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Nietzsche and Political Thought

Edited by
Keith Ansell-Pearson

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Notes on Contributors

Keith Ansell-Pearson holds a personal chair in Philosophy at the University of Warwick. In 2013/14 he will be a visiting fellow in the Humanities at Rice University. He is the author and editor of several books on Nietzsche, including *Nietzsche contra Rousseau*, *The Nietzsche Reader* and *A Companion to Nietzsche*. He is currently completing a book with Rebecca Bamford on Nietzsche's text *Dawn*.

Nandita Biswas Mellamphy is associate professor of Political Theory at Western University, and former Associate Director (2011–12) of the Center for the Study of Theory and Criticism (Western). She is the author of *The Three Stigmata of Friedrich Nietzsche: Political Physiology in the Age of Nihilism* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), as well as several other essays on Nietzsche's and Nietzschean political thought. Her topics of study include post-humanism, digital media culture, continental philosophy (especially the work of Friedrich Nietzsche and the post-Nietzscheans) and the political dimensions of contemporary science-fiction and current-day neuroscience. In addition she is completing a series of articles devoted to the theorist François Laruelle's interpretation of Nietzsche's political thought.

Bruno Bosteels is professor of Romance Studies and Comparative Literature at Cornell University. He is the author, among others, of *Badiou and Politics* (Duke University Press, 2011), *The Actuality of Communism* (Verso, 2011) and *Marx and Freud in Latin America* (Verso, 2012). Between 2005 and 2011 he served as the general editor of the journal *diacritics*. He is also the translator of numerous books by Alain Badiou, including *Theory of the Subject* (Continuum, 2009), *Wittgenstein's Antiphilosophy* (Verso, 2011), *Philosophy for Militants* (Verso, 2012), and *The Adventure of French Philosophy* (Verso, 2012).

Daniel Conway is professor of Philosophy and Humanities at Texas A&M University. He is the author of *Nietzsche's Dangerous Game* (Cambridge UP, 1997), *Nietzsche and the Political* (Routledge, 1997), and *Reader's Guide to Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals* (Continuum, 2008). He is the editor of the four-volume series *Nietzsche: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers* (Routledge, 1998) and co-editor of *Nietzsche und die antike Philosophie* (Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1992), *Nietzsche, Philosophy, and the Arts* (Cambridge UP, 1998), and *The History of Continental Philosophy, Volume II* (U Chicago, 2010). He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Friedrich Nietzsche Society and a former Editor of the *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*.

Rosalyn Diprose is professor of Philosophy (Emeritus) at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. She is author of numerous articles and book chapters on

Nietzsche's philosophy, including in relation to other thinkers such as Hannah Arendt. Recent books include *Corporeal Generosity: On Giving with Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, and Levinas* (SUNY Press, 2002) and the co-edited anthology *Merleau-Ponty: Key Concepts* (Continuum, 2008). Her ongoing research draws on existential phenomenology and biopolitical analysis to explore themes such as the politics of dwelling, reconstruction and natality.

Robert Guay is associate professor of Philosophy at Binghamton University. His work has appeared most recently in the *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* and *The Edinburgh Critical History of Philosophy*, and the *Oxford Handbook to Nietzsche*. He is currently completing a book on Nietzsche's accounts of the conditions for normative authority.

Vanessa Lemm received her PhD in Philosophy from the New School for Social Research (2002). She is professor in Philosophy at the School of Humanities and Languages of the University of New South Wales. She is the author of *Nietzsche's Animal Philosophy: Culture, Politics and the Animality of the Human Being* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), *Nietzsche y el pensamiento politico contemporáneo* (Santiago: Fondo de cultura económica, 2013), and several articles on contemporary political theory. She has also edited volumes on Hegel and Foucault.

David Owen is professor of Social and Political Philosophy at the University of Southampton. He has also held visiting positions in Frankfurt and Madrid. He has published nine books, most recently, *Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morality* (Acumen, 2007) and published numerous journal articles. Among other things, he is currently working on Nietzsche's relationship to realism, agonism and perfectionism.

Paul Patton is Scientia Professor of Philosophy at The University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. He is the author of *Deleuze and the Political* (Routledge, 2000) and *Deleuzian Concepts: Philosophy, Colonization, Politics* (Stanford, 2010). He is the editor of *Nietzsche, Feminism and Political Theory* (Routledge, 1993) and *Deleuze: A Critical Reader* (Blackwell, 1996). He is co-editor (with Duncan Ivison and Will Sanders) of *Political Theory and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (Cambridge, 2000), (with John Protevi) of *Between Deleuze and Derrida* (Continuum, 2003) and (with Simone Bignall) *Deleuze and the Postcolonial* (Edinburgh, 2010). His current research deals with political normativity in French poststructuralist philosophy (Deleuze, Derrida and Foucault) and in contemporary left-liberal political philosophy, especially Rawls.

Alan D. Schrift is the F. Wendell Miller Professor of Philosophy at Grinnell College. In addition to his many published articles or book chapters on Nietzsche and French and German twentieth-century philosophy, he is the author of *Twentieth-Century French Philosophy: Key Themes and Thinkers* (Blackwell, 2006), *Nietzsche's French Legacy: A Genealogy of Poststructuralism* (Routledge, 1995), and *Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation: Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction* (Routledge, 1990). Most recently, he was the general editor of the eight-volume *History of Continental Philosophy*

(Acumen Publishing/University of Chicago Press, 2010) and continues as the general editor of *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, the Stanford University Press translation of Nietzsche's *Kritische Studienausgabe*.

Peter R. Sedgwick is reader in Philosophy at Cardiff University. He is the editor of *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader* (1994). His authored books include *Descartes to Derrida* (2001), *Nietzsche's Economy* (2007) and *Nietzsche's Justice* (2013).

Gary Shapiro is Tucker-Boatwright professor in the Humanities and Philosophy, Emeritus at the University of Richmond. His books include *Nietzschean Narratives* (1989), *Alcyone: Nietzsche on Gifts, Noise, and Women* (1991), *Earthwards: Robert Smithson and Art After Babel* (1995), *and Archaeologies of Vision: Foucault and Nietzsche on Seeing and Saying* (2003). He is completing a book on Nietzsche's political thought and has recently published articles on aesthetics, the philosophy of literature, and land art. website: https://sites.google.com/site/garyshapirophilosophy/

Herman Siemens teaches modern philosophy at Leiden University in the Netherlands and is president of the Friedrich Nietzsche Society of Great Britain. He is a chief editor and contributor to the ongoing 'Nietzsche Dictionary' project, based at Radboud University of Nijmegen and Leiden. He has published widely on Nietzsche, including concept-studies and articles on his main areas of interest: art, law, the agon and its political implications. He is co-editor of the 2008 volume *Nietzsche, Power and Politics* (de Gruyter) and directs a research programme funded by the NWO (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research): Between Deliberation and Agonism: Rethinking Conflict and its Relation to Law in Political Philosophy. He is a Research Associate of the Universidad Diego Portales (Chile), the University of Pretoria (South Africa) and the Universidade de Lisboa (Portugal).

Michael Ure is based in the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University and specializes in modern European philosophy and political theory. His research focuses on ancient and modern philosophical therapies and the politics of the emotions. He is currently writing *Nietzsche's The Gay Science* (Cambridge University Press) and completing an edited book collection, *The Politics of Compassion* (Routledge, London).

List of Abbreviations

A	*The Anti-Christ*
AOM	*Assorted Opinions and Maxims*
BGE	*Beyond Good and Evil*
BT	*The Birth of Tragedy*
D	*Dawn: Thoughts on the Presumptions of Morality/Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*
EH	*Ecce Homo*
GM	*On the Genealogy of Morality*
GS	*The Gay Science*
HH	*Human, all too Human*
HL	*On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*
KGB	*Nietzsche Briefwechsel: Kritische Gesamtausabe*
KSA	*Friedrich Nietzsche: Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*
MD	'Mahnruf an die Deutschen'
OTL	'On truth and lies in a nonmoral sense'
PTA	*Philosophy in the Tragic Age of Greeks*
RWB	*Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*
SE	*Schopenhauer as Educator*
TI	*Twilight of the Idols*
WP	*The Will to Power*
WS	*The Wanderer and His Shadow*
Z	*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Note: References to Nietzsche's texts are to sections and aphorisms, not page numbers, unless stated otherwise.

Introduction

Keith Ansell-Pearson

Among scholars and commentators of his work opinions diverge markedly on the status of Nietzsche as a political thinker and the relevance of his thought for political philosophizing. This volume of specially commissioned chapters does not seek to resolve this issue once and for all; rather, what it does is to present innovative and imaginative work on the topic of Nietzsche and political thought by some of the foremost commentators writing on his work today, and in an effort to show that it can prove fruitful to approach Nietzsche from the perspective of the concerns of politics. It includes chapters by leading commentators on Nietzsche's relation to political thought and who see value in appropriating aspects of his work for thinking about politics in fresh and challenging ways. The volume features chapters on some of the most important topics in the field of Nietzsche's relation to political thought, including perfectionism and agonism. At the same time it features instructive chapters on Nietzsche and justice, on Nietzsche and the politics of the event, on Nietzsche and the multitude, on Nietzsche and democratic theory, as well as chapters on Nietzsche's relation to key thinkers from Spinoza to Simondon. No consensus emerges from the chapters, and this is perhaps as it should be with respect to a thinker as fertile and multifaceted as Nietzsche.

In his chapter on 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, and Justice,' Paul Patton explores the complex origins of justice and rights as outlined in Nietzsche's middle period and considers these in the light of his scattered comments during this period on democracy and the process of democratization. On this basis, it asks whether it is possible to extend Nietzsche's account of the origins of justice and rights to encompass its modern democratic form. In other words, in contrast to contemporary liberal conceptions of justice, can we envisage a just and democratic society on the basis of Nietzsche's subject of power and the feeling of power? Can we imagine a society in which the affirmation of the equal rights of all is a means to the feeling of power for individuals and the community as a whole? By probing these questions Patton is able to provide an interpretation of Nietzsche that shows his middle period writings to be a fertile source for thinking about democracy.

In 'Nietzsche on Truth, Honesty, and Responsibility in Politics' Rosalyn Diprose explores the connection Nietzsche makes between responsibility and honesty as a way of explaining the importance of maintaining truth in politics. This involves elaborating the political ontology that emerges from reconciling Nietzsche's rejection of absolute truth in favour of perspectivism, on the one hand, with his admiration of 'honesty'

and his criticism of 'dishonest mendacity,' on the other. The issue of truth in politics is framed in terms of Hannah Arendt's concern about the harm done to the plurality of human existence and to political community by the 'organised lying' characteristic of totalitarian (totalizing) government. To get around the apparent contradiction in opposing both absolute truth and political mendacity Arendt distinguishes between 'moral truth' and 'factual truth' (an agreed view of reality) and she argues that, while moral truth has no place in politics, upholding factual truth is essential to political life. The analysis explores why Nietzsche would not hold to this argument – for him, perspectivity is a fundamental condition of all life, including political and ethical life. Yet he shares Arendt's worry about the harm done to pluralism by lying. Nietzsche's different approach to the same concerns includes distinguishing between different kinds of lying so that, for him, the organized lying Arendt refers to is actually a dogmatic form of truth. The analysis shows how Nietzsche's notion of the corporeal self and his perspectivism allows him to value 'honesty' in politics without resorting to the distinctions between ethics and politics, moral truth and factual truth. The chapter concludes with an account of what notion of political responsibility might be derived from Nietzsche's perspectivism.

In his chapter Peter Sedgwick examines the relationship between naturalism and law in Nietzsche. Nietzsche is often taken to endorse a naturalistic instrumentalism which combines scientifically-inspired positivist and historicist elements in a philosophy of will to power. Such a view leads to him being portrayed as law's enemy: Nietzsche, it is claimed, reduces legitimacy to the play of power relations. This reading is reductive. For Nietzsche, law characterizes the emergence of human identity in an essential way. Law springs from the need to fulfil the conditions of authority (of commanding and obedience) necessary to communal life. Law is culture. Through law self-understanding and the understanding of the 'natural' environment in which we live are rendered possible. The humanity that thereby confronts nature is never in a condition of will-less servitude, but endowed with the dignity of resistance. Such dignity needs to be recalled when considering Nietzsche's discussion of the origins of the state in *On the Genealogy of Morality*. The state emerges as a pure tyranny which imposes law upon its victims. Tyranny, however, is only possible because human dignity already exists. The shame of victimhood involves a specifically political violence springing from normative violation: only shamed humankind can come to experience and suffer from itself. The human soul emerges, therefore, as a doubly divided entity: a being always already inclined to conform to law, yet resistant to the power of externalized legal authority. Such a being experiences itself as a domain of contestation in which the authority of the law is continually at stake, since the authority in question is at the same time intimately its own.

When Nietzsche discusses democracy, one of his frequent targets, he discusses it not as an institutional arrangement but as cultural phenomenon, conception, symptom, or, frequently, as a 'movement.' In 'Movements and Motivations: Nietzsche and the Invention of Political Psychology' Robert Guay argues that Nietzsche is not engaging in either the ancient or modern forms of political philosophy: his discussions betray neither a perfectionist interest in how human nature realizes itself in a community, nor an interest in distinguishing state organization from other

social formations. Instead he refers to modern political formations in order to offer an analysis that is psychological in character. Democracy, considered as a movement, is a psychological formation writ large: it evidences motivations, aims and needs. Consideration of its actual operation or its public discourses is only a means to discussing the underlying psychological phenomena. Nietzsche's interest here is to locate their origin and to argue that these movements have become pathological: they are reactive, hypertrophic, disconnected from other psychological elements, and, most importantly, obstruct the possibility of their own satisfaction. He discusses the novelty of Nietzsche's approach, distinguishing it from the organicism of Plato and Hegel, and from empirical inquiry.

In 'Nietzsche's Freedom: The Art of Agonic Perfectionism' David Owen provides an account of Nietzsche's concept of freedom. More specifically, he shows how Nietzsche's concerns with art and artistic agency, agonism and perfectionism come together in the composition of an understanding of freedom as a practical relation to self. The first part of the argument sketches the formal character of Nietzsche's account of agency and of autonomy, focusing on his understanding of artistic agency as exemplary of agency as such. The second part of the argument introduces Nietzsche's understanding of will to power and shows how this links agonism and perfectionism to his account of autonomous agency, before returning to the relationship of art and truthfulness in order to sketch their roles in the maintenance of freedom.

In 'Reassessing Radical Democratic Theory in the light of Nietzsche's Ontology of Conflict' Herman Siemens aims to reassess the critical and constructive potential of Nietzsche's thought for democratic politics by confronting agonistic theory with his concept of the agon and more broadly, his ontology of conflict (Will to Power). Do existing democratic appropriations release constructive potentials in his thought to which he was blinded by his aristocratic proclivities? Are they viable ways of thinking 'with and against' Nietzsche – or does his thought on antagonism expose weaknesses in these appropriations? The first section of the chapter considers agonistic democratic theory in the light of Nietzsche's ontology of conflict/power and his concept of the agon. Agonistic theory, he argues, is informed by an ontology of struggle and power that is post-structuralist in origin and quite distinct from Nietzsche's. What is more, Nietzsche's ontology of conflict opens up critical and corrective perspectives on contemporary conceptions of agonism and especially their reliance on the notion of 'agonistic respect.' The second section of the chapter turns to the question of the constructive resources in Nietzsche's thought for democratic theory. These are located first in Nietzsche's 'philosophy of hatred' with the thesis that for Nietzsche hatred, envy, pride and the like are the springs of agonal action, not respect. Nietzsche's philosophy of hatred opens up a rich and 'realist' phenomenology of enmity unbound by the constraints of 'respect,' yet profoundly affirmative of the other. The final part of the chapter concentrates on the link between pluralism and antagonism made by agonistic theorists. Focusing on the agonism of Chantal Mouffe, Siemens argues that Nietzsche's ontology of conflict overcomes the problems she inherits from Carl Schmitt's 'reactive' theory of power and offers alternative ways to address one of the central tasks for political philosophy today: how to rethink pluralism in a way that addresses its contemporary forms and formations.

In 'Spinoza versus Kant: Have I Been Understood?' Alan D. Schrift approaches the question of Nietzsche and political thought indirectly by suggesting that Nietzsche offers a set of ideas that allow one to avoid what, since Kant, has been seen to be the necessary assumption for doing politics, namely that one must appeal to something or someone transcendent in order to legitimate one's political position. Deleuze argues that we find an alternative to the Kantian paradigm in the immanentism of Spinoza, and he follows Deleuze's lead by demonstrating that we find in Nietzsche, as in Spinoza, a consistent refusal to leave this world in favour of some other world that transcends this one. While perhaps not overtly offering a political theory, he argues that Nietzsche's consistent appeal to values immanent to life and to an account of the subject grounded in immanence provides philosophical resources to legitimate an immanent politics.

In 'Kairos and Chronos: Nietzsche and the Time of the Multitude' Gary Shapiro examines Nietzsche's statement in Beyond Good and Evil 256 that 'this is the century of the multitude (*Menge*)!' His essay develops the meaning of this emphatic declaration and articulates it with a linked set of concepts of temporality in Nietzsche's 'Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future,' specifically (1) to that of the century, and (2) to kairos or event, and the contrasting concept of chronos or duration. The multitudes are diverse, emerging in a world of nomadism and the formation of a variety of hybrid cultural types. Declaring this their time (era or saeculum), Nietzsche challenges state-oriented political philosophy that is unable to think beyond 'Peoples and Fatherlands.' The multitude is not a universal class and is analogous to a theatrical audience. Commentators tend to conflate the quite distinct concepts of herd, masses and multitude (reflected in misleading translations); they incorrectly assume that Nietzsche sees homogenization of populations as inevitable. Conflation is avoided by following Nietzsche's practice of carefully distinguishing the terminology and rhetorical uses of various ways of characterizing and positioning social groups, as well as his use of models drawn from theatre and spectacle. The formation of the Menge can be creative (as in ancient Greece), and the *Menge* happily resists efforts at religious reformation. Nietzsche's linked concepts of nomadism, hybridity and multitude can enrich current discussions of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. While the multitude is not the herd or the masses, their culture threatens to be a powerful distraction to 'those who wait' who must be vigilant in their readiness to be worthy of the kairos or event (BGE 274). This vigilance can be preserved by understanding the psychological dynamics of the multitude and resisting its ceaseless series of enthusiasms for actors of all sorts and for those it takes to be 'great men.'

In 'Nietzsche and the Engine of Politics' Nandita Biswas Mellamphy provides an interpretation of the *Übermensch* in light of the cardinal conceptual and methodological importance of physiology in Nietzsche's thinking – not as an ideal type but as the ongoing overhuman process of physiological overcoming in which even the 'human being' is to be taken beyond the framework and typological construct of the human. She argues that Nietzschean physiology is not primarily concerned with the language of man and its paradigm of the speaking or thinking subject, but rather with an overhuman physiology of forces that make use of the human – in addition to non-human formations – as its material and medium of inscription hence articulation (a type-writing rather than a type, in this sense). Nietzsche privileges *physis* (growth, will

to power) over *logos* (speech, human reason) in his physiology, and hence a-signifying overhuman forces over forces of (human, all too human) signification. In posing the political question of rule in terms of the physiological question of the production and direction of will to power, the overhuman appears to be Nietzsche's strategy for radically rethinking the place and the fate of human life-forms in relation to wider non-signifying, non-conscious, non-human, often inhuman as well as transhuman 'form-shaping forces.'

In recent years scholars have begun to investigate the manner in which Nietzsche reinvents the classical and Hellenistic model of philosophical therapy. This new research promises to yield fresh insight into his meta-philosophical assumptions about the nature of philosophy and the role of the philosopher. In his chapter on 'Nietzsche's political therapy' Michael Ure extends this research by examining how Nietzsche harnesses the Hellenistic therapies to serve an aristocratic political programme. He shows how beginning in his middle works Nietzsche develops a neo-Stoic political therapy and he seeks to illuminate his political therapy by contrasting it with Adam Smith's neo-Stoicism. It shows how these two modern philosophers utilize Stoic therapies for very different political ends. Smith deploys Stoic therapies for the purposes of social harmony and co-ordination rather than ethical perfectionism. In his so-called middle works Nietzsche, by contrast, initially draws on Hellenistic therapies as an integral aspect of his reinvention of ancient ethical perfectionism. He identifies Stoic therapies as cures for the emotional distress that prevents individuals from responding with equanimity to all the turns of fortune's wheel. The chapter then argues that in the 1880s Nietzsche radically transforms the scope and purpose of his philosophical therapy as he integrates evolutionary theories into his moral analysis and political theory. In his late works Nietzsche folds his neo-Stoic therapy into a 'bio-political' programme. Here he deploys a neo-Stoic political therapy to cure higher types of the moral corruption that prevents them from fully exercising their aristocratic 'rights' and in doing so enhancing the species' capacities.

In 'Nietzsche's Politics of the Event' Vanessa Lemm offers an analysis of Nietzsche's politics of the event. Nietzsche's conception of the event is inseparable from his conception of the great human being. She argues that Nietzsche provides a politics of the event and that this politics denotes the task of cultivating great human beings. One can distinguish between two different politics of the event in Nietzsche's thought. On the one hand, there is what could be called a small politics ('*kleine Politik*') understood as a politics of the state or of moral and religious institutions that seek to produce conditions which favour the emergence of great human beings. We are here dealing with an active politics of liberation which seeks to change the course of history giving it a new direction and a new aim. On the other hand, Nietzsche speaks of a great politics ('*große Politik*') of the event which is not inscribed into the programme of a particular political or moral institution. Rather it is a politics beyond politics and morality whose aim is not to change the course of time but rather to affirm the eternity of the moment. At the centre of this great politics stands Nietzsche's conception of *amor fati*. The chapter examines the different elements of these two politics of the event in three recurrent figures in Nietzsche's philosophy: the historical agent, the genius and the philosopher.

In 'Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Advent of "Great Politics"' Daniel Conway aims to elucidate the relationship that exists between Nietzsche's avowed immoralism and his alleged contribution to the inauguration of the era of great politics. Nietzsche is read as an immoralist not simply in the sense that he denies the validity and efficacy of Christian morality, but also in the sense that he does so in the name of morality itself. As an immoralist, then, Nietzsche asserts himself as a particular kind of moralist – in particular, one who may turn the authority and power of morality against itself. Owing to the unique conditions of his historical situation this first immoralist presents himself as belonging, potentially, to the last generation of moralists. Under his direction, the historically dominant regime of morality will have no choice but to pronounce itself immoral and, therefore, ripe for destruction and collapse. Indeed, Nietzsche's goal as an immoralist is to deliver and enact the final, self-consuming decree of morality – its decree against itself. This characterization of Nietzsche's immoralism positions us in turn to understand why he claims to have contributed to the inauguration of the era of great politics. As morality suffers shipwreck, the business of politics will become 'great' in the sense that its practitioners may and will proceed unfettered by traditional constraints. Especially when compared to nineteenth-century European politics, great politics is likely to be global, transnational, geo-political and, perhaps, apocalyptic. As Nietzsche correctly foresaw, the warfare of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has been and remains broadly ideological in nature, with the future of the earth hanging in the balance. He claimed to welcome this outcome, despite its collateral disruptions, especially inasmuch as humanity might avail itself thereby of the opportunity to undertake a revaluation of all values. In this sense, then, we may think of the era of great politics as delivering humankind to that fateful 'day of decision,' whereupon the continued existence of a wounded, wayward species finally might be determined.

In his chapter on Nietzsche and grand politics, Bruno Bosteels analyses Alain Badiou's reading of the late writings of Nietzsche in light of two basic questions concerning, on the one hand, the status of philosophy, which in the hands of the thinker of the overman takes the form of what Badiou, following Jacques Lacan, will call antiphilosophy; and, on the other hand, the nature of politics, which in the case of Nietzsche's final works – especially the letters and notes of 1888 during the period of so-called madness in Turin – takes on the radical form of 'great' or 'grand' politics. After a brief comparison with Pierre Klossowski, the chapters goes on to define the context in which Badiou turned to Nietzsche as part of a 4-year long seminar between 1992 and 1996 devoted to the great antiphilosophers Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Lacan and Saint Paul, before concluding with an interrogation of the antiphilosophical temptations that might be at work in Badiou's own philosophy.

1

Nietzsche, Genealogy and Justice

Paul Patton

Justice, according to Rawls, is the first virtue of social institutions, in the same way that truth is the first virtue of systems of thought (Rawls 1999, p. 3). A society is 'well-ordered,' he argues, when there is a political conception of justice on which all reasonable citizens can agree, when its basic institutions are effectively regulated by a public conception of justice, and when citizens have an effective sense of justice that enables them to understand and apply the principles of justice (Rawls 2005, p. 35). It follows that the legitimacy of our social institutions, including our form of government, depends on their being just. The exercise of political power is legitimate only when it is exercised in accordance with a constitution that embodies the principles of an agreed political conception of justice (Rawls 2005, p. 137).

Rawls distinguishes particular public *conceptions* of justice, such as his own conception of justice as fairness, from *concepts* of social justice that set out general principles for the assignment of rights and duties and the distribution of the benefits of social life. For the modern citizens of democratic and liberal societies, whose considered intuitions about what is just form the raw material of Rawls's conception or theory of justice, these basic principles include avoidance of 'arbitrary distinctions' between persons in the assignment of basic rights and duties, and the establishment of a 'proper balance' between competing claims to the advantages of social life' (Rawls 1999, p. 5; 2005, p. 14). While he does suggest that this concept tallies with traditional views of justice such as Aristotle's, Rawls does not inquire further into the origins of our concept of justice. More generally, he is less interested in the historical character of our concept and conceptions of justice. By contrast, if we are interested in the possibility that our conceptions and even our concept of justice might change, then it is important to understand their history. If we are interested in the future of justice, genealogical inquiry into its origins can provide us with resources for thinking about it differently.

Nietzsche is a species perfectionist, interested in the future of the human sense of justice and forms of social and political order.[1] Moreover, he is committed to an historical approach to the concepts and conceptions that inform social and political life. He denies the possibility of defining such concepts – 'only something which has no history can be defined' (GM II: 13) – in favour of genealogical enquiry into their origins. In *Human, All Too Human*, *Daybreak* and *On the Genealogy of Morality*, he provides

elements of a speculative account of the origins of justice grounded in a historical conception of human nature understood in terms of the theory that 'a *power-will* is acted out in all that happens' (GM II: 12). Although he is often considered to be an anti-democratic if not an anti-political thinker, Nietzsche's comments on democratic political organization include some highly favourable judgments, particularly in writings around 1880.[2] In this chapter, I will focus on these comments in order to argue that he provides the bases for a novel interpretation of the sources and possible future development of a democracy 'yet to come' (HH 293).

1 Origins of justice

In *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche suggests that 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' (HH 92). Under these circumstances, it makes more sense for both parties to negotiate over the demands of each party with a view to reaching a mutually satisfactory agreement, thereby avoiding conflict that would only lead to injury with no assurance of a beneficial outcome on either side. Understood in this manner, justice is based on the egoism that is expressed in the thought: 'to what end should I injure myself uselessly and perhaps even then not achieve my goal?' (HH 92).

From Nietzsche's genealogical point of view, the egoistic origin of moral virtues such as justice does not mean that they do not serve the interests of all parties concerned, nor that they cannot over time come to appear unegoistic. In *The Wanderer And His Shadow*, he offers a parallel account of the manner in which unselfish dealings with others could have come to acquire a positive evaluation. Neighbouring chieftains who had long been in conflict with one another come to a peaceful agreement because of the intervention of a third party who threatens to side with whoever is the victim of aggression by the other, thereby convincing both to keep the peace. As a result, the former enemies enter into peaceful relations of trade and mutual assistance that enhance their condition in a variety of ways:

> They both saw with astonishment how their prosperity and wellbeing suddenly increased, how each had in his neighbour a willing trading partner instead of a crafty or openly mocking illdoer, how each could even assist and rescue the other in times of need instead of exploiting and augmenting this need of his neighbour as heretofore. (WS 190)

Each party saw only the behaviour of the other, which they called unselfish and considered a virtue because of the benefits they derived from it. In this manner, on the basis of perceived self-interest, the virtue of unselfish behaviour became acknowledged. It was not that unselfish behaviour had not previously occurred in private or on a small scale, but rather that it only became acknowledged as a virtue when

> for the first time it was painted on a wall in large letters legible to the whole community. The moral qualities are recognized as virtues, *accorded* value and an

> honoured name, and recommended for acquisition only from the moment when they have visibly determined the fate and fortune of whole societies. (WS 190)

So it is with justice, according to Nietzsche's account. The high value placed on this apparently unegoistic virtue increases over time as a consequence both of the benefits it brings to the community and of the efforts to protect and maintain it. Its value increases as does the value of every highly valued thing:

> For something highly valued is striven for, imitated, multiplied through sacrifice, and grows as the worth of the toil and zeal expended by each individual is added to the worth of the valued thing. (HH 92)

Nietzsche's genealogies of justice, unselfish behaviour and other social virtues remain firmly anchored in a conception of human nature as fundamentally self-interested. However, there is more to his conception of human self-interest and the mechanism by which this leads to just and fair dealings between individuals and groups. First, because the concept of justice originates in negotiation between parties of approximately equal power, it implies an understanding of the bases of agreement between parties with different or conflicting interests: 'the characteristic of *exchange* is the original characteristic of justice' (HH 92). Second, the practice of negotiation implies an understanding of the process of give and take, or what Nietzsche refers to as requital (*Vergeltung*). It follows that: 'Justice is thus requital and exchange under the presupposition of an approximately equal power position' (HH 92). *On the Genealogy of Morality* reiterates the connection between justice and exchange in pointing to the etymological link between *Schuld* (guilt) and *Schulden* (debts), and in suggesting that the origins of punishment included the idea that every injury could be compensated by an equivalent amount of suffering inflicted on the perpetrator (GM II: 4).

In *Human, All Too Human*, the reference to requital and exchange leads Nietzsche to invoke two other moral sentiments that belong to the same domain as justice, namely revenge and gratitude: 'revenge therefore belongs originally within the domain of justice, it is an exchange. Gratitude likewise' (HH 92). However, when we turn to his analyses of these phenomena, the idea of justice as a relationship involving requital and exchange between parties of approximately equal power is further complicated by the introduction of the conception of individuals as 'spheres of power.' This is how Nietzsche explains the sentiments of gratitude and revenge:

> The reason the man of power is grateful is this. His benefactor has, through the help he has given him, as it were laid hands on the sphere of the man of power and intruded into it (*an der Sphäre des Mächtigen gleichsam vergriffen und sich in sie engedrängt*): 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)

Nietzsche's analyses of gratitude and revenge, and by implication of the human sense of justice, in terms of the sphere of power that constitutes the individual social agent requires further explanation. This will be provided in the next section devoted to his theory of will to power and the role played in this theory, insofar as it applies to human

beings, by the concept of the feeling of power. For the moment, however, it is important to note the complexity of the origins of justice as he explains them. These include the capacity for requital and exchange, the equality of power or rather the perceived equality of power (which may or may not accurately reflect the actual balance of forces in a given relationship), and the capacity for a feeling of power, which refers us to the kind of agency involved in human interactions.

2 Power and the feeling of power

At the time of writing *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche had not presented in explicit form his theory of the will to power.[3] Applied to the organic world, this theory does not claim that all things seek power over their environment, or that they seek self-preservation, but rather that everything seeks to exercise or express its own distinctive capacities. Whether or not that leads to self-preservation or to power over other things will depend not only on the intrinsic capacities of the body concerned, but also on the environment in which it seeks to exercise its power. As he later writes:

> A living thing desires above all to vent its strength – life as such is will to power – self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent consequences of it. (BGE 13)

Applied to the human animal, this theory takes on a further dimension by virtue of the fact that, to a greater degree than all other living things, human beings are conscious of and affected by their actions. The fact that they are conscious of their actions means that they act in the light of particular ways of understanding or describing the meaning, goals and content of their actions. This implies that there is an inescapable interpretative element in all human action. The fact that human beings are conscious of and affected by their actions further implies that there is a particular kind of feedback loop between an agent's actions and the agent's self-esteem or self-respect.[4] When the action is misdirected or blocked the agent experiences a feeling of impotence or powerlessness. When it succeeds, or is believed to have succeeded, the agent experiences a feeling of power. Nietzsche's mature doctrine of the will to power as it applies to human beings is summed up in the following passage from *On The Genealogy of Morality*:

> Every animal . . . instinctively strives for an optimum of favourable conditions in which it can fully express its power and achieve its maximal feeling of power. (GM III: 7 *translation modified*)

Even though he only explicitly formulated this doctrine some years later, the crucial role of the feeling of power is implicit in the analyses of human social interaction undertaken in *Human, All Too Human* and *Daybreak*. At the outset of *Human, All Too Human*, after calling for a chemistry of the moral, religious and aesthetic sensations and 'all the agitations we experience within ourselves in cultural and social intercourse, and indeed even when we are alone,' Nietzsche advances the hypothesis that there are no actions that are either completely egoistic or completely disinterested: there are only sublimations 'in which the basic element seems almost to have dispersed and reveals

itself only under the most painstaking observation' (HH 1). He does not immediately say what he takes to be this 'basic element' in all human actions, but the answer becomes apparent in the course of his analyses of the affects that accompany different forms of social interaction. Even though his terminology is not yet fixed, it is power, or more precisely the awareness of one's power that comes through exercising it over others or over oneself.

For example, he suggests that the objective of so-called wicked acts is not so much the suffering of others but rather 'our own enjoyment, for example the enjoyment of the feeling of revenge or of a powerful excitation of the nerves' (HH 103). In the next passage, he argues that there is no difference between a wicked act that causes harm to others and an act of self-defence insofar as the act is accompanied by a pleasure or 'feeling of one's own power, of one's own strong excitation' (HH 104). Eventually, he answers the question raised at the outset concerning the basic element in all human actions by suggesting that:

> It is the individual's sole desire for self-enjoyment (together with the fear of losing it) which gratifies itself in every instance, let a man act as he can, that is to say as he must: whether his deeds be those of vanity, revenge, pleasure, utility, malice, cunning, or those of sacrifice, sympathy, knowledge. (HH 107)

All of these formulations amount to early versions of what he later refers to as the 'feeling of power,' where this is not a simple psychological state but a feeling bound up with experience of agency on the part of complex, self-conscious human animals. This feeling is the decisive element in many of his analyses of human actions throughout *Human, All Too Human*. For example, in addition to the analysis of gratitude and revenge (HH 44), the discussion of the desire to excite pity in others (HH 50) relies on a conception of human beings as subjects endowed with a certain degree of power and striving to achieve or restore the feeling of their own power. The desire to incite pity in others, on the part of those who suffer, arises because of the affect that accompanies successful incitation. Nietzsche refers here to the feeling of superiority which accompanies the demonstration that, whatever their misfortune, the one arousing pity still has the power to elicit this response from others. This feeling of superiority provides 'a sort of pleasure' and it follows that the thirst for pity is 'a thirst for self-enjoyment' at the expense of one's fellows (HH 50). In a later passage, he refers simply to a 'pleasure of gratification in the exercise of power' (HH 103).

In *Daybreak*, too, the feeling of power is explicitly invoked in Nietzsche's analyses of a variety of human actions and attitudes. For example, he suggests that the pleasure obtained from practising or witnessing cruelty to other animals, 'one of the oldest festive joys of mankind,' can be understood as a form of gratification of the feeling of power (D 18).[5] The phenomenon of blaming others for one's failure can similarly be understood: 'for failure brings with it a depression of spirits against which the sole remedy is instinctively applied: a new excitation of the feeling of power' (D 140). The criticism of the preceding generation by a younger generation may also be understood in these terms, since 'in criticizing it enjoys the first fruits of the feeling of power' (D 176). So too in the case of those moments in history when 'grand politics' occupies centre stage and people are ready to stake their lives, their

property and their conscience on the success of a particular cause: 'the strongest tide which carries them forward is the need for the feeling of power' (D 189). The drive to accumulate wealth that has become such an important feature of modern commercial society may be understood as 'that which now gives the highest feeling of power and good conscience' (D 204). As these examples suggest, the importance of Nietzsche's will to power hypothesis for our understanding of human actions cannot be underestimated. They are summed up in his suggestion that, because for so much of human history it was believed that natural phenomena were endowed with purpose and the power to frustrate human endeavours, and because the feeling of impotence was so widely and strongly felt, the feeling of power has become humankind's strongest propensity: 'the means discovered for creating this feeling almost constitute the history of culture' (D 23).

3 Rights, power and the feeling of power

In *The Wanderer And His Shadow*, Nietzsche suggests that a right is a kind of power and that this is one reason that many fail to assert rights to which they are entitled: effort and in some cases courage is required to assert one's rights (WS 251). In *Daybreak*, he offers a more developed account of the origin of rights and duties in which rights are defined as recognized and guaranteed degrees of power (D 112). In accordance with the familiar reciprocity of rights and duties, our duties are the rights that others acquire over us. These arise on the basis of a capacity for requital and exchange similar to that identified among the sources of justice. Others acquire such rights, he argues, 'by taking us to be capable of contracting and requiting, by positing us as similar and equal to them' (D 112). His examples of the ways in which others do this to fellow citizens allude to those things that Socrates admits having been given by society, such as being reared, educated and supported, being entrusted with the welfare of others and given a share in the advantages of social life (*Crito* 50d–e, 51d–e). Socrates further admits that because he has accepted these things and continued to live in a society governed by law, he has contracted to repay the debt incurred by honouring the duties imposed on him by the law. In the same way, Nietzsche argues, we fulfil our duty when 'we give back in the measure in which we have been given to' (D 112).[6]

His account of the origin of our rights over others relies on the same conception of relationships of requital and exchange. My rights 'are that part of my power which others have not merely conceded me, but which they wish me to preserve' (D 112). In the case of rights that originate between parties of approximately equal power, others might concede certain powers to me on the basis of anticipated requital and exchange of equivalents. This might take the form of my conceding the same powers to them, hence protecting their rights. Alternatively, they might consider struggle with me to be perilous and potentially to no advantage, thereby relying on the same egoistic calculation that underlies the sense of justice. Or finally, they might wish me to retain certain powers to preserve the possibility of an alliance against third parties.

The situation is different in cases of unequal power, where other motivations may prevail. For example, where one party has more than enough power to maintain a

relation of domination over another, they might donate some of it to the weaker party. In doing so, they not only presuppose 'a weak feeling of power in him who thus lets himself be donated to,' as Nietzsche suggests, but they also perpetuate the weak feeling of power and thereby reinforce the hierarchical relationship (D 112). In *Human, All Too Human*, he proposed an economic motive for the powerful to respect the rights of those conquered or enslaved in pointing out that the latter still possess at least the power to destroy themselves, thereby inflicting a loss on the conqueror or the slave master (HH 93).

There is a further dimension to Nietzsche's analysis of the origins of rights and duties which brings this into close alignment with his account of the origin of justice, namely the fact that it also relies on a conception of the agents involved as not merely subjects of power but also subjects endowed with a capacity for the feeling of power. When we honour our duties to others, doing something for them in return for what they have done for us, he argues:

> What we are doing is restoring our self-regard – for in doing something for us, these others have impinged upon our sphere of power, and would have continued to have a hand in it if we did not with the performance of our 'duty' practise a requital, that is to say impinge upon their power. (D 112)

For this reason, Nietzsche qualifies his initial definition of rights as recognized and guaranteed degrees of power by specifying that the rights of others 'constitute a concession on the part of our feeling of power to the feeling of power of those others' (D 112). His analysis of the origins of rights and duties thus proceeds, on the assumption that these involve relations between individuals conceived as 'spheres of power,' where this involves a capacity to be affected by the exercise of one's own power as well as by the impact of the power of others. It also involves beliefs about one's own power and that of others. As Nietzsche points out, the rights of others 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 implies that rights and corresponding duties only arise within a context of shared beliefs about the powers of those involved. Among the consequences of this view, it follows that rights are subject to change as those shared beliefs change. Human beings are acutely sensitive to changes in the perceived relations of power that obtain between themselves and others. That is one of the reasons that rights may come to exist where they did not before, or go out of existence where they had previously existed.

4 Democracy and the state

In the abbreviated genealogy of rights and duties in *Daybreak*, as in the analyses of justice, gratitude and revenge in *Human, All Too Human*, we encounter the logic of requital and exchange along with the conception of the bearers of rights and duties as subjects of both power and the feeling of power. On this basis, Nietzsche offers an account of the emergence of social relations involving justice and of the value of such relations. Just relations and the associated rights and duties that these imply

within civil or political societies therefore can be supposed to have emerged between individuals and groups seeking to express their own power and to achieve a maximal feeling of power. Nietzsche's discussion of the origin of rights and duties does not consider the late modern idea of democratic societies governed by means of laws, where it is assumed not only that all citizens are equal before the law but also that they participate equally in the formation of new laws. However, his conception of rights as recognized and guaranteed degrees of power is *prima facie* applicable to this form of political society. The basic civil and political rights, which form the basis of democratic government, would amount to the 'degrees of power' that all citizens would agree to accord one another. These degrees of power would include those necessary for the conduct of government where this is ultimately a matter of the ways in which citizens collectively exercise coercive power over one another. They would include not only the protection of person and property but also freedoms of speech and opinion, rights to participation in the political process and so on. As such, these rights provide much of the framework of a constitutional democracy.

Considered in the light of contemporary liberal conceptions of justice, the question arises whether it is possible to extend Nietzsche's account of the origins of justice to encompass its modern democratic form. Can we envisage a society in which the affirmation of the equal rights of all citizens is a means to the feeling of power for individuals and the community as a whole? Nietzsche's writings contain tantalizing suggestions that he thought this might be possible. For example, in *On the Genealogy of Morals* he points out that as the power and self-confidence of a community grows, so does its capacity to take lightly the offences of individuals: its penal law becomes more lenient. On this basis, he suggests that

> It is not impossible to imagine society *so conscious of its power* that it could allow itself the noblest luxury available to it, – that of letting its malefactors go *unpunished*. 'What do I care about my parasites' it could say, 'let them live and flourish: I am strong enough for that!' (GM II: 10)

This overcoming of justice in the penal sphere would amount to the abolition of one of the essential functions of the state hitherto, namely the power to punish. Elsewhere, in a long passage in *Human, All Too Human*, devoted to the relationship between religion and government, he imagines a form of society in which all of the essential functions of the state have been taken over by another 'organizing power.' He views the emergence of democracy in European modernity in a historical perspective that enables him to see the fundamental changes in the nature and in the perception of government that this implies. He argues that 'absolute tutelary government' which regarded itself as the guardian of the people would always want religion to continue, at least so long as it fully understood the benefits that religion provides. These include calming the populace and helping them to deal with calamities, whether natural or social, as well as ensuring civil peace. Religion 'quietens the heart of the individual in times of loss, deprivation, fear, distrust' and it also 'guarantees a calm, patient, trusting disposition among the masses' (HH 472). It also ensures the legitimacy of the state itself since without the assistance of priests 'even now no power can become "legitimate": as Napoleon grasped' (HH 472).

By contrast, a very different dynamic takes over once government is no longer considered to stand above and apart from the people, but is regarded merely as an expression of the will of the people. Henceforth, 'the attitude towards religion adopted by the government can only be the same as that adopted towards it by the people' (HH 472). Once the people come to hold a range of diverse and conflicting attitudes towards religion, as well as a plurality of conflicting religious beliefs, the state will have no option but to treat religion as a private matter. The secularization of the state will in turn unleash a dynamic of increased religious diversity on the one hand, and increasing hostility towards religion on the part of the state and its irreligious supporters on the other. Religious groups will turn against the state and become hostile towards it. This will only further increase conflict between the forces of religion and secularism and undermine the 'attitude of veneration and piety' towards the state that hitherto prevailed (HH 472).

Over time, assuming that the enlightened forces opposed to religion prevail, this will lead to decline in the authority of the state and thereby its effectiveness as an institution of government. It will become the site of constant political struggle between contending parties, incapable of embarking on projects that require long-term investment or commitment.

> Finally – one can say this with certainty – distrust of all government, insight into the uselessness and destructiveness of these short-winded struggles will impel men to a quite novel resolve: the resolve to do away with the concept of the state, to the abolition of the distinction between private and public. Private companies will step by step absorb the business of the state: even the most resistant remainder of what was formerly the work of government (for example its activities designed to protect the private person from the private person) will in the long run be taken care of by private contractors. Disregard for and the decline and *death of the state*, the liberation of the private person (I take care not to say: of the individual), is the consequence of the democratic conception of the state; it is in this that its mission lies. (HH 472)

Commentators on this passage have a tendency to stop at this point and to suppose that Nietzsche simply welcomes the decline and death of the state.[7] Yet these are not his final words on the subject. He presents the state in a longer-term historical perspective as merely one among many 'organizing powers' that have held sway for periods in the history of humanity in various parts of the world. Others include the racial clan, the family and the Greek *polis*.[8] How many such organizing powers has humankind not seen die out? Far from sustaining an anti-political view, his long-term historical perspective enables him to envisage a future in which some other form of 'organizing power' will emerge:

> The prudence and self-interest of men are of all their qualities the best developed; if the state is no longer equal to the demands of these forces then the last thing that will ensue is chaos: an invention more suited to their purpose than the state was will gain victory over the state. (HH 472)

Nietzsche is reluctant to speculate on the form that this new invention might take. However, it is worth noting that he is well aware of the distinction between government, as the work of some organizing power, and the state as a particular form of government that presupposes an authority over and apart from the people who are governed. In an earlier passage in *Human, All Too Human*, he noted that historically, the relation of government to the governed was seen as a relation between 'two distinct spheres of power' that resembled a range of other hierarchical relations in society: between teachers and pupils, masters and servants, fathers and families and so on (HH 450). He contrasts this with the 'hitherto unhistorical and arbitrary, if nonetheless more logical' conception of government as 'nothing but an organ of the people' and notes that its widespread acceptance implies change in the nature of these other social relations as well (HH 450).

5 Democracy and justice

Paragraph 275 of *The Wanderer And His Shadow* is one of Nietzsche's more positive assessments of the democratization of Europe. He argues that this process is irresistible because any opposition to it now has to employ 'precisely the means which the democratic idea first placed in everyone's hands,' namely it has to appeal to the judgement and will of those affected by it (WS 275). More importantly, he argues that it is valuable because of the 'cyclopean' institution building that serves to separate European modernity from the Middle Ages. The institutions that accompany the advent of democratic society are described as '*prophylactic measures*' by means of which the foundations of a future, higher form of society are laid 'so that the future can safely build upon them' (WS 275). Nietzsche suggests that by these measures

> We make it henceforth impossible for the fruitful fields of culture again to be destroyed overnight by wild and senseless torrents! We erect stone dams and protective walls against barbarians, against pestilence, against *physical and spiritual enslavement!* (WS 275)

Although he does not spell out precisely the nature of these stone dams and protective walls, we can suppose that they include the fundamental constitutional and legal architecture of a just and democratic society. The experience of episodes in the course of the twentieth century when forms of physical and spiritual enslavement re-emerged because these were not present gives us some indication of what is involved, namely freedoms of conscience and opinion, freedom of association, the protection of person and property and an independent judiciary to ensure that these protections really do amount to a rule of law.

Nietzsche's historical speculations in *Human, All Too Human* about the consequences of democratic institutions for modern society and government leave us with two significant resources with which to address the possibility of a more just and thoroughgoing democracy on the basis of his conception of the will to power and the dynamics that it unleashed in human history. First, he distinguishes between the state, understood as a distinct sphere of power over and above the power of those governed,

and government, understood as the means by which citizens collectively exercise power over one another. Second, he recognizes that the evolution of modern society will inevitably lead to a plurality of religious, philosophical and moral views. In other words, effective and stable democratic government will no longer be able to expect that everyone will have the same opinions and objectives but will have to take into account a plurality of conceptions of the good.

A fundamental principle of modern liberal conceptions of democracy is what we might call an egalitarianism of conceptions of the good. Subject to their respecting the rights of others, individuals have the right to their own conception of the good and the right to live in accordance with their own conception of what makes a life worthwhile or at least endurable. This is often expressed in terms of the idea that individual lives should be lived from the inside. People should not be beholden to external authorities to tell them how to live. Nietzsche endorses the core of this principle when he writes that:

> . . . if 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. (HH 438)

Of course, Nietzsche's own view is that it is not the purpose of all politics to make life endurable for as many as possible. His conception of 'grand politics' aims at something altogether different, namely the higher power and splendour of the human species. In *Daybreak*, he argues that many political and economic affairs 'are not worthy of being the enforced concern of society's most gifted spirits' (D 179). However, acknowledgement that the idea and the pursuit of such grand politics are not for everyone does not make him an enemy of democracy, nor does it preclude his qualified endorsement of the egalitarian principle along the lines above. The egalitarian principle that all should be allowed to live in accordance with their own conception of the good can readily accommodate the requirement that some more enlightened spirits ought to be allowed to abstain from those forms of politics aimed only at making life endurable for as many as possible, subject on all sides to this not causing harm to others. It is the task of the enlightened few to question the prevailing conceptions of the good and to ask whether these serve or hinder the progressive evolution of humankind.

Nietzsche was always critical of the idea, which he attributed to the socialists of his time, that the highest good should stop at the 'desire to create a comfortable life for as many as possible' (HH 235). On his view, the attainment of this comfortable life for as many as possible would 'destroy the soil out of which great intellect and the powerful individual in general grows' (HH 235). The state may well have been a

prudent institution for the protection of individuals against one another and against external threats. However, he argues, if this protective function is perfected too far 'it will in the end enfeeble the individual and, indeed, dissolve him – that is to say, thwart the original purpose of the state in the most thorough way possible' (HH 235). He is therefore opposed to the perfection of the state as a prudential institution, but not to the liberal ideal of a democratic society of autonomous and self-determining individuals. Nothing in his commitment to grand politics prevents him from recognizing the value of the basic democratic right of self-determination for all citizens, including those focused on the perfection of the species. Nothing prevents him endorsing the idea of a just and well-ordered society.

6 Democracy to come

In a passage towards the end of *The Wanderer And His Shadow*, Nietzsche defines democracy as that form of political organization that 'wants to create and guarantee as much independence as possible: independence of opinion, of mode of life and of employment' (WS 293). This complex ideal of independence goes beyond the basic architecture of negative liberties and protections mentioned above. Independence of opinion and mode of life implies a plurality of conceptions of the good and the ability of individuals not only to choose but also to live in accordance with their chosen mode of life. In the view of contemporary liberals such as Rawls, the capacity to freely choose one's mode of employment implies a free market in labour. This threefold sense of independence is an ideal that calls for the right of individual self-determination mentioned above. As such, it serves not only the interest of those socialists and egalitarians concerned to create a comfortable life for as many as possible, but also the interest of those concerned with species perfection, since it provides the conditions under which they can best pursue their intellectual and cultural activities. Nietzsche distinguishes this ideal from the currently existing forms of democratic society by specifying that here he is 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. – Have things really got less perilous because the wellbeing of the nations now rides in this vehicle? (WS 293, emphasis added)

There are, on Nietzsche's view, 'three great enemies of independence in the above-named threefold sense . . . the indigent, the rich and parties' (WS 293). One of the points at issue here is the same as that identified in *Human, All Too Human* 452, namely the relative lack of independence among the mass of citizens. This is hardly surprising when we consider the social circumstances in Europe at this time. There were many who lacked the means to genuine independence of opinion and mode of life, including servants, women and all those who possessed no property. We should not hasten to conclude that, like Kant, Nietzsche would prefer to exclude such dependent persons from full citizenship. On the contrary, his commitment to a conception of a democracy

to come that 'wants to create and guarantee as much independence as possible' might be taken as justification for providing all with access to sufficient wealth and education to ensure such independence.[9] By the same token, we might argue for limitations to the degree to which those who already possess the means to independence – the genuinely rich but also the rulers of political parties – can use their power to deny independence to others. This might lead, for example, to the public financing of elections and limits to campaign contributions on the part of individuals, corporations and other vested interests. It might lead to restrictions on the degree to which political parties control the legislative votes of their members.

Nietzsche was well aware of the ways in which modern democratic society generates the conditions for genuine independence on the part of individuals. For example, he laments the disappearance of subordination, which becomes increasingly impossible as a consequence of the disappearance of belief in unconditional authority and definitive truth. But he also draws attention to the fact that the same conditions mean that 'people subordinate themselves only under conditions, as the result of a mutual compact, thus without prejudice to their own interests' (HH 441). He also recognizes that modern democratic society would lead to the flourishing of a plurality of conceptions of good. This is one of the implications of the independence of mind that he associates with genuine democracy.

Together, these suggest that he could well have supported a conception of just and democratic government that citizens might endorse on the basis of their own moral or political points of view, as though by mutual compact. We can find an intimation of such a conception of government as an expression of the collective power of citizens in the suggestion in *Daybreak* that it is not unthinkable to imagine a future state of affairs in which a criminal

> calls himself to account and publicly dictates his own punishment, in the proud feeling that he is thus honouring the law which he himself has made, that by punishing himself he is exercising his power, the power of the lawgiver. (D 187)

Up to this point, we have considered only part of the framework of a modern constitutional democracy. A further crucial element of its operation is that the exercise of the collective power of the citizens is determined by reasoned deliberation. In other words, there must be some form of public justification not only for the basic institutions and policies of government but also for its day-to-day operations. Decisions are arrived at by offering arguments on matters of public policy, rather than threats or other intrusions upon the sphere of power of fellow citizens. Although he does not consider the giving of reasons in domestic political contexts, Nietzsche is not unaware of the tendency implicit in the democratizing project to rely on the exchange of reasons rather than threats. His speculations on the future effects of the spread of democracy in Europe include the suggestion that this will lead to a European league of nations with reduced powers and revised borders in which decisions will be made by future diplomats, experts in matters of culture, agriculture and communications, who will rely not on armies but on 'arguments and questions of utility' (WS 292). Applied to the domestic political arena, this idea of a nascent European sphere of public reason implies a conception of government based on the exchange of reasons between citizens.

In view of these scattered remarks about the implications of the process of democratization, and Nietzsche's apparent endorsement of an ideal of democracy, it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that we can conceive of a just and democratic society on the basis of his conception of individuals as subjects of power. We can imagine a form of political society based on the equality of citizens *qua* citizens that is more than a mere accommodation between differential spheres of power. We can reconstruct a pathway from citizenship rights understood as mere *modus vivendi* between individuals and state institutions, of vastly different degrees and kinds of power, to rights understood as derived from agreement on a political conception of justice. Given the tendency inherent in democratic society to multiply religious and other moral points of view, such a conception of justice would require an overlapping consensus on fundamental principles of justice and constitutional association. In addition to conceiving of him or herself as a lawgiver, the citizen of such a democracy to come would also have to recognize his or her differences from others. He or she would have to accept that they do not necessarily share a common conception of the good and that what are compelling reasons for one are not necessarily compelling for others. Such a pluralist and democratic society would only be stable if citizens were committed to an ideal of public reason as governing their political relation to other citizens. This would oblige them to argue for or against particular proposals in terms that they could reasonably expect others to endorse. In a democracy dedicated to creating and guaranteeing as much democracy as possible, citizens would achieve a feeling of power by respecting the independence of others. They would honour themselves by honouring the independence and feeling of power of others. Such a conception of citizens as reasonable subjects, endowed with a capacity for justice and a conception of the good, allows us to imagine a conception of justice similar to that found among late modern theorists of constitutional democracy such as Rawls. It allows us to envisage a well-ordered society in which the maintenance of the political relation of citizens to one another is a means to the feeling of power for all.

Notes

1 Herman Siemens suggests that what is at stake for Nietzsche 'is not a few individuals but, in fact, the future of humankind, a concern that has its sources in a positive ethical impulse that fuels Nietzsche's thought from beginning to end: that is, his perfectionist demand that we overcome ourselves as we are, that we do everything to enhance or elevate the human species by extending the range of human possibilities' (Siemens 2009, p. 30).

2 These include *Human, All Too Human* (1878), *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* (1879), *The Wanderer And His Shadow* (1880) and *Daybreak* (1881). Siemens notes two features of Nietzsche's writings during this period that stand in contrast to his overall treatment of democracy: 'first, his positive evaluation of democracy and second, his engagement with democracy as a political phenomenon' (Siemens 2009, p. 23).

3 This appears in published work for the first time in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Z 2, 'Of Self-Overcoming'). It appears in notebooks from 1885, where he asserts that '*This*

world is the will to power – and nothing besides!' (Notebook 38, June–July 1885 [12]). See also 36[31]). Editor's note: reference to 'der Wille nach Macht' can be found in Nietzsche's notebooks as early as 1880. See KSA 8, 6[130].

4 According to Rawls, self-esteem includes a sense of one's own value, as well as 'a confidence in one's own ability, so far as it is within one's power, to fulfill one's intentions' (Rawls 1999, p. 386).

5 *On The Genealogy of Morality* reiterates the claim that cruelty was part of 'the festive joy of the ancients' (GM II: 6), in the context of arguing that, for a long time, the equivalence that underpinned the phenomenon of punishment relied upon 'the pleasure of having the right to exercise power over the powerless without a thought' (GM II: 5).

6 For further discussion of Nietzsche's approach to an immanent historical understanding of the origin of rights, see Patton 2004, pp. 43–61; Patton 2008.

7 Reading this passage alongside his better known characterizations such as the suggestion that 'State is the name for the coldest of all cold monsters' (Z I, 'On the New Idol') leads Lester Hunt to the view that he is an anti-political thinker (Hunt 1985, pp. 454, 458ff). Brian Leiter takes this passage to indicate that Nietzsche believes humanity to be set on a path towards 'a kind of anarchy' (Leiter 2009, p. 2). Herman Siemens suggests that 'the argument of this text is that the concept of popular sovereignty has the effect of destroying the religious aura of the state so that "modern democracy is the historical form of the decay of the state"' (Siemens 2009, p. 25).

8 Nietzsche describes the Greek *polis* as mistrustful of the growth of culture, like every 'organizing political power' (HH 474).

9 Rawls argues that measures of this kind to establish a 'property owning democracy' are required by liberal principles of justice (Rawls 2001, pp. 135–40).

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2

Nietzsche on Truth, Honesty and Responsibility in Politics

Rosalyn Diprose

This chapter elaborates the connection Nietzsche makes between responsibility and honesty for the purposes of explaining the importance of upholding truth in politics. It may be counter-intuitive to turn to Nietzsche for guidance on the problem of truth in politics. After all, he is critical of doctrines of absolute truth (moral and epistemological), his mature epistemology of perspectivism at best renders truth relative to particular sociopolitical and historical contexts, and his explicit references to politics consist, not in a call to cleanse it of lies and corruption, but in debunking all forms of government from the tyrannical to the democratic. That said, Nietzsche's revised concept of responsibility and his idea of the creative, corporeal self provide the basis for a political ontology that relies on a form of 'honesty' in politics. Equally, elaborating this link between responsibility and honesty in politics goes some way towards reconciling what to some is Nietzsche's contradictory approach to truth.[1]

1 The problem of truth in politics

Given the multifarious complaints about the lack of political integrity in contemporary liberal democracies, I begin by clarifying what I mean by the problem of truth in politics. It is not so much the private conduct of individual politicians and their reporting of the same that is at issue in this analysis. Nor am I concerned here with broken election promises (a practice that is often mistakenly equated with lying). The veracity of politicians' reporting of their role in *past* affairs of government is of some concern, especially if it entails not accepting responsibility for decisions or policies that did involve lying at the time they were implemented or that turned out badly in the end. But, such lying by individuals and its morality is only of secondary importance. The political mendacity of primary concern to me here is something more general: what Hannah Arendt has called 'organised lying' characteristic of totalizing government.[2] By 'organised lying' she means public, systematic and sometimes government-sponsored propaganda campaigns, such as those of the National Socialists against the Jews in Germany in the 1930s. More generally we can take 'organised

lying' to mean the way national governments systematically misrepresent a state of affairs, explicitly or by obfuscation, in order to justify a controversial policy that may otherwise go against majority public opinion or that seems to reverse liberal values regarding the just treatment of people. Contemporary examples might include when government representatives implied or claimed the presence of 'Weapons of Mass Destruction' (WMDs) in Iraq in 2003 to justify entering into war with that State or, in Australia, the way senior politicians have implied since early 2001 that asylum seekers are disreputable and possibly dangerous in order to justify policies of mandatory detention and offshore processing of those arriving by boat. This lying on the part of politicians and public officials may be blatant or it may be a disguised, but deliberate, practice of creating a false impression of a situation over a period of time so that the general public takes the impression to be fact. The motivation behind this kind of lying in politics is hard to fathom. Often it seems to be part of a strategy for gaining or maintaining political power and it usually involves nationalist sentiments among political leaders and strong convictions about the need to preserve community 'values,' whatever they may be. Of course, a certain amount of 'lying' of this kind, usually by omission and in the name of 'national security' or judicious protection of privacy, has seemingly always been part and parcel of legitimate democratic government. Martin Jay, in his comprehensive account of *The Virtues of Mendacity: On Lying in Politics* (2010), traces philosophical justifications of political mendacity from Plato's 'noble lie' to Machiavelli's politics of knowing pretence and Hitler's ironic description of the 'big lie' (Jay 2010).[3] Notwithstanding the ubiquity of political mendacity, Arendt, in what Jay considers 'the most profound considerations of the question' of truth in politics produced so far (Jay 2010, p. 157), points to the harmful consequences of some forms of public 'lying' and she argues against the 'noble lie' in any form. Her approach, therefore, is helpful in framing the problem, especially given her stated debt to Nietzsche's philosophy.

Arendt raises the issue of truth in politics in the following terms: while agreeing with Nietzsche that rejection of *moral truth* (or absolutism) is crucial for maintaining the plurality of human existence, she is concerned with how organized political mendacity is as harmful as moral absolutism is to the pluralist fabric of community and to human existence in general. In order to make the case for the importance of maintaining some kind of truth in politics, Arendt argues for understanding 'political action' ontologically rather than instrumentally (i.e. 'in terms of means-end category') and she distinguishes between 'rational' (or moral) truth and 'factual truth' (1993, p. 230). '*Rational' truth* is moral truth of Plato's sort, which involves individual 'thinking' (an internal dialogue with oneself) that generates principles for the conduct of one's life (ibid.).[4] This kind of truth has no place in politics (or collective life) because imposing such individually-generated principles on the conduct of others would involve force. By *politics* Arendt means public life, which for her is characterized by community of 'potentiality' and plurality generated through public dialogue ('speech') and action (1998, pp. 175–81, 199–207). '*Factual' truth*, in contrast to rational or moral truth, 'is political by nature' (Arendt 1993, p. 238) – it is truth generated through the witnessing and reporting of events within the public realm of communal speech and action. Factual truth is subject to ongoing communal debate and agreement (Arendt 1972, p. 6).

While facts are open to interpretation and perspectival embellishment, there is nevertheless, according to Arendt, a bedrock of facts built up over time upon which interpretation and political community are based. So, it is not 'rational' (moral) truth that is at stake in organized lying because moral truth is a private matter. Rather it is 'factual truth,' and the communal fabric that supports it and vice versa, that is damaged by organized lying in politics: 'the result of a consistent and total substitution of lies for factual truth is . . . that the sense by which we take our bearings in the real world – and the category of truth vs. falsehood is among the mental means to this end – is being destroyed' (Arendt 1993, p. 257). Organized lying destroys the plurality of the public sphere, the social fabric of togetherness, and it disorientates the individuals who are embedded in that sphere.

Nietzsche would not hold to Arendt's definition and defence of 'factual truth.' At least, he would reject the idea of a bedrock of pure fact, uncontaminated by moral evaluation and interpretation. For Nietzsche, there is no '"contemplation without interest" (which is a nonsensical absurdity)' (GM III: 12) and 'perspectivity' is the 'basic condition of all life' (BGE P).[5] Yet, for all his dismissing of truth as 'error' and 'dissimulation,' Nietzsche values 'honesty' and is aware of the harm done to community by some kinds of lying. What I will argue is that Nietzsche, like Arendt, objects to what she calls 'organised lying' in politics, but that he would consider this kind of lying to consist, not so much in misrepresenting or denying 'factual truth,' but in perpetuating one perspective dogmatically in the form of moral 'truth.' This points to a different political ontology arising from Nietzsche's perspectivism and from his notion of the corporeal self, a political ontology that includes his revised concepts of responsibility and honesty. In drawing out these ideas from Nietzsche's philosophy I aim to show how he addresses the issue of truth in politics without resorting to the distinctions between ethics and politics, moral truth and factual truth that underscore Arendt's account.

2 From truth to a political ontology of perspectival honesty

An alternative political ontology arises from Nietzsche's idea that perspectivity, rather than a bedrock of facts, is the fundamental condition of life. In addressing what political ontology this might be, I begin from Daniel Conway's suggestion that Nietzsche's political thinking returns us to 'the very ground of politics itself' (Conway 1997, p. 2). While Conway views this ground to be the founding question of politics – 'what ought humankind become?' (ibid., p. 3) – I take the ground of politics to be the more fundamental ontological question of the very nature of the human existence that politics addresses. Specifically I start where, for Nietzsche, the political and the epistemological intersect: at the level of human *experience* of social and material worlds and Nietzsche's revisions of notions of experience.

The first point to note about Nietzsche's claim that perspectivity is a condition of life, is that he *does not abandon truth* with this claim. Rather, as early as 'On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense' he suggests that truth is culturally specific, tied to language, and is about denoting perceptual experience rather than things or events themselves. Even though Nietzsche says here that truth is 'a uniformly valid and

binding designation . . . invented for things' (OTL, p. 81; KSA 1, p. 877), if we take into consideration his account in 'On Truth and Lies . . .' of the metaphoric transfer of a nerve stimulus into an imagistic impression and from the image into a word, the word is a designation invented for a *perceptual experience*, rather than for a thing (OTL, p. 82; KSA 1, p. 879; and also see BGE 268). Moreover, a word evolves into a concept through repetition and common usage and it takes on the status of truth when the history of its invention is forgotten.

From his early work Nietzsche implicitly associates this fabricated truth with the *experience of politics* where politics is understood in its general sense of activities and decision-making processes comprising society and public life, including those of government and public institutions geared towards the organization of society.[6] Even though truth is a fabrication, it plays a crucial social role in binding us to public life, to a society of shared values and a world view. What binds us to truth, says Nietzsche, are the 'pleasant, life-preserving consequences of truth' (OTL, p. 81; KSA 1, p. 878). Truth is more about the necessity of sociality than it is about 'adequate expression: otherwise there would not be so many languages' (OTL, p. 82; KSA 1, p. 879). Truth is relative, not to an individual but to the concepts or linguistic conventions that a culture embodies through its members, their activities and institutions. Language gives us truth and a world by facilitating understanding between members of a social group, by giving a measure of common meaning to experience (BGE 268). And linguistic concepts are 'conventional fictions for the purpose of designation and communication – *not* for explanation' (BGE 21).

In his later accounts of the relation between truth and the sociopolitical existence, Nietzsche dispenses with the naïve idea, apparent in 'On Truth and Lies in a Non-moral Sense,' that truth is a kind of social contract constituted by explicit agreement between individuals, as if individuals have a choice whether to agree with convention or to get carried away by their own intuitive first impressions. In his later work Nietzsche seems to grant that all experience is already informed by linguistic concepts and any moral values and social norms these carry; there is no 'pure' experience. And, in another departure from 'On Truth and Lies. . .,' the degree to which convention can be disrupted hinges on factors other than 'intuition.' I will address this issue of breaking with convention shortly. What emerges more strongly in Nietzsche's later perspectivism, and why he would reject Arendt's distinction between 'rational' (moral) and 'factual' truth, is the idea that, while every experience is an interpretation, every interpretation is also an *evaluation*. Moral norms and their causal interpretations of pleasures and pains are incorporated through discipline, punishment and habit (e.g. GM II: 3 and TI 'Four Great Errors' 4). That cultural convention includes 'valuations' that are 'expressions of the needs of a community' (GS 116) and that these valuations precede and inform experience is why Nietzsche says in his later work, not only that 'everything of which we become conscious is arranged, simplified, schematized, interpreted through and through' (WP 477; KSA 13, 11 [113]), but also that '[a]ll experiences are moral experiences even in the realm of sense perception' (GS 114).

Unlike Arendt then, Nietzsche is not interested in a politics that would preserve what is taken as 'factual truth' – interpretations subjected to public witness and debate

– because, for him, this includes the *conventions* that are embedded in and necessary to socially-bound (shared) experience in the manner just discussed. Moreover, for Nietzsche, once an action or experience is raised to the level of consciousness and public debate, or to what Arendt would call communal speech and action, it is deprived of its character of being 'incomparably personal, unique' (GS 354). On the other hand, Nietzsche is not really troubled by the way we necessarily reproduce convention to some extent in our perceptions and their communication. Yet he would oppose the public propaganda campaigns with the same vehemence as Arendt, but for different reasons. What is of more concern to him is moral *dogmatism* in any form and that includes activities where a government, a ruler or the 'herd' presents one perspective as universal and the only possibility. As I will go on to argue, Nietzsche's political ontology allows for truth in the form of 'honesty' while rejecting epistemological and moral dogmatism and absolutism that disallows the expression of uniqueness and creativity. This idea of 'honesty' involves granting the influence of convention on one's perceptual experience while also avoiding dogmatism.

Nietzsche often mentions 'honesty' and 'good conscience' together approvingly and at the same time as denouncing dogmatism (e.g. GM III: 25; BGE 5). In unravelling what he means by 'honesty' it is important to note, first, that with Nietzsche's perspectivism, even though we incorporate moral norms and habitual perspectives by virtue of belonging to a particular culture, there is essentially a *multiplicity* of different perspectives, even within the same culture (e.g. BGE 374). This is not because we have different views of the same reality. My account so far should indicate that, for Nietzsche, there is no distinction between reality and a perspective. Rather, as we perceive and live through our reality we are in the process of transforming its meaning and value such that every experience carries an element of novelty. I will return to the politics of this creativity that underscores plurality. The second point to note in addressing what Nietzsche means by 'honesty' is that one's perspective is *corporeal and affective*. Holding a perspective is not about *representing* the meaning of one's experience, either to oneself or to others. Instead, the meaning of the experience is expressed as it is experienced. Not that a perspective is prior to culture, but its expression is at once cultural *and* natural, that is, it is fabricated but embodied. This inseparability of nature and culture, materiality and ideality, is why Nietzsche talks of the 'reality' of our 'drives and passions' while defining 'thinking' as 'the relationship of these drives to one another' (BGE 36). That perspectives are fabricated but also corporeal and affective is also why he describes philosophy and the generation of knowledge in terms of an 'involuntary and unconscious memoir' whereby one's values and 'morality' are interpreted into the world as one's 'drives' are thereby reordered (BGE 6). In other words, Nietzsche seems to locate the possibility of creativity or the disruption and transformation of perspectives in the corporeal and affective dimension of perspectivity.

'Honesty' then, for Nietzsche, seems to consist in expressing what one believes to be true but doing this in 'good conscience,' that is, in full recognition and acknowledgement that this truth is perspectival, a fabrication partly inherited from a historical and cultural context, but also involving an element of uniqueness, 'a desire of the heart sifted and made abstract'; it is *my* memoir, *my* 'prejudice,' my truth that is, at

the same time, being inspired beyond itself (BGE 5). After all, asks Nietzsche, is 'living not valuating' and, hence, a matter of 'preferring, being unjust, being limited, wanting to be different?' (BGE 9). This idea of honesty makes sense of Nietzsche's occasional reference to a new 'objectivity,' understood as:

> the ability *to control* one's Pro and Con and to dispose of them, so that one knows how to employ a variety of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge. [. . .T]he *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity," be. (GM III: 12)

This 'objectivity' is not about mixing as many various perspectives as possible to reach agreement about the 'thing.' That would not only introduce the distinction between perspective and the thing-in-itself that Nietzsche explicitly rejects, but also it would be to feign disinterest, which Nietzsche explicitly rejects in the same passage. 'Objectivity,' rather, is about embracing the interestedness and desire inherent in my perspective, taking up the creative, dynamic plasticity of perspectivity, and taking this to the limit to open up new perspectives.

Nietzsche explicitly extends this ideal of 'honesty' and 'objectivity' to politics in *Beyond Good and Evil* #211: The art of perceiving with 'manifold eyes and a manifold conscience,' and celebrating this, is the precondition to enacting the 'duty' of 'creat[ing] values,' not just in science, but also in the 'realm of *logic* or of *politics* (morals) or of *art*' (BGE 211). Creating values in politics is not about making up claims that devalue particular groups of people, nation-states or political opponents in order to justify policies that are either unpopular or that reverse ethical norms. Creating values in politics is about subjecting 'everything that is or has been,' especially perspectives that have settled as truths, to thoroughgoing critique. Now, it is significant that Nietzsche equates politics with morality in this passage – the duty of revaluation is extended to 'politics (morality)' (ibid.). In equating the two he is not suggesting that politics does or should uphold a moral code; on the contrary, he is proposing that politics is necessarily value-bound. Hence, honesty in politics, as with honesty in epistemology, should not work against this value-laden and perspectival aspect of social life, but against self-deception and dogmatism. Nietzsche's 'great method of knowing' (which he eventually calls 'genealogy') consists in embracing the revelation that there are 'only perspectival evaluations' combined with attentively 'feeling' the many contradictions or 'pros and cons' that one embodies. This is the means by which the 'wisest' raise themselves up 'to justice – to comprehension beyond the valuation of good and evil' (WP 259; KSA 11, 26 [119]). And, for Nietzsche, this justice in the sociopolitical realm is the same as justice in the epistemological and interpersonal realms: Justice is about all relevant parties having a say in the construction and exchange of evaluations rather than applying a fixed, universal law equally to all (e.g. GM II: 8).

In contrast to the pluralist 'objectivity' of perspectivism, *dogmatism in politics* (as in morality and epistemology) involves taking one perspective as absolute truth and/or universalizing one perspective and imposing it on all. In *Human, All Too Human* #25 Nietzsche claims it is 'thoroughly undesirable that all men act identically' and humanity will destroy 'itself by such a conscious overall government.' Moreover, if having similar

'value standards' rather than perspectivism were a '*fundamental principle of society*,' this would be 'the will to the *denial* of life' (BGE 259). Similarly, Nietzsche's well-known objections to democracy and its doctrine of equality are primarily based on his rejection of tenet that democracy inherits from Christianity (BGE 202): 'what is good and right for one is good for all' (e.g. BGE 228). In *On the Genealogy of Morals* he goes so far as to suggest that sociopolitical organization itself, the desire to congregate in communities, arises from an inability to cope alone with the feelings of contradictory drives and their evaluations (e.g. GM II: 18). 'Political organization' is at its most dishonest if its *raison d'ĕtre* becomes the protection of itself against the free reign of these multiple, contradictory 'instincts' (GM II: 16).

Dogmatism is one thing, but what Nietzsche particularly deplores in politics is the hypocrisy and dishonesty of political leaders cloaking a particular tablet of values in the 'will of the people' as if it were shared (D 189). It seems to be precisely on these grounds that Nietzsche objects to nationalism, to statesmen and states narrowing 'taste' to the 'national' by whipping up nationalist sentiments in the populace (BGE 241).[7] This kind of politics involves turning expressions of novelty into a flaw; it converts the 'desire to stand aside into a stigma'; and it turns any 'secret infiniteness into a fault,' where the 'new infinite' refers to 'infinite interpretations' (GS 374). Dogmatic politics devalues 'heartfelt sentiments' and reverses the 'conscience' of such sentiments (BGE 241). Nietzsche finds the origins of racism, including against the Jews, in this nationalism and similar modes of political repression of perspectivity (e.g. HH 475; GS 377; BGE 242).[8] Moreover, he suggests that the resultant homogenization within democratic nation states deprives the individual of their capacity to create values (e.g. Z I: 11 'On the New Idol') and this climate of dependence provides ripe conditions for the emergence of 'tyrants' who preside over a bureaucratic form of 'slavery' (BGE 242).

To reiterate what political dogmatism has to do with truth: central to the kind of 'herd organization' that upholds nationalism and suppresses multiplicity and the 'feeling of life' is the '*dishonest mendaciousness*' with which I began (GM III: 19). In the third essay of *On The Genealogy of Morals* #19, Nietzsche differentiates between the honest and dishonest lie. Both involve political repression of affective multifarious interpretations. The difference is that the 'honest' political liar is aware that he/she is pushing one perspective as truth and Nietzsche cites Plato as the exemplar (GM III: 19).[9] By the 'dishonest' liar, Nietzsche seems to mean those who have simply internalized convention without awareness ('they are one and all moralized to the very depths') such that they blindly accept their society's values without question (ibid.). It is to the different kinds of lying involved in nationalistic or homogenizing democratic politics that I now turn before also considering Nietzsche's 'solution' to political mendacity.

3 From political mendacity to genuine responsibility

Telling the truth matters in public life not simply because it sets the record straight, but because 'honesty' is central to the preservation of pluralism and perspectivity in

the self and in culture. On Nietzsche's model of truth, the error of dogmatic politics, including nationalism, is not so much that it is based on false perceptions and evaluations, but that it is based on the belief that these perceptions belong to a truth that is 'found' rather than fabricated and that this truth is universal and eternal rather than socially and historically specific (e.g. HH 11). To build a way of life upon the basis of the assumption that truth is found, eternal and universal involves lying. But not all lying is a problem for Nietzsche. It is the lying that characterizes hypocritical, totalizing and dogmatic politics that is harmful. When such lying becomes widespread in public affairs (or becomes 'organized,' to use Arendt's terminology) and when this lying includes demonizing minority or 'foreign' ways of life, it indicates the degree to which plurality is being suppressed.

On the basis of a Nietzschean model of truth, there are three kinds of lying, two of which he addresses in 'On Truth and Lies. . . .'[10] The first is unconscious lying 'according to fixed convention' (OTL, p. 84; KSA 1, p. 881; see also BGE 192). This kind of lying is central to all forms of truth. Being bound to truth involves lying in the sense already discussed – where convention informs experience by universalizing different perceptions under a single concept and giving the expressed perception the status of truth involves forgetting that truth is constructed. But insofar as this kind of lying is 'unconscious,' it may actually be 'honest' although, if the truth-claim denies other perspectives then it would be honesty without 'good conscience.' Nevertheless, this kind of lying proceeds through conventions that one has inherited and if preservation of social life is the consequence of truth then, Nietzsche concedes, one would have a social duty to lie unconsciously in this way to some extent (OTL, p. 84; KSA 1, p. 881), providing public life remains open to critique. This caveat points to the second kind of lying: 'misus[ing] fixed conventions by means of arbitrary substitutions or reversals of names' (OTL, p. 81; KSA 1, pp. 877–8). Again this countering of convention can be 'honest,' being a matter of perceiving things differently to the majority because one's experience is informed by different conventions or is in some other way uncommon. The person who can break with customary lying (i.e. lying according to convention) and admit the unique and 'uncommon experience' would be a source of cultural renewal (BGE 192). The views of dissenting citizens protesting the treatment of asylum seekers or whistle-blowers reporting on the lack of evidence of WMDs in Iraq, would fall under this kind of 'lying' insofar as the views they are disputing with their counter-perspectives are held up as 'truth' (convention). Or misuse of convention may be deliberate misreporting of one's experience.

The third kind of lying is the 'dishonest mendacity' of dogmatism that Nietzsche targets assiduously in his later work: this is wilful lying in order to preserve one set of values as universally true. With regard to politics, this is a kind of lying and dishonesty perpetuated by governments, even those democratically elected, that wish to push policies that favour and perpetuate one way of life, one set of values, or the 'common good.' But precisely because the good is not common, truth is not universal and eternal, such 'dishonest mendacity' is as destructive of culture and society as any 'misuse of convention' or the expression of 'uncommon experience.' Celebrating the perspectivity of life, that is, expressing 'uncommon experience,' undermines nationalism and the values upheld by a totalizing government. But dishonest mendacity, wilful lying in the

service of upholding a myth of absolute truth, erodes the pluralism and potentiality that should characterize a robust democracy. Nietzsche finds this kind of lying far more harmful, 'life-denying,' and nihilistic than the destabilization brought about by expressing unique and uncommon experience. The impact of political mendacity on those who are reviled, demonized and excluded by the perspective or policies that this lying serves to uphold is perhaps obvious. Less obvious, but of particular interest to Nietzsche, is the impact of dishonest mendacity on the culture and/or life of those who practice it.

The life-denying impact of political mendacity lies in the way that the dogmatic morality and epistemology it serves weakens the cultural fabric by dampening the creativity and cultural innovation inherent to perspectivity. And this brings us to Nietzsche's 'solution' to dishonest politics: his understanding of how perspectivity transforms convention, that is, his ideas of the historicity of the self and genuine *responsibility*.[11] Nietzsche's overarching claim about the impact of dogmatism is that it is destructive because it forecloses genuine responsibility and, with this, futurity. First, the issue of futurity, or what Arendt might refer to as the 'potentiality' of public collective life. Any set of ideas or 'legal order thought of as sovereign and universal . . . would be a principle hostile to life, an agent of the dissolution and destruction of man, an attempt to assassinate the future of man' (GM II: 11).[12] The 'last man,' for example, is the embodiment of a single socially prescribed 'good,' a national identity for instance, and, as such, is the future actualized as a lie ('Good men never speak the truth').[13] But, if such an ideal could be realized, those who embody it would be 'unable to *create*,' unable to respond to elements and influences of concrete existence, including its 'terrible aspects,' in a way that keeps the self and culture open to a different future (EH 'Why I am Destiny' 4). As I have argued elsewhere, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* III 'On the Vision and the Riddle,' Nietzsche ties the revaluation of value to futurity by harnessing self-overcoming to a particular notion of temporality (Diprose 2008). Through his idea of the 'moment' Nietzsche proposes a self-relation involving a kind of temporality where the self neither escapes the past (which would imply linear time) nor simply repeats it (cyclic time). Instead, in any experience, the self *reinterprets* the past that constitutes the present in such a way as to open a (contradictory) future as *potential* rather than as a predetermined actuality. This process of reinterpretation or revaluation involves the dual operation of memory and forgetting that Nietzsche first outlined in his *Untimely Meditation* 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life' and that culminates in his notion of genealogy. But this idea of revaluation of value that keeps the future open is most graphically encapsulated in Nietzsche's figure of genuine responsibility, which, as I go on to argue, underscores the need for honesty in politics.[14]

Nietzsche's figure of the sovereign individual who is genuinely responsible is also an image of pure 'honesty' and 'good conscience.' It is an ideal, therefore, that points to what kind of politics might be preferable to the nationalism and homogenizing democracy that relies on political mendacity and hypocrisy. In outlining his idea of responsibility, Nietzsche debunks the way Kant ties conscience and moral judgement to practical reason (e.g. in GS 335) and, like Arendt, he refutes any moral theory that bases conscience on existing moral norms or laws (GM II: 2). In the second essay of

On the Genealogy of Morals Nietzsche describes the genuinely responsible sovereign individual as unique ('like only to himself'), having his own measure of value, who is thus 'autonomous' and 'liberated again from the morality of custom,' and in whom a consciousness of this power and freedom has 'become flesh' (GM II: 2). Conscience (the capacity to judge the difference between right and wrong *for oneself*) consists in this 'proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom' (ibid.). This 'good conscience' is linked to the experience of *futurity*, by which I mean the condition of being caught between a past and an undetermined and open future. And this experience of futurity rests on the way that the *process* of revaluation of value (rather than one's own set of revalued values or norms) has become flesh. Even though this individual will have incorporated cultural conventions and traditional values through punishment and habit, the capacity to critique and transform these values rests on what I have elsewhere described as 'somatic reflexivity' – a corporeal, affective self-relation that critically revises the values and norms that constitute it (Diprose, 2008).[15] This constitutive and transformative relation between a self and social norms involves feeling, or the harnessing of affect into unique action and critical thought (genealogy). The sovereign individual is irresponsible in the sense that she will not necessarily uphold a moral code or political ideals of national identity that would secure a particular future as they shape her. But she is responsible in the sense that, in responding to, and either affirming or contesting, those norms, she sacrifices an enduring image of herself to keep the future open; she 'goes under' while taking responsibility for her destiny.

Nietzsche's revised idea of responsibility is not without its problems. For instance, it is for the most part aggressively individualistic – there is no obvious limit to the expansionism that comes of this operation of will to power. Nevertheless, a politics of 'expanded responsibility' does seem to be Nietzsche's preferred solution to the racism, nihilism and cultural stagnation that accompanies democratic nationalism and the mendacity that upholds it. He is clear that the overriding duty of critiquing existing 'truths' and creating values is not a task confined to epistemology and morality. In *Ecce Homo*, for instance, he puts the '*revaluation of all value*' at the core of his concept of '*great politics*': the 'concept of politics will have merged entirely with the war of spirits; all power structures of the old society will have been exploded – all of them based on lies' (EH 'Why I am Destiny' 1). Admittedly the aggression returns in the way Nietzsche equates 'great politics' with 'war' (ibid.) and in describing these philosophers of the future as '*commanders and law-givers*' (BGE 211). Still, he cannot mean a lawgiver of the tyrannical kind who would impose his/her will and truth upon all – this would contradict everything else he says about truth, honesty and perspectivity. He clarifies the point in *Beyond Good and Evil* #212 where he ponders how far philosophers of the future could extend their responsibility. The philosopher of the future:

> would be compelled to see the greatness in man, the concept of "greatness", precisely in his speciousness and multiplicity, in his wholeness in diversity: he would determine value and rank according to how much and how many things one could endure and take upon oneself, how *far* one could extend one's responsibility. (BGE 212)

Providing the expansionist rhetoric that accompanies Nietzsche's revised idea of politics is not an essential condition, the ideals of responsibility and honesty that underscore it provide a welcome diagnosis of, and alternative to, the political mendacity that seems endemic in some contemporary liberal democracies.

In conclusion, there are two further points to be made in considering 'how far one could extend one's responsibility' in politics. The first is that Nietzsche's criticisms of political hypocrisy apply equally well to a specific kind of lying in politics that is all too familiar in the contemporary world: where governments and political leaders retrospectively claim ignorance of the reality of a past situation after the consequences of the policies they implemented through political mendacity have turned out badly (e.g. we didn't know there weren't any WMDs in Iraq). On Nietzsche's account, this claim of ignorance is tantamount to irresponsibility in the sense that it *disavows* the judgments and evaluations that underscored the policy or rhetoric that the claimant seemed to push so stridently at the time. The second concluding point is about the personal responsibility of citizens who embrace (or at least tolerate) the 'organized lying' and dishonesty of political leaders of totalizing governments. Nietzsche shows much insight about this. He is just as disdainful of those who blame the 'system' when things turn out badly as he is of the political leader who cloaks his 'crimes in the good conscience of his people' (D 189). If citizens can be so greatly deceived by dishonest dogmatic government, says Nietzsche, it is because 'they are always *seeking* a deceiver,' they desire leaders who can stimulate their senses and 'intoxicate' (D 188). Nietzsche describes this 'mob taste' in terms of a populace that willingly obeys because they lack responsibility themselves. They enthusiastically accept the falsehoods of a dogmatic and totalizing government because they lack or abdicate the capacity to evaluate and judge right and wrong for themselves. Political responsibility is intertwined with personal responsibility for Nietzsche, not only in the sense that dishonest and dogmatic government can have a flow-on effect of producing dishonest and dogmatic citizens, but also, conversely, a citizenry of a democratic society that willingly abdicates responsibility for evaluation and critique gets the government that it deserves.

Notes

1 To do this I leave aside the empiricist and cognitivist approach taken to Nietzsche's epistemology in the wake of Maudemarie Clark's argument, in *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (1990), that Nietzsche perspectivism does not entail 'falsificationism'. For a recent critical assessment of this approach to Nietzsche's epistemology see R. Lanier Anderson (2005). The alternative approach I take here acknowledges the relationship between Nietzsche's epistemology and his revisionist ontology, especially his revised notion of self. See, for instance, Tracy Strong's influential discussion of the importance of heeding this connection (Strong 1985). Acknowledging the relation between epistemology and ontology reveals that Nietzsche is neither an empiricist nor a cognitivist and to read his perspectivism in that way is to miss too much of his thinking. Proponents of this 'holistic' approach to reading Nietzsche are too many and varied to mention, but particularly salient for the analysis here is Sarah Kofman's account of Nietzsche's idea of truth as involving

corporeally-based metaphoric activity (Kofman 1993, especially ch. III). Equally, commentators who have provided rich readings of Nietzsche's political philosophy argue that his approach to politics is inseparable from his understanding of truth, history, and/or culture (Ansell-Pearson 1994, pp. 1–3, for example).

2 Arendt makes this her focus in two papers: 'Truth in Politics' (1967), reprinted as chapter 7 of *Between Past and Future* (Arendt 1993); and 'Lying in Politics: Reflections on the Pentagon Papers' (1969) published in *Crisis of the Republic* (Arendt 1972).

3 As Jay points out, while the 'big lie' is usually identified with Nazi propaganda against Jews, it was actually a term Hitler used when accusing Jews and others of claiming, falsely in Hitler's opinion, that Germany lost WWI 'in the field' rather than because of what Hitler saw as treasonous domestic politics (Jay 2010, p. 2).

4 For a detailed discussion of Arendt's distinction between individual thinking and public action see Dana R. Villa's 'Thinking and Judging', Chapter 4 of *Politics, Philosophy, Terror* (Villa 1999).

5 When quoting from Nietzsche's works I use translations by Walter Kaufmann for EH, GM, GS and Z; I use translations by R. J. Hollingdale for BGE, D and TI; and I use Marion Faber and Stephen Lehmann's translation of HH (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984). While page references to quotes from Nietzsche's unpublished notes and essays are to the KGW or KSA, I use David Breazeale's translation of 'On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense' (published in *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979) and Kaufmann and Hollingdale's translations of Nietzsche's notebooks compiled under the title *Will to Power* (New York: Vintage, 1968).

6 He makes this connection between truth (and lies) and politics explicitly in his later work. In EH 'Why I am so Clever' #10, for instance, he states: 'All the problems of politics, of social organization, and of education have been falsified through and through', although the point he goes on to make there is different from the general point I am making here.

7 Robert Gooding-Williams provides an interesting analysis of Nietzsche's approach to Nationalism that is consistent with, although beyond the scope of, my argument here (see Gooding-Williams 2001, especially ch. 3). Gooding-Williams' focus is on BT and Z and he argues that the Dionysian experience of 'going under', as per his reading of Z, amounts to a process of 'passionate' value-creation that replaces the national body-politic as the medium of cultural formation (p. 102).

8 For a more detailed reading of Nietzsche's discussion of nationalism and European politics in the chapter of BGE entitled 'Peoples and Fatherlands' see Laurence Lampert 1999.

9 Plato discusses 'medicinal lying' in the *Republic* 382a–e and 459d–60c and what is called the 'noble lie' in the *Republic* 414b–15c.

10 Elsewhere I have discussed in more detail Nietzsche's approach to lying in these terms, but in relation to the specifics of decolonization and Australian indigenous politics (Diprose 2002, ch. 8).

11 Some of what I go on to say in discussing Nietzsche's idea of responsibility is borrowed from a more detailed comparative analysis in Diprose 2008.

12 Similarly, those that embody a pre-ordained future prevail 'at the expense of the future'; in sacrificing 'the future to *themselves* – they sacrifice all man's future' (EH 'Why I am a Destiny' 4).

13 Nietzsche describes the 'last man' in Z, especially the Prologue, and as a summary in EH 'Why I am a Destiny' 4.

14 In her interesting account of 'Nietzsche and the recovery of responsibility', Bonnie Honig, while similarly linking responsibility to the transformative power of revaluation of value, goes further than I would in emphasizing the self-affirmative response to the idea of 'eternal recurrence', which she sees as central to Nietzsche's 'new responsibility' (Honig 1993, ch. 3).

15 This is one way to understand 'will to power'. It is also consistent with Nietzsche's descriptions of the contradictory and competing drives that make up the bodily self (e.g. in BGE 19).

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3

Nietzsche, Naturalism and Law

Peter R. Sedgwick

1 Nietzsche as law's enemy: Vining and Habermas

Law, Joseph Vining comments, is all too often akin to 'the ambient love of a parent' or the presence of air (Vining 1995, p. 3). If asked to compile an overview of the nature of the world they dwell in, adored child and breathing person alike generally omit love and air from their respective accountings. Love and air are things which are never mere 'things': they are vital to the well-being of person and child. Yet, these essentials are often unacknowledged. 'Law is like these,' Vining argues. It is something hidden, yet it facilitates sense, for it is the invisible presupposition at work in any discussion of whatever else there is; the 'taken for granted' component of our mundane, everyday, meaning-rich world:

> Literary and philosophic schools that find in a phrase of Rimbaud or Wallace Stevens or a cry of Nietzsche or Kierkegaard the turning point in Western thought give no thought to law. Physicists who see now only a tiny gap between their symbolic systems and a Theory of Everything, biologists who place man among the fossils, economists who plan the future, give no thought to law. [. . . It is . . .] the great overlooked fact in modern thought. (Vining 1995, p. 3)

Vining argues that we generally neither notice law nor realize its centrality to our identity. Worse still, we even suffer from the delusion that other things, very significant things, can be considered in a manner safely isolated from law. The physicist who talks of 'laws of nature' does so with little thought to the legal genealogy that winds its way through the scientific idiom of speech; the poetic craving for transcendence cannot convincingly claim to draw its inspiration from a realm not already immersed in the language of law, for language (the medium of poetry) is itself already permeated by a sense of the lawful. The same goes for sociology, which 'assumes law and cannot replace it. Like economics and political science, sociology and even anthropology are laden with legal terms that have no meaning except as writer and reader shift to the understandings involved in the exercise of legal method' (Vining 1995, p. 224). Law is invisible precisely to the extent that we unquestioningly take it as a given, and it is taken as given precisely because it is an essential condition of our world. What would

it mean to assume a world *without law*? To ask such a question, Vining holds, is to embark upon the path towards law's 'true acknowledgement,' one that 'would threaten radical change' hitherto undreamt. One important feature of this radicalism would be that it would force upon us the need to rethink commonly separated categories of thought and experience: 'Law, philosophy of mind and metaphysics are interwoven. They are dependent, not independent of one another' (Vining 1995, p. 4). The fact of law (that we live in a world permeated by the thought of law; that we behave in accord with such thought constantly and unthinkingly) has implications for our understanding of mind. In short, to ask what law is means to engage with the matter of what it means for us to be persons.

Vining's conjoining of questions of law, mind and metaphysics is motivated by an anxiety about two contending but related tendencies at work in secular modernity: positivism and historicism. Positivism reduces meaning to a methodology that mimics the example of the empirical sciences in a simplistic and reductive way. For the positivist, legal systems are webs of convention defined primarily by their internal consistency. Any consideration of such conventions is regarded as being independent of their merit. The consequence of this is positivism's driving of a wedge between matters of fact concerning legality and matters of metaphysical and ethical import.[1] Vining calls historicism 'positivism's enemy' (Vining 1995, p. 4).[2] But the two are nevertheless close kin, for 'historicists, [are] the children of science' (Vining 1995, p. 161), no less than positivists. The historicist approach likewise undermines the possibility of discussing ethical content in the thought of law. Historicism's contention is that cultural and economic conditions constitute the self. In what Vining regards as its most extreme forms, those of 'dialectical materialism' and postmodernism, the historicist tendency enacts 'the leaching of the person away into history' (Vining 1995, p. 208): 'Modern (or postmodern) historicism, with its ancient roots in stoicism and courage despite despair, dissolves the self into process – linguistic, cultural, social, economic, political – denies the self, and denies the possibility of authority because, it is said, there is no foundation' (Vining 1995, p. 161). Historicism is thus little more than a variant of positivism. Against this, Vining argues for a view that seeks to ground law in a realm of significance generated not out of the relations between material entities but in the hermeneutics of an engagement of persons in search of authority. The self is not a malleable and passive material whose significance is exhausted by empirical or historical observation. Selfhood presupposes self-interpretation. Self-interpretation springs from a world of communal relations that stands out from nature and mere things. Community, through interpretation, constitutes the self and endows it with the ability to ponder the nature of authority. The acknowledgement of authority thereby intimates a sense whose meaning can only be grasped by transcending a contemporary understanding increasingly trapped within metaphors of materiality (see Vining 1995, p. 161). The dominant instrumentalist tendency of modern thought, which is marked by an obsession with thing-hood, categories and definitions, cannot, on this account, adequately think the self because it has divested itself of the means of doing so. Selfhood, Vining urges, must be thought in the light of a conception of law as a practice of self-disclosure, one in which it comes to light as recognition,

commitment and obedience to a mutually inhabited space of community, a space in which authority is lived rather than positivistically 'observed.'

Positivism has its sources. Vining seeks to unearth them. One is Nietzsche:

> *A Source of Positivism*. Nietzsche was no lawyer. Law's authority, he proclaims, is in its pure imperative, its *non* sense. A book of law does not refer to reasons, "for if it did so, it would lose its tone of command – the 'Thou shalt' which enforces its obedience; and this is the heart of the matter. . . . The authority of law is established on the twofold principle: God gave it, our ancestors lived it".
>
> No lawyer can point to an *it*. (Vining 1995, p. 241)

This is Nietzsche conceived as outsider and law's enemy. Like the legal positivist whom he is said to prefigure, Nietzsche fails to grasp the meaning of law in terms of a search for the reasons and justifications underlying authority. Law understood as pure command, as Nietzsche appears to be envisioning it (the text in question is §57 of *The Antichrist* (see Nietzsche 1976a)), is an empty structure evacuated of the sense that energizes it. As pure command, law is sheer senselessness and unbridled force; a thing that animates unthinking behaviour rather than provoking reflective thought. Nietzsche, Vining suggests, is naïve. He lacks lawyerly wisdom and ignores the fact that the word 'law' does not signify an 'it'; that authority and the search for it can neither be pointed at, in a manner akin to the way in which we point at mere 'things' like rocks and stones, cups, chairs or pencils, nor be reduced to simple, unquestioning acts of obedience. In addition to associating him with positivism, Vining also gestures towards a Nietzsche lurking behind the other aspect of modern theory which emphasizes the 'dissolution to process' paradigmatic of the historicist draining-away of the self. This is the Nietzsche who argues that 'the word "I" as a subject in language may be . . . false to experience and there may be no "I"' (Vining 1995, p. 175).[3] Like one of his most famous followers, Michel Foucault,[4] Nietzsche is envisaged as offering an authorless, authority-less and law-less account of selfhood that engulfs it and its history in the contingencies of process and compulsion and so renders both devoid of the redemptive possibilities of genuine sense.

Whether conceived in terms of the positivistic emphasis on mindless obedience to convention or the historicist dissolution of the subject into the contingency of history, the two conceptualizations of Nietzsche offered by Vining point to the image of Nietzsche as a thinker of force and power. On such a view, we are faced with something reminiscent of the starkest consequences of the death of God as Nietzsche rehearses it in *The Gay Science* (see Nietzsche 1975, §125). Denied recourse to a divine will and order impermeable to the vicissitudes of history, a materialist inclined modernity is compelled, like Nietzsche's madman, to mourn not only God's passing but also to bear helpless witness to the shrinking of the conditions of its own self-understanding into an historically constituted condition of bland thing-hood. Here, in the words of Francis J. Mootz III, is the essence of 'Nietzsche's as-yet unanswered challenge to law' (Mootz 2007, p. 128).[5] With the death of the subject at the hands of a philosophy of power comes the death of natural law on the one hand and the historicization of community on the other. This double consequence undermines authority and initiates

a fractured modernity divided against itself. Liberal modernity's reliance on the belief that universal individual rights ground the legitimacy of law and the constitutional state stands revealed for what it is: a contingent fabrication haunted by the taint of partiality. What were once deemed 'universal rights' are exposed as nothing more than expressions of dominant power relations solidified into the habitual frameworks of conventions and hence historically relative. In the words of Mootz, 'If natural law died along with God, we appear unable to avoid the Nietzschean conclusion that legal practice is just the play of will to power. Against the force of this Nietzschean challenge, legal positivism has utterly failed to fulfil its promise of providing guidance after the eclipse of natural law' (Mootz 2008, p. 1).[6] Where Mootz notes positivism's failure, Vining notes its complicity. Positivism has not simply failed in the wake of natural law; positivism, in conjunction with its historicist rival, is actually responsible for the legitimation crisis that modernity is forced to confront. Nietzsche's thought, in turn, stands revealed on both Vining's and Mootz's accounts as something that naturalizes to the extent that it seeks to dissolve the legacy of positivistic and historicist modes of analysis into a chaotic agglomeration of power relations. The positivist and historicist paths lead inexorably to the same unpalatable naturalistic impasse.

Aspects of the above discussions of Nietzsche and power are probably familiar to anyone acquainted with the writings of Jürgen Habermas. For Habermas, too, Nietzsche's thought performs an inexorable interlinking of knowledge with interests by way of a conjoining of perspectivism and power. Perspectivism, which holds that we cannot grasp a single, unified reality, but must engage with the world from multiple standpoints, implies that universal validity cannot be attributed to our knowledge claims or moral discourse. Nietzsche arrives at this position, Habermas notes, naturalistically (Habermas 1971, p. 297). In other words, Nietzschean perspectivism acts out the implications of positivism and historicism by stating that the sources of our beliefs are rooted in biological, social and historical conditions. This observation paves the way for Habermas's characterization of Nietzsche as the quintessential thinker of will to power. Reason, Habermas argues, is for Nietzsche nothing more than an instrument which furthers survival (Habermas 1994, p. 121). Nietzsche thus 'explained the complete assimilation of reason to power in modernity with a *theory of power* that was remythologized out of arbitrary pieces and that, in place of the claim to truth, retains no more than the rhetorical claim proper to an aesthetic fragment' (Habermas 1994, p. 120). Values rendered as fragments become matters of taste, with the consequence that judgements concerning truth or right are transformed into expressions of the sensibilities and interests of particular groups. For Habermas, Nietzsche is like the positivist in stripping away value in order to reveal beneath it an instrumental partiality that gives rise to a debilitating evaporation of sense.[7] Nietzsche therefore shares with positivism a vulnerability to the charge of 'decisionism,' that is the belief that all judgements of value express decisions that are not arrived at in a rational manner but are utterances whose basis rests on nothing more than arbitrariness and caprice. In turn, Habermas argues, Nietzsche's aestheticization of experience and judgement allows him to challenge 'the fusion of validity and power' in a manner that launches him on the path of a radicalization of 'the counter-Enlightenment' (Habermas 1994, p. 120). Radicalized in this way, counter-enlightenment shifts into a

hybridized romanticism which deploys the instrumentalism derived from the model of the sciences in order to undercut rationality and enact a critique 'disburdened of the mortgages of enlightenment thought' (Habermas 1994, p. 125). For Habermas, this romanticism totalizes in its own specific and disturbing manner: it inhabits 'a world fallen back into myth, [one] in which powers influence one another and no element remains that could transcend the battle of the powers.' In short, the philosophy of power expresses the ethos of a romanticism that encloses modernity, smothering the radical, liberating tendencies of enlightenment beneath the detritus of history and reifying reason and the self.

Like Vining, Habermas sees in Nietzsche a figure who challenges the integrity of law in modernity by recourse to strategies derived from positivistic discourse. This is enacted above all in Nietzsche's challenge to the sources from which modern law might seek to claim its authority. On this view, Nietzsche's thought exemplifies a decisionism of the worst kind, for it reduces the sources of political sovereignty and law-giving to nothing more than the uncritical articulation of mythical pre-constitutional power relations. Nietzsche's decisionist-positivist approach thereby seeks to explain away the sources of modernity by reducing their significance to a pathology of perverse psychological and social conditions. The sphere of law, which for both Habermas and Vining is bound up with the 'search for authority' (Vining 1995, p. 248), is unravelled by Nietzsche through a genealogical analysis which reduces the self and its attributes to the outcome of nothing more than an appalling arbitrariness. Nietzsche's critique thereby threatens to reduce the modern constitutional state to rubble by threatening the sanctity and authority of law.

Is such an interpretation of Nietzsche entirely justified? Is a characterization of him as endorsing a brutal, positivistic philosophy of power run amok and lacking lawyerly dialogical wisdom a just one? In what follows, I argue that there is rather more to Nietzsche's discussion of the sources of law than the above accounts are willing to concede. Indeed, I will seek to show how Nietzsche's thought can make a positive contribution to the concerns about modernity raised by Vining and Habermas. In order to engage with this, Nietzsche's understanding of law needs to be set in the context of a more sensitive articulation of his naturalism. Such naturalism is no reductive positivism; nor does its embracing of history amount to a simplistic historicism which swallows the subject in historical contingency. A clue as to how to provide this articulation is given in *On the Genealogy of Morality*: 'If anyone finds this script incomprehensible and hard on the ears, I do not think the fault necessarily lies with me. It is clear enough, assuming, as I do, that people have first read my earlier works without sparing themselves some effort . . .' (Nietzsche 1994, Preface, §8). In other words, Nietzsche's naturalism as it is expressed in his late writings must be approached by of consideration of its elucidation in his earlier texts. The discussion that follows heeds the advice of *Genealogy* by turning to Nietzsche's so-called 'middle period' writings, *Human, All Too Human*, *Daybreak* and *The Gay Science* in order to clarify ideas associated with Nietzsche's late writings. In this way, I hope to offer an interpretation of the relation between Nietzsche, naturalism and law that responds (however tentatively and insufficiently) to his call for those interested with his thinking to engage in a ruminative 'art of reading' (Nietzsche 1994, Preface, §8).

2 Naturalism, nature and law

When we talk of law, for Nietzsche, we do so at two habitually related levels of meaning. We speak of the laws that claim legitimacy with regard to the governance of persons; and we speak of 'laws of nature,' such as the physicist does when discussing natural phenomena. Our presuppositions concerning the one, he holds, constitute the basis for our articulations concerning the other. One gains insight into this contention if one turns to Nietzsche's conception of naturalism. Naturalism, according to Nietzsche, can appear to be somewhat paradoxical, for it involves the 'de-naturalisation' of powerful cognitive habits. It warns us against succumbing to the inclination to interpret our environment in ways that, because they are amenable to us and so habitual, seem obvious and 'natural.' Thus, as *The Gay Science* tells us, we should be wary 'of thinking that the world is a living being' and also 'of calling the universe a machine . . .' (Nietzsche 1975, §109). Such judgements concerning the world we inhabit impart a sense of lawfulness that is unwarranted. This sense of lawfulness legitimates a complacent tendency to see order where there is none. From the naturalistic perspective, as Nietzsche conceives of it, the world does not conform to the law-like conditions that govern the beliefs of the living. The universe does not harmonize with the sense of order and purpose inherent in our concept of mechanism. Our environment does not correspond to the contrasting notions of design and accident; it pertains neither to reason or unreason. A naturalized world looks 'unnatural,' for it defies everyday thought by presenting a world devoid of the kind of everyday sense and order we are inclined to locate in it. Nature, Nietzsche contends, neither strives for anything (as we do), nor exhibits any perfection (as we hope to do), nor pertains to the fulfilment of our aesthetic or ethical impulses (as we are inclined to hope of it). With this observation, Nietzsche takes us straight to the matter of nature's relation to the notion of law. Nature, he says, 'knows no laws':

> Let us beware of saying that there are laws in nature. There are only necessities: there is nobody who commands, nobody who obeys, nobody who transgresses. Once you know there are no purposes, you also know that there is no accident; for it is only beside a world of purposes that the word 'accident' has meaning. . . . But when will we be done with our caution and care? When will all these shadows of God cease to darken our minds? When will we complete our de-deification of nature? When may we begin to naturalize our humanity with a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature? (Nietzsche 1975, §109)

Metaphysics, Nietzsche argues in this passage, is mythology: it denaturalizes the world by thinking it in terms of illusory conditions that invoke a false transcendence – this, above all, in terms associated with divine will. A nature understood in terms of the divine is one regulated by universal law. Metaphysics conceptualizes nature as something subordinate to notions of purpose, command, obedience, limit and transgression. That the world is understood as a realm of law-like elements is taken by the metaphysician to warrant the further belief that such elements are necessarily objective components of that world. For metaphysics, necessity is law and law is a

necessity. Naturalism warns us against considering the relation between nature and law in these terms. Any metaphysical talk of nature as subordinate to the force of law, even of the kind indulged in by the natural scientist, expresses a deep, unconscious urge to understand the environment in terms amenable to human sensibilities. Naturalism reveals a world radically different. It questions the commonly assumed equation of law with necessity by revealing its mythical roots and thereby envisages a world devoid of any law-like element – one devoid of our usual conception of necessity. In this way, naturalism dissolves myth and as it does so it simultaneously shatters the positivistic pretension to claim objective validity for any construal of a natural world that corresponds to the notion of 'natural' law, moral or physical.

Section 109 of *The Gay Science* demonstrates well how Nietzsche's naturalistic approach does not passively endorse a positivistic attitude, but rather exhibits a tendency to turn the positivistic spirit of natural science against itself. Science may gesture in the direction of a revelation of the anthropomorphic limits of our common conceptual habits, but the natural scientist does not grasp the implications of his or her own demythologizing tendencies. On its good days, science may yield valuable insights concerning method. On its bad days, as Nietzsche points out in *Beyond Good and Evil*, science hypostatizes these insights in a manner that replicates the most questionable metaphysics. This occurs when, for example, the metaphor of mechanism solidifies law into thoughtless literalism, such as when the physicist succumbs to the temptation to think in terms of 'nature's conformity to law' (Nietzsche 1973, §22). Insofar as the physicist remains inclined to think that they can uncover an objective 'law of nature' at the heart of phenomena he or she is deluded.[8] What the physicist actually does is no more than describe and label phenomena on the basis of inherited conventions of thought, which means that 'physics too is only an interpretation and arrangement of the world (according to our own requirements, if I may say so!) and not an *explanation* of the world. . .' (Nietzsche 1973, §14). Any science that seeks to overcome metaphysics through a physics that would explain reality through a causal language that invokes concepts of mechanism and lawfulness does nothing more than unwittingly rearticulate the metaphysical delusions it takes itself to have overcome.

One should not conclude from this that Nietzsche holds we should abandon talk of law as something that consists of nothing more than pointless metaphysical projection, or that he advocates the wholesale abandonment of the scientific ethos.[9] What matters for Nietzsche is that we pay attention to the difference between understanding law as it relates to humankind and the thought of law as it is uncritically applied to the world. The latter is error: the world is inhuman insofar as it lacks all law. The necessity that pertains to it (and Nietzsche clearly thinks that necessity is a notion that is applicable to our environment[10]) is not the kind of necessity that we commonly assume when we take it to be an analogue of law. Indeed, the discussion in Section 109 of *The Gay Science* presents nature in terms of a necessity so resistant to the kind of thought that would bind it in law-like concepts that even notions epitomizing what we generally conceive to be the opposite of lawfulness – namely, chaos and anarchy – are dismissed as being inapplicable to it. The world shows itself to us, but we cannot speak its inner reality in the language of law. What can be spoken of is always our relation to our world. When we talk of such matters as law

we in actuality talk of ourselves in relation to the environmental pressures we must face; pressures which in being refracted through us back into the environment shape us even as we seek to shape it.

We talk of ourselves, however unthinkingly, when we talk of law because law is constitutive of the kind of animal that we are. This is due to the role that law plays in how we articulate our relationship to our environment. For Nietzsche, the origins of law-talk reside in its being a precondition of survival for creatures like us. The sources of law-talk, in other words, are not to be found in the world but in the responses of communities to the challenge of negotiating environments that neither wholly yield to human demands nor wholly resist them. Law is not an objective condition of reality that inheres within it, as the naïve realist natural scientist might think, but it is nevertheless a condition of our speaking of reality, no less than air is a condition of our doing so. If we wish to talk of law, on Nietzsche's account, then, we need to talk in terms of the terrain appropriate to it. We need, in short, to consider law in the context of culture. And since culture is intimately conjoined with history, we must think of law in relation to history – or more specifically, prehistory. Nietzsche's view on this matter is evident right from the outset of his initiation of the project of 'historical philosophy' outlined in the first section of *Human, All Too Human*, the text which marks the inauguration of his naturalistic turn (Nietzsche 1986a, §§1–2). Historical philosophy asserts the primacy of becoming over being, of temporality over metaphysics. If we want to unearth the sources of our values, of our notions of truth, untruth, right, wrong, fairness, lawfulness and the like, then we must follow the guide of historical philosophy and envision the most primitive state of affairs in which human life was first unconsciously and decisively fashioned. Such an approach takes us to a consideration of the communal, law-like conditions upon which culture is founded.

3 The primitive community as the space of law

Human communities, Nietzsche argues, originated in the need for survival (Nietzsche 1986b, §22). Our forebears, creatures rather like us – that is, weak creatures, beings lacking in great strength, the capacity for speed, long teeth or talons – found security in numbers. Out of the communal satisfaction of this need arose the 'animal [that] has become human' (Nietzsche 1986a, §94). Our animality, however, is never conceivable as mere bestiality. Human animality is something that is tempered and fashioned by cultural conditions inexorably associated with communal life.[11] We are, from the outset, in our origins beings of custom. The primitive community, according to Nietzsche, is the domain of the 'morality of custom.' In the beginning and properly (i.e. naturalistically) understood, Nietzsche argues in *Daybreak*, the word 'morality' denoted 'nothing other (therefore *no more*!) than obedience to customs, of whatever kind they may be' (Nietzsche 1982, §9). Customs are norms that, for the informed eye, point beyond themselves to a social domain moulded and patterned by traditional practice. To follow custom means to do something according to a predetermined ritual and standard. In its origins, tradition is utilitarian. What is endorsed by the observance of tradition is behaviour deemed beneficial to the community. By the same token,

tradition condemns those actions which are regarded as harmful. The community, one should note here, forms the context for the most autochthonous expression of human will. Willing is first always the willing of the domain of the norm, of the shared world of community. The community wills and through this generates the power of tradition, a power which resides in its normative-imperative character. It is as a consequence of the compulsion of this imperative condition that the human self emerges. This is why, on Nietzsche's view, the self must be numbered among the most recent inventions of communal culture, for it emerges only as a later consequence of the power of norms to fashion the body through adherence to practices.[12] Tradition, Nietzsche holds, is 'A higher authority which one obeys, not because it commands what is *useful* to us, but because it *commands*.' To be human, in other words, means in the first instance to be a communal creature whose world is always already mediated by obedience and to discover oneself as an individuated being in the context of such mediation. To be human, in other words, means to be an animal which is both capable of feeling, acknowledging and acting on the peculiar kind of compulsion that is associated with the commanding power of something that is deemed 'higher' (i.e. authority).

One can note in the account offered above the apparent presence of the elements that might cause discomfort to the likes of Vining and Habermas. The origin of morality and the authority of law is demythologized at the hands of a propensity to reduce meanings to a compelling force (what Habermas would argue Nietzsche subsequently articulates as 'will to power') both originating in and reducible to the need for collective survival. But this is only half the story. It is one thing to argue where the origins of our normative propensities lie, but it is another to claim that the meaning of such propensities amounts to no more than these origins. It is true that for Nietzsche, the member of the primitive community is a creature of custom, a mere passive follower of law-like conventions, un-free and motivated by a specific type of fear. However, the account of the primitive community is not couched in merely restrictive terms. Tradition creates an animal that, through obeying, learns much more than mere obedience:

> What distinguishes this feeling in the presence of tradition from the feeling of fear in general? It is fear in the presence of a higher intellect which here commands, of an incomprehensible, indefinite power, of something more than personal – there is superstition in this fear. – Originally all education and care of health, marriage, cure of sickness, agriculture, war, speech and silence, traffic with another and with the gods belonged within the domain of morality: they demanded one observe prescriptions *without thinking of oneself* as an individual. Originally, therefore, everything was custom, and whoever wanted to elevate himself above it had to become lawgiver and medicine man and a kind of demi-god: that is to say, he had to *make customs* – a dreadful, mortally dangerous thing! (Nietzsche 1982, §9)

Nietzsche here certainly paints a picture of the primitive human as a creature compelled to fearful obedience by superstitious belief in the threat of divine revenge. But he is also interested in what such obedience generates. The fear that the observer of customs feels is more than fear of the brutal threat of immediate violence.

Superstitious fear digs deeper; it takes the form of anxiety about what will happen. Superstition is the cradle in which fear for the future is nurtured. Such fear is mythical. Through it human thought becomes something directed simultaneously to past and future. Myth thus conjures up a terrifying temporality that generates a selfhood that finds itself immersed in a universe dominated by a vast, superior and censorial will capable of engulfing it. The observer of customs keeps to the law of tradition, the authority of which resides in observance of the sacred and unquestionable power that acts as a guarantor of the future. The breaker of customs, in contrast, stands in danger of being held to future account as one whose sins against the authority of divine will exert a power capable of bringing down the entire community. The self thus emerges out of conformity. It is in virtue of this conformity that individuality is from the outset linked to the feeling of guilt. What is individual is what does not conform to the law of tradition, i.e. is associated with the '"capricious", "unusual", "unforeseen", "incalculable".' Individuality in this way first appears as a negatively conceived possibility of acting in a way that situates one outside the sanctified and secure communal domain of custom and tradition. The individual is an entity endowed with the potential to dwell in a region situated beyond the law.

The community shapes self-understanding by guiding and determining it 'in the strongest way' according to precepts dictated 'by the *law*, by *tradition*' (Nietzsche 1986a, §111). Where the morality of custom dominates, law and tradition dictate subjectivity to the extent that 'the individual is tied to them almost automatically and moved with the regularity of a pendulum.' Such determination, however, takes place in a proximal relation to capricious nature. The regularized primitive mind is thus from the beginning locked into an encounter with a nature that teems with incalculable and unpredictable variables. For the primitive person, in nature capriciousness holds sway – it is a place where terrible and unknown spirits are at work exercising a freedom unconscionable within the everyday bounds of community constrained and ordered by the fearful power of tradition. The community conceives of nature 'outside' in the same way as it understands the individual law-breaker who lives proximally alongside it: both stand for lawless and demonic disorder and, consequently, must be regarded as a threat. Thus threatened, the community responds in the only way it can: it responds in mythical terms derived from the traditional fabric of normative practice. The realm of language and sign, which emerges as the suasive element in which the community comes to articulate and so endorse its self-understanding ('We are those who do such and such' (i.e. adhere to these norms)), is turned out to face the world of nature in the form of holy incantation combined with ritual. Through incantation and ritual the community makes a bid to subjugate the capricious and unruly to the demands of collective interest. In this way, 'The believer in magic and miracles reflects on how to *impose a law on nature*' (Nietzsche 1986a, §111). Here, Nietzsche argues, lies the origin of religion.

Religion is an organized cult devoted to control through wizardry. In wizardry, a personal possession of the unruly person to be controlled (a shred clothing, hair, food left on his or her plate, a name) is got hold of and subjected to magical incantation. The realm of communal authority thereby extends itself in an attempt to exert a grip on the individual's lawless nature, negating its threat by way of 'the corporeal [which]

provides the handle with which one can grasp the spiritual' (Nietzsche 1986a, §111). The manner in which the dangerous member of the community susceptible to the power of tradition is influenced and tamed by the magic of words and ritualistic action forms the basis for the attempt to subjugate nature by drawing on the power of the sacred. Thus, as culture develops, words and actions are finally formalized into a narrative in which the natural world, too, is pictured as a realm responsive to incantation and ritual. The seasons, for example, are encouraged to repeat themselves in answer to prayer. In this way, humanity embarks on the path of differentiating itself from nature through an appeal that contains within it the seeds of hubristic resistance. Here is the first step in humanity's striving to bring external nature under control. Through it the lawful fabric that binds the social world and the un-law-like fluidity of the natural world become intertwined in an act of religious union:

> The meaning of the religious cult is to determine and constrain nature for the benefit of mankind, that is to say *to impress upon it a regularity and legality which it does not at first possess*. . . . In brief, the religious cult rests on the ideas of sorcery as between man and man; and the sorcerer is older than the priest. But it *likewise* rests on other and nobler ideas; it presupposes relations of sympathy between man and man, the existence of goodwill, gratitude, the hearing of petitions, treaties between enemies, the bestowal of pledges, the claim to protection of property. Even at very low stages of culture man does not stand towards nature as its impotent slave, he is *not* necessarily its will-less servant. (Nietzsche 1986a, §111)

The sacred thus emerges as a means of pacifying, negotiating and mastering unruly nature by conceiving the natural realm (the realm alien to the community) as being open to magical persuasion. To render nature amenable to such control is to subject it to the demand that it answer to the ritual and incantation that characterize the world of communal tradition and law. The taming of external nature thus occurs in conjunction with the fashioning of inner nature in the realm of communal relations.

As Section 9 of *Daybreak* also makes clear, the attitude of fostering sympathy between oneself and others, the negotiation and resolution of differences, the drawing up of contracts, claims to rights, etc. likewise emerge in tandem with outer nature being named and encountered, too. In other words, the designations 'inner' and 'outer' (culture and nature) develop only in virtue of the condition of a normative social world permeated by the force of tradition. In this regard, tradition is formal legality in embryo; and formal, customized legality is rearticulated as the realm of causal lawfulness. The rules which serve to mediate the diversity of interests that spring from the communal realm are projected outwards on to lawless nature. Law – which begins as the sanctification of social convention – is hence a conduit to something miraculous. It bridges the mystery that separates the community from what threatens to overpower it by offering the promise of control, which is the promise of futurity. In this regard, law, for Nietzsche, makes manifest the sense of will whereby humanity unwittingly differentiates itself from brute nature. The will is culture, the lawfulness of tradition and the sacred, the domain in which the regulated self is affirmed. In this way, what starts as the unthinking compulsion of adherence to custom and tradition

becomes through law, treaty, pledge and the observance of rights the means whereby human dignity is established and affirmed as the counter-image of a nature that knows no such things.

On Nietzsche's account, then, the world of nature is first grasped as being amenable to the thought of law through the mystical religious cult. Through the sacred is brought about the fusion of an initially lawless nature with the social realm of normative conformity. The environment of brute nature is in this way initially rendered open to disclosure by the thought of the sacred as something simultaneously magical and elusive yet amenable to revealing itself by answering to instrumental manipulation. Religion thus poses a mythically derived but practical answer to concretely encountered problems. Its metaphysically inclined propensity to control through invocation and spells envisages a nature that answers to the law-like realm of communal meaning from which it emerges. Thought reaches out, however clumsily, to make a grab at what is alien to it, attempting to subordinate the alien to the traditional, normative domain in which thought itself is compelled to dwell. In this way, religious sensibility, which originally conceives of nature as a realm devoid of '*natural* causality,' nevertheless also contains within it the seeds for the elaboration of a 'nature' which adheres to the basic demand of the social imperative understood as objective 'lawful' process. Religion, in other words, is proto-science. A secular positivistic understanding of the world, one which thinks only in terms of brute 'physical laws,' is only possible in virtue of the legacy of this subsequently suppressed religious element. Nature becomes an object of the thought of law understood as causality and process only because the normatively guided thought of the sacred has already articulated it in an embryonic causal terminology before being subsequently suppressed and discarded as the causal terminology gains greater explanatory power. The naïve scientist who sees laws at work 'in' nature ignores the religious-legal genealogy at play in his or her descriptive language. They neglect the thought of law as social form indebted to the sacred and fail to see nature as something that must already be appropriated by thought. Here is the source of the positivism that Vining and Habermas deride in equal measure: the positivist thinks the descriptive language he or she employs exhausts the realm of experience and thereby constitutes its explanation.

4 Normative violence, law, the state and the divided self

With these observations in mind it is possible to turn to a discussion in the *Genealogy* concerning the origins of the state and the formalization of law that appears to confirm Vining's and Habermas's worst fears about Nietzsche. In this discussion (which is in *Genealogy* II, 17), the events that establish the state in its original form are characterized by Nietzsche in terms of an unrestrained violence. The state arises from conflict between two groups of beings governed by tradition, one establishing rule over the other. The violence which characterizes the initial imposition of the state and the rule of law is the violence of a tyranny specifically aimed at control, in which aggressors colonize a population susceptible to the iron grip of rule: 'The oldest "state" emerged as a terrible tyranny, as a repressive and ruthless machinery, and

continued working until the raw material of people and semi-animals had been finally not just kneaded and made compliant, but *shaped*' (Nietzsche 1994, II, §17). These aggressors are unconscious, instinctive actors who 'imprint forms' on the social body they seek to dominate. They do so without reflecting on the consequences of their actions, since they have no interest in anything other than the enforcement of will. What matters for Nietzsche, however, are the consequences rather than the aggressive intent, for with the state 'soon something new arises, a structure of domination that *lives*, in which parts and functions are differentiated and co-related, in which there is absolutely no room for anything which does not first acquire "meaning" with regard to the whole' (Nietzsche 1994, II, §17). What matters is that disparate parts are rendered subordinate to a greater, unifying force of will. The violent aggressor, in other words, unconsciously implements the conditions which bring about a new form of cultural life. As Nietzsche notes, the active will to power of these 'artists of violence and organizers' (Nietzsche 1994, II, §18) makes up only half of the story to be narrated here. More important is the 'raw material of humanity' that such organizing power works upon in order to impose a structure of rule. Such 'raw material,' it is worth recalling, is already normatively distinct and thereby differentiated from brute, lawless nature. The tyrannical imposition of will that results in the formal realm of state and law is possible only because that will can work upon something amenable to this imposition. The primitive aggressors who subjugate another primitive population of custom-driven semi-humans can enforce subjection only in virtue of the law-like conditions that have already begun to fashion the human animal into a creature susceptible to being compelled by the force of normative adherence. Violence alone is an insufficient condition of tyranny. For tyranny to be possible there must be threat, that is, the normative articulation 'if . . . then,' the *promise* of violence capable of compelling one party to submit to another's norms.

The tyrannical promise of violence (the central thread that guides the argumentation of the second essay of the *Genealogy*, which need not be rehearsed here) seizes on a law-like but primitive humanity that has developed rudimentary self-understanding in virtue of its being fashioned by normative adherence. This is a humanity that, through the religious cult, has already forged self-understanding by articulating its relation to a lawless nature conceived in terms of lawful myth and a world of others articulated in terms of a quasi-legal realm of rights and duties. Primitive humankind, in other words, responds to the *promise of violence* only because it is already endowed with will and dignity. However autochthonous it might appear, therefore, primitive humankind is already capable of being violated, that is, of having the integrity of its world transgressed. The tyranny that characterizes the rise of the state and the imposition of the rule of law is only possible *as tyranny* in virtue of the possibility of one group violating the will and dignity of another that is similarly endowed. What is notable about Nietzsche's discussion of this matter is its focus on the victim of this violation. It is through subjugation, the making of victims, that the state is first brought into existence. This victimizing act is a specifically *political* violence. In this way, all political violence is revealed as being derived from normative violation. Politics is thereby worked through as the forcible concatenation of cultural forms by way of a violence that compels in virtue of its ability to use the normatively generated resistance

it encounters to further its own ends. The origins of the formalization of law likewise represent a violence perpetrated against the realm of communal tradition: 'Submission to *law*: – oh, how the consciences of nobler clans rebelled everywhere against having to give up their vendettas and accept the force of law over themselves! For a long time, "law" was a *vetitum*, a crime, a novelty; introduced with force, *as* a force to which man submitted, ashamed of himself' (Nietzsche 1994, III, §9). The state, then, brings about the formalization of law as *rules*. The understanding that characterizes the normative being of tradition is violated and divided against itself. The name for this self-division is shame.

The tyrant who imposes law in this way does not see violence for what it is, for the imposer's experience of his or her own violence is the mere pleasure of the exercise of power over another. Seen from the standpoint of the oppressor who brings about the state, laws dictated and pressed into statute correspond to nothing more than the objective facilitation of conditions that satisfy the pleasure to be derived from willing. For the tyrant, the law promulgated by the mechanism of the state represents something that corresponds to objectively existing conditions that enable effective instrumental manipulation. The tyrannical 'artist of violence' appears, in this regard, as a kind of thoughtless proto-positivist whose power is achieved at the cost of cleansing the primitive subject of his or her rudimentary selfhood. So as to satisfy the ruler's requirement that he or she be subjugated, the victim must be treated as mere material susceptible to the brute power of a crudely conceived causal fashioning. Just as the positivist comes to see the world as being amenable to instrumental manipulation facilitated by understanding hidden causal conditions in a manner that represses law's normative status, so the tyrant organizer of the primitive state regards the primitive human victim as mere material fit only for subordination by an act of will. The blonde beast, like the positivist, never really understands the decisively normative nature of political violence. Neither primitive tyrant nor positivist can be deemed to have grasped the locus of law. What matters in the narrative of the founding of the state that Nietzsche provides in the *Genealogy* is not the active tyrant but the activity of the victim subjected to tyrannical will. The positivist likewise forgets the victim, immersing him or her in the dry formality of rules. The origin of bad conscience lies, Nietzsche notes, with the same 'force' that motivates the tyrant to build states, but in a form turned back on itself in the shape of the victim. Through what Nietzsche famously calls the 'internalization of man,' the self emerges (Nietzsche 1994, II, §16). Normatively shaped human instincts imprisoned by state and statutory ordinance turn inwards to create the inner world of subjectivity that is called the 'soul.' The bite of bad conscience the victim thereby feels is the sign of the emergence of the soul. Only as a political victim does humankind truly come to experience and suffer from itself. Moreover, it does so by for the first time encountering the mystery of power and authority that was fashioned in the world of tradition both in objectified institutional form and in its own inner turmoil. The human soul emerges, therefore, as a doubly divided entity: a conformer, yet one situated in resistance to the power of state and law rather than being their formal articulation and stamp of approval.

The divided nature of the soul is the dwelling place of both conformity and resistance. As conformity, the soul is unthinking normative adherence – the inheritor

of the habits of the primitive observer of custom and tradition. As resistance, the soul is driven to reflect on the shame of the susceptibility to being ruled that springs from its powerful normative urge and to question the power of tradition made use of by state and statute. The soul, for Nietzsche, is thus driven to seek authority over itself (i.e. dignity) as the cure to shame. That is why he conceives of the genuine philosopher as a law-giver.[13] The soul, accounted for in these historicist terms is not leached away into history, as Vining would have it. History is, rather, the cradle of the self. History is the space of struggle from which the self emerges in all its splendid potential, replete with the vulnerability that is the hallmark of will and dignity. Likewise, the conception of authority suggested by this account does not amount to a simplistic positivistically inclined decisionism of the kind suggested by Habermas. Insofar as the self is brought about by oppression it is, at the same time, permeated by the kind of spiritual resistance to power that characterizes the search for authority rather than the mere acceding to dominant power. The state seeks to impose a power that claims legitimacy through being formalized in law and statute. The self created in the midst of this normative violence responds to the claim to power by being driven by shame to seek its own legitimacy. In this way, the state validates the search for authority, but one of the effects of this search is the threat of the de-legitimization of the power of the state. For in the state, the power of the sacred (of custom, tradition and law) becomes objectified and so rendered open to the possibility of demythologization. Nietzsche's naturalistic reading of tradition, myth, law and the sacred does not, it follows, recoil into a simplistic decisionism. The power-takeover which characterizes the *Genealogy*'s analysis of the emergence of the state ought not, therefore, to be confused with the naturalizing trajectory endorsed within Nietzsche's critique. The latter does not seek to overturn law or the realm of the self, but to foster a better understanding of both such that the legislative potential of the individuated self might be realized. Law, in this regard, defines the space within which freedom may be articulated. Such freedom, on Nietzsche's conception, is not realized by the abandonment of law. It is found in the quest for authority that, as Vining rightly notes, characterizes it. This quest for authority must take place within an understanding of the realm delineated by bad conscience as the only kind of freedom possible to us. This is the freedom that approaches the question of law with the seriousness capable of making its existence a matter of personal integrity. Law, understood thus, is not oppression, but the precondition of concrete freedom:

> 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 *for* what? Can you give yourself your own evil and your own good and hang your own will over yourself as a law? Can you be your own judge and avenger of your law? Terrible it is to be alone with the judge and avenger of one's own law. (Nietzsche 1976, I, 'On the Way of the Creator)[14]

Terrible it is to be the divided self. The human animal represents a crossing from lawless nature into lawful culture. To be an animal of this kind means to experience oneself as domain of contestation in which the authority of the law is continually at stake, since such authority is intimately one's own. Nietzsche's naturalism, which as

'historical philosophy' is neither a positivism nor an historicism, seeks to do justice to this authority. In this regard, the authority of the self is, for Nietzsche, the legitimate heir of the sacred ordinance from which it emerges: a being of will and dignity, rather than nature's passive victim.

Notes

1 John Gardner, a defender of what he terms 'hard' legal positivism, provides what must be among the most straightforward of working definitions. According to Gardner, the legal positivist endorses the view that the legal validity of a norm 'in any legal system' is a matter wholly dependent upon the sources in virtue of which that norm is posited, 'not its merits (where its merits, in the relevant sense, include the merits of its sources)' (Gardner 2001, pp. 199–200). On Gardner's view, all the legal positivist thus seeks to do is clarify the conditions in virtue of which legal norms have validity. The legal positivist thus addresses the 'thin *lex* sense' concerning what law is, in a manner that does not preclude further (and different) consideration of the extent to which such norms might also be taken to be morally binding (in 'the thicker *ius* sense') (p. 227).
2 On this conception, historicism and positivism are locked in a conflict which, because it is a conflict, tends to mask what they share in common and emphasize their differences.
3 The passage under discussion here is *On the Genealogy of Morality*, I, §13.
4 See, Vining 1995, pp. 147–9.
5 Mootz argues that this challenge can be addressed insofar as Nietzsche's thought does not so much initiate the destruction of law as the destruction of a specific mode of 'legal argumentation' (Mootz 2007, p. 129). As in another paper on the topic (see below), for Mootz this challenge to law is overcome by the elaboration of a hermeneutics indebted to the writings of Heidegger and Gadamer.
6 Mootz seeks to offer a hermeneutic account as a means of overcoming the problems posed by Stephen D. Smith's *Law's Quandary* (Smith 2007). For reasons of space, I do not propose to discuss the pros and cons of Mootz's interesting discussion here. The argument proffered here holds that one can develop an account of law based on Nietzsche's texts that is both less destructive and dangerous than Mootz's comments suggest and avoids the accusations of positivistic and historicist reductivism levelled against Nietzsche by Vining. In short, like Mootz, I think that a kind of non-reductive naturalistic account of law is possible. Unlike Mootz, I think that this can be developed from Nietzsche without need of hermeneutic assistance (although I have much sympathy with hermeneutics generally).
7 Consider, for example, Habermas's contention that since for Nietzsche 'thinking can no longer operate in the elements of truth, or of validity claims in general, contradiction and criticism lose their meaning. *To contradict*, to negate, now only has the sense of "*wanting to be different*"' (Habermas 1994, p. 124).
8 Nietzsche argues that such a view presupposes a concept of nature that differs hardly from the one presupposed by the Stoic philosophy of the ancients (see Nietzsche 1973, §9).
9 Nietzsche in fact envisages a time when the limits of science are not overcome by its abandonment, but by its cross-fertilization with other forms of practice: at such a point, the 'artistic energies and the practical wisdom of life will join with scientific

thinking to form a higher organic system in relation to which scholars, physicians, artists, and law-givers – as we know them at the present – would have to look like paltry relics of ancient times' (Nietzsche 1975, §113).

10 This notion is developed in *Beyond Good and Evil* in relation to will to power (see Nietzsche 1973, §36).

11 This includes such things as the orientation of our actions towards negotiating long term goals.

12 See in connection Nietzsche's discussion of this in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Nietzsche 1976, Part I, 'On the Thousand and One Goals').

13 See, for example, the discussion of the 'new philosophers' and the notion of philosophers as 'commanders and lawgivers' in *Beyond Good and Evil* (Nietzsche 1973, §§203, 211).

14 See, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Nietzsche 1976, I, 'On the Way of the Creator').

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4

Movements and Motivations: Nietzsche and the Invention of Political Psychology

Robert Guay

1 Introduction

Nietzsche expressed anti-democratic views, especially in his later writings, but, strangely, expressed no interest at all in institutional forms or government policies. On the rare occasion when the topic of democratic institutions did arise, Nietzsche commented that they are 'very useful and very boring' (WS 289), mere 'foregrounds' (BGE 242) or only the 'consequences' (TI 'Skirmishes' 37) of decline, but took no interest in their operation or justification. He proposed no alternative institutional scheme.[1] There is no discussion of legitimacy, obligation, authority, principles of justice, sovereignty or any of the familiar topics of modern political philosophy. This seems, furthermore, to have been a studious neglect: Nietzsche alternately affiliates himself with positions that are 'unpolitical' (TI 'Germans' 4), 'indifferent toward politics' (EH BT 1; cf. A pref), or, most famously, 'antipolitical' (TI 'Germans' 4, EH 'Wise' 3).[2] Nietzsche offers few hints as to the nature of his commitments here, but they seem to be both deeply held and antipathetic to the substantive political questions.

This presents something of a mystery: Nietzsche seems to touch upon political questions – not merely about democracy, but about a wide range of topics, and often with forceful judgements – at the same time as he refuses to engage with them. Some have responded to this mystery by employing Nietzsche's thought in the service of democratic theory, separating Nietzsche's own personal views from the positions that are suggested or perhaps entailed by his deeper theoretical commitments.[3] I, too, wish to separate any question of Nietzsche's idiosyncratic personal views from his philosophical commitments, but I am nevertheless interested in the interpretative project of identifying Nietzsche's views rather than the constructive one of making use of those views in previously unanticipated ways. My aim in this paper is to explain Nietzsche's own philosophical position with respect to democracy, including his lack of interest in any institutional features. What I argue is that Nietzsche's interest and hence his criticisms are not primarily directed at democracy *per se*, but at the 'democratic movement,' which is to be understood as a psychological phenomenon and may not correspond to any institutional form.

When Nietzsche discusses democracy, he does not discuss it as a kind of institutional arrangement but as a cultural phenomenon, 'idea' (WS 275), 'conception' (HH 472), 'symptom' (GM III: 20, BT AS 4), or, prominently, as a 'movement' (BGE 202, BGE 203). Nietzsche is accordingly, I argue, engaging in neither the ancient nor modern forms of political philosophy: his discussions betray neither a perfectionist interest in how human nature realizes itself in a community, nor an interest in distinguishing state organization from other social formations. Instead he refers to modern political formations in order to offer an analysis that is psychological in character. Democracy, that is, considered as a movement, is a psychological formation writ large: it evidences motivations, aims and needs. Consideration of its actual operation or its public discourses is only a means to discussing the underlying psychological phenomena. Nietzsche's interest in democracy, as in other many other forms of social, political and economic arrangements,[4] is to diagnose them as psychological phenomena and to argue that these 'movements' have become pathological: they are reactive, hypertrophic, disconnected from other psychological elements, and, most importantly, obstruct the possibility of their own satisfaction.

My discussion proceeds in the following three sections. In the next section, I discuss Nietzsche's understanding of 'movements' and his historical analysis of them, which I argue provides an initial explanation of Nietzsche's anti-democratic sentiments. A first approximation of his concern is that the democratic movement substitutes claim-making for direct action in a problematic way. This is, I argue, inadequate to explain Nietzsche's antipathy for the democratic movement, however; a full explanation requires a consideration of Nietzsche's political psychology.[5] In the following section, I thus discuss the distinctiveness of Nietzsche's treatment of movements in psychological terms, distinguishing it from both empirical inquiry and from Plato and Hegel's organicism, and then argue that it provides the basis for Nietzsche's negative assessment. In the final section, I discuss the limited implications that Nietzsche's views have for the assessment of political institutions.

2 Movements as historical

This passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* is representative of Nietzsche's remarks about democracy at the end of his career: 'We, who are of a different faith – we, for whom the democratic movement holds not merely as a form of decline of political organization, but as a form of decline, namely a form of diminishment of the human, making it mediocre and lowering its value: where must *we* reach with our hopes? – Towards *new philosophers* . . .' (BGE 203) This is a strange passage, and what is strange about it is that the target is not exactly democracy, and neither the criticism nor the remedy seem to be things that democracy is responsible for. His objection is not aimed at institutions, and he even distinguishes his concerns from ones that treat the ways in which political organization proceeds. He associates his criticism with a belief or faith about 'the human,' and suggests that the necessary remedy is 'new philosophers,' or at least a hope directed towards them, rather than some alternative institutional scheme. At the root of all these oddities, however, is that the object of

criticism is 'the democratic movement' rather than democracy *per se*, and he does not explain what means by 'the democratic movement' or why it is a form of decline. One could try to identify a specific referent for 'the democratic movement,' but there are no obvious candidates: it does not seem likely that Nietzsche was referring to anyone in particular, and doing so would undermine the generality of his point. So one approach to understanding Nietzsche's views is to figure out what he means by 'movement,' and then to determine how a movement, and the democratic movement in particular, would fit into the existential concerns that he raises.

That is my approach in this section. I show that Nietzsche's idiosyncratic usage of 'movement' is only minimally helpful, but that a consideration of the origin and development of social movements makes it possible to relate the distinctive features of movements to Nietzsche's historical understanding of modernity and some of the normative concerns that he does make explicit. In particular, I identify Nietzsche's use of 'movement' with the semantic elements of agitation, historical progress and embodiment. I connect these elements to what Charles Tilly has called the 'campaigns,' the 'repertoire,' and the 'WUNC displays' of early social movements. I then argue that in light of this historical context, it becomes easier to see how democracy considered as a movement rather than as an institutional form fits into Nietzsche's historical analysis and thus sheds light on the nature of Nietzsche's main complaint, which is that movements advance normative claims in defective ways.

Although Nietzsche makes frequent use of the term 'movement,' he never indicates what he means by it. The term had abruptly come into contemporary parlance – the very idea of a 'social movement' seems to have emerged in 1850 after a few decades of vaguely metaphorical uses of 'movement' rapidly dying into something more concrete.[6] But despite the widespread characterization of the social world in terms of a plurality of movements, there was little discussion, outside of specific contexts, of what this meant. Even those within self-described movements gave little thought to what that in general meant. Nietzsche's own usage of the term only adds to the confusion here. Instead of identifying particular contemporary movements, he associates the term mostly frequently with Christianity (e.g. BGE 202, TI 'Errors' 7, TI 'Improvers' 3, A 27, A 51, A 58, A 59, EH GM) and with the Reformation (GS 149, GM I: 16, GM III: 19) in particular. So Nietzsche uses a non-standard meaning of an undefined term.

The origin and development of the relevant sense of 'movement' can, fortunately, contribute to an explanation of what Nietzsche means and why he treats Christianity and democracy as movements. There were three main semantic elements that got carried over from the everyday sense of movement to form the distinctive modern sense: *agitation*, *historical progress* and *embodiment*. The oldest one to be used in this way is that of agitation, upheaval or unrest: the sense of movement here is that of trouble being stirred up in an otherwise placid setting. Frese dates the usage to 1684, and others attempt to trace it back further.[7] Regardless of when the metaphor was first employed and when it ceased to be a metaphor, the meaning seems to have been firmly established in Europe by the end of the eighteenth century.[8] This meaning makes its first appearance in English no later than 1812, by which time it has started to blend with the other senses of movement.[9] Agitation is initially understood as more akin to

a natural disturbance of order, but this gradually began to be treated as a distinctively social phenomenon.

The second semantic element is that of *historical progress*. Here the background idea is that history has a determinate trajectory along which progress may be made or impeded, but that the trajectory itself cannot be altered. Movement, then, is that of the historical process in the direction of its destination.[10] This is the sense of the single greatest influence in proliferating 'movement': the Movement Party of the July Revolution of 1830.[11] The liberals referred to themselves as the 'Movement Party' in opposition to the 'Party of Order,' and the contrast between movement and reaction came to represent what was understood as a pan-European emancipatory struggle. Thus 'the movement' was commonly referred to as something singular. This singular reference to 'the movement' indicates that the modern sense has not yet developed. First, there is only one movement because there is only one historical trajectory; there is no possibility of plural and multidirectional movements. More basically, however, the movement in question is that of the historical process rather than a distinctive form of social-political engagement. There happens to be a party that identifies itself with this movement, but the party is not quite itself the movement.

The final component, then, is that movement is bodily movement: 'persons are united in a social body, a corpus, which moves or acts as an entity' (Nicholas 1973, p. 67). Actual circumstances had, to be sure, already implied this sense: unrest was always popular unrest, and the historical process always had its organizations rallying behind it. But part of what constituted a movement as such became that it is a single, unified entity lumbering around. It was always a strange sort of entity – as Frese writes, it was 'experienced by the participants as a unity but remaining organizationally subjectless' (Frese 1971, p. 882). This headlessness of the social body itself became a topic of contestation, provoking debate over what sort of leadership or elite might be required for a movement to sustain itself.[12] This perceived possible lack indicates, however, what is already implicit in the notion of 'movement': that a movement lacks the deliberateness or directedness of an action, even when it is attributed to a body.

This range of meanings captures fairly well the new form of social organization that developed in Nietzsche's lifetime; at the same time, once this range of meanings coalesced into a familiar option for self-ascription, it affected how participants in movements thought of themselves.[13] So these semantic elements manifested themselves in the emergence of social movements. Charles Tilly has summarized three basic features of early movements as the *campaign*, the *repertoire* and *WUNC displays*.[14] That is, the three basic features of what developed into social movements were, first, the making of collective claims through sustained efforts, second, a shifting but conventional stock of activities, and third, a 'concerted public representation of . . . worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment' (Tilly 2004, p. 4). The fully integrated sense of 'movement' is realized when the progressive[15] agitation carried out by a subjectless social body took the form of 'solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstration, petition drives' (Tilly 2004, p. 3), and so on, with the function of sustaining a public identity, validating themselves, and above all, publicly directing claims to targeted authorities.

Nietzsche occupied a privileged historical position to see this new form of organization as both strange and pervasive. The point of forming a group in response to

dissatisfaction had previously been either to seize political power or to use coercive force to achieve desired ends. One would, for example, free a prisoner by storming a prison, chase a sheriff or a tax collector out of town, or assert a claim to public authority. These courses of action no longer seem available now, even when the same inciting grievances arise. This is, incidentally, what explains Nietzsche's infamous admiration of Cesare Borgia. There were nothing intrinsically admirable about Borgia, but as Nietzsche indicates, he represents the lost possibility of social engagement taking the form of both direct action and at the same time the seeking of political power: Borgia represents a direct 'form of attack' (A 61) against the seat of power, one which we moderns have become too 'sensitive' (TI.9.37) to be capable of.

Nietzsche noticed that in his time social activity had abruptly shifted from direct interventions to holding rallies or petition drives to make claims on the wider social world. This matching of repertoire of activity to ultimate ends would have been unthinkable a few generations earlier, but by Nietzsche's lifetime it had come to seem instinctive, so much so that movement politics had started to become one of the dominant forms of sociality in the modern world. Claims from almost any sphere – economic, political, cultural, ethical, religious – would be addressed by the formation of movements.

This pervasiveness contributes, I think, to an understanding of Nietzsche's claim that 'the democratic movement is the heir of the Christian movement' (BGE 202; cf. A 43). Nietzsche treats the democratic movement as the realization, in secular form, of what had already been implicit in Christianity: moving towards the future indirectly, by mass participation rather than by taking authority. There are two main elements of this. One is that it works by the process that Nietzsche calls 'imaginary revenge' (GM I: 10; cf. A 17),[16] that is, proceeding by the replacement or 'inversion' of ideals where direct action is impossible. The basic form, in other words, is organized agitation for the sake of demands grounded in novel claims of group worth. The other main element is another central component of Nietzsche's historical understanding, theoretical 'optimism' (BT 15; cf. EH 'Destiny' 4). This optimism, or 'faith in truth' (GM III: 24), is the belief that 'the nature of things can be fathomed' and that knowing and cognition 'have the power of a panacea' (BT 15). Nietzsche associates 'democratic taste' with the 'triumph of optimism' (BT AS 4): the confidence of being on the right side of history, and that historical progress can be made. Social movements may not have deep theoretical commitments, but Nietzsche nevertheless sees their confidence in their own causes and methods as being the legacy of faith in convergence on a single right answer.[17]

Nietzsche thus sees only a single movement, with many masks, throughout history, without radical breaks, departures or revolutions. Socratic optimism adds metaphysics to become Platonism, Christianity is 'Platonism for the people' (BGE pref), and democracy sheds metaphysics but retains optimism and mass mobilization in the service of a universal, unconditional solving or dissolving of the 'problem of existence' (SE 4).

This gives us a very short answer to what Nietzsche thought was wrong with the democratic movement: it is continuous with Christianity, and Nietzsche does not like Christianity. This is, I think, a fairly good approximation of the correct answer, but

lacks the details about what is generally problematic with organizing social life around movements, Christian or otherwise. Filling in the details requires considering the 'subjectlessness' of movements and the ways in which they make claims. Movements count as subjectless in part because what they want is always nebulous. To some extent this is a function of group dynamics: groups may aggregate individual wants, or fail to do so, in too many different ways. The more basic problem, however, is that what movements do is so disconnected from what they want: the repertoire of movements leaves few clues as to what they seek, and can even come to seem important for their own sake. So part of Nietzsche's concern here is that movements can be expedients that mistakenly take themselves as ultimate ends and confuse the conditions that they are responding to with the limits of possible action. Nietzsche typically expresses his complaint here in terms of the 'task,' 'goal,' hopes or telos of desire that becomes confused or lost once social life is organized around movements.

The more fundamental dissatisfaction with movements, however, is that their way of making claims seems to Nietzsche hopelessly compromised or even senseless. By 'claims,' I do not mean reports on how the world is, but assertions of some kind of normative standing: some status, right or entitlement. That this claim-making has replaced both seeking power and individual perfection is already perplexing to Nietzsche, but what he finds objectionable is that such claims are advanced by neither force nor persuasion. The main concern that the prevalence of social movements raises for Nietzsche is that social organization becomes enmeshed in such claims without having any intrinsic connection to their merit. Normative claims and the demands of mobilization each have their own requirements; movements inevitably mix up these two sets of requirements, compromising the very claims that they are rooted in. So the claims, which were originally important, were neglected, as in Nietzsche's example of liberal movements that cease to be liberal once they have power (TI 'Skirmishes' 38; cf. WS 284).

More generally, movements generate a bad conscience about their own ideals. Christianity is Nietzsche's paradigmatic example here. If it really possessed its own optimism, Nietzsche suggests, then it would not need a movement (A 36) or even a faith (A 33). It would sustain itself on the always-imminent expectation or the lived experience of a joyful existence available to all. Instead it needs to establish an enduring presence in the social world, with all of the practical compromises, popular appeals and institutional imperatives that entails. These worldly demands have been so thoroughly accommodated, Nietzsche insists, that 'every practice at every moment . . . is anti-Christian' (A 38) and '*there have never been any Christians*' (A 39).

This is the root of Nietzsche's complaint about movements: they involve a normative claiming that carries on in its own self-destruction. But even this still cannot explain the full nature of Nietzsche's complaint because this understanding of movements is insufficiently distinct from his own position. Nietzsche, too, agitated against the *status quo*, so whatever the fault of movements, it cannot be the effort to organize change. Nietzsche even identifies himself among the 'immoralists' who are participating in an 'opposition movement' (TI 'Errors' 7). He does not seem averse to claims of group identity, given his identification with immoralists, 'free spirits,' 'good Europeans' and several other mostly imaginary associations. Political organization, furthermore, is

not objectionable, since Nietzsche's 'critique of modernity' is that we 'lack the instinct out of which institutions grow' (TI 'Skirmishes' 39). So if a movement is a sustained social mobilization in favour of new institutions, then either Nietzsche offers his own views as susceptible to his critique of movements, or there must be some additional explanation of the failings of non-immoralist movements.

In the following section, I offer my explanation of Nietzsche's view of the failings of social movements and the democratic movement in particular. I argue that Nietzsche approaches movements as psychological entities, and assesses them as exceptional failures on that basis. The problem with the democratic movement in particular is that it appears as malformed, one-sided drives that frustrate their own satisfaction. These drives are not only unhealthy on their own, but they are also self-undermining even as they reinforce themselves in destructive ways.

3 Movements as psychological

Nietzsche's treatment of movements would not be familiar either to a participant or to, say, a sociologist studying them: he is generally uninterested in the movements' own terms of self-understanding, the observable characteristics of movements, and their structural roles in society. For Nietzsche movements, like much else, are psychological entities writ large, and are thus not typically about what they seem to be about. So the consideration of political formations is primarily a means to examining the psychological phenomena that underlie them: the drives, instincts and motivations that they manifest but which are not themselves distinctly political. This psychological understanding of movements furnishes the basis for assessing them. Nietzsche argues that the democratic movement in particular, seen as a psychological phenomenon, has become pathological: it is reactive, hypertrophic, disconnected from other psychological elements, and obstructs the possibility of its own satisfaction.

Nietzsche frequently characterizes social groups, and movements in particular, in the terms of individual psychology. Of course, it is not unusual to attribute beliefs, goals or values to groups – one can speak of class interests, or the outlook of a nation or an age. Nietzsche's discussions are unusual, however, in just how explicit he is in theorizing his project in terms of such attributions. The crucial innovation of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche claims, is its 'psychology' of 'the Dionysian phenomenon among the Greeks' (EH BT 1) – in other words that it offers a drive psychology in the service of cultural explanation. Nietzsche's paradigmatic movements each possess their own psychology, too: *ressentiment* is the primary factor in 'the psychology of Christianity' (EH GM), and Christianity in turn is treated in agentive terms in accounting for the revolutions of the nineteenth century (A 43). When specifically addressing the democratic movement, Nietzsche claims that its distinctive drives and instincts take on their character from their source in the physiology of 'herd animals' (BGE 202).[18]

In changing the terms of social analysis from the public character of events to their underlying psychological roots, Nietzsche manages to bring the language of diagnosis

to bear on social phenomena. The point of Nietzsche's political psychology, that is, seems to be that of understanding social phenomena in terms of 'symptoms' (BGE 202) and 'illnesses' (EH CW 2). To some extent, this is simply because Nietzsche sees these phenomena in psychological terms, so an adequate understanding of them requires analysing them in this way. Such analyses also permit Nietzsche to identify particular social formations as pathological, however, and thus gain some prescriptive leverage on how they might be altered. The language of diagnosis introduces the idea that our political psyche might be functioning well or poorly, and that remedies may be sought where it is not functioning well. Nietzsche most frequently characterizes the malfunctioning as a 'decline' (TI 'Skirmishes' 34, BGE 203): that is, that our functional capacity is steadily diminishing. There are a variety of other criticisms, too, and they generally turn on the social psyche not functioning in a sustainable way.

Nietzsche was not the only philosopher to appeal to psychological subjects comprised of social groups, but his approach is distinctive in a number of respects. Most basically, his attributions of psychological features to social entities are not merely rhetorical: he was not merely anthropomorphizing social movements, or making use of analogy or synecdoche. Some of the aspects of mindedness that Nietzsche identifies cannot be attributed to the individuals that comprise groups, and then only derivatively to the groups themselves. Nietzsche's ontological commitments are unclear, but he really seems to be invoking social minds; indeed, if anything, individual subjects seem to be modelled after social subjects. I think that Nietzsche's commitment to social minds can be shown with respect to all the intentional states that Nietzsche invokes, but it is most clear when the social subject is considered as an *agent*. Consider this passage for example: 'Several generations have performed the advance work for the emergence of the philosopher' (BGE 213). In this brief passage, as in Nietzsche's narratives about the development of the ascetic ideal, moral conscience, the sovereign individual, and many other things, the course of action can only be identified as extending past any individual's lifetime and outside of any individual's particular intentions. It is important to Nietzsche to treat these events as intentional activity, even though they belong to generations, nations, races, classes, types or movements rather than individual persons; the ascetic ideal, for example, is crucially self-inflicted rather than just a causal by-product of intentional activity.

One distinctive feature of Nietzsche's approach is that the psychological elements attributed to movements and other groups include not only mundane elements, such as beliefs and desires, but deep, unconscious elements, too. This political-psychological depth is represented as a 'labyrinth' (BGE 214) that contains 'secret entrances' (BGE 224) and hidden 'passages' (BGE 244) in every direction. These labyrinths lie beneath and belong to 'the German soul' (BGE 244) or 'the European soul' (BGE 245) in particular; the depths of the Greeks (TI 'Ancients' 3) and Christianity (A 61), like those of other peoples and ages, are not nearly so convoluted. Filling this hidden metaphorical space are the 'most basic' (A 61) and 'most fervent' (BGE 214) 'needs and desires' (A 61), 'inner tension' and 'drives' (TI 'Ancients' 3), and above all else a variety of 'instincts' (A 55, EH D 2) that manifest themselves in a diversity of forms. Nietzsche identifies will to power as an example of such an instinct (EH 'Ancients' 3), and one that explains both the content of mental states and outward behaviour. Will to power

as instinct itself functions as part of the psyche, albeit unconsciously, and at the same time grounds other, more readily apparent psychological phenomena.

Another distinctive feature of Nietzsche's approach is that these deep, unconscious drives that operate in political psychology can be independent of what might be called complete minds. The drives that Nietzsche identifies are not merely elements contained in developed, reflective subjectivity; they seem to be capable of functioning without any connection to a full repertory of psychological capacities or centre of experience. Submerged 'value feelings,' for example, have lives of their own: they 'live, grow, reproduce, and are destroyed' (BGE 186) by their own dynamics. 'Will' seems to be even more independent, regardless of whatever persons it happens to subsist in. It operates in a sphere populated by other wills, which in turn belongs to affects: 'the will to overcome an affect is, in the end, only the will of another or several other affects' (BGE 117). Drives, too, compete primarily with each other: 'they fight with each other and rarely leave each other in peace' (BGE 200; cf. BGE 6, 36). Larger-scale processes aggregate these psychological forces. So behind the democratic movement, for example, are not the views and desire of individual actors, but 'an immense physiological process' (BGE 242) that comprises a host of competing forces.

Nietzsche's world seems to be populated with psychological forces primarily and psychological subjects only derivatively, rather than the other way around. This presentation of free-floating psychological forces is strange, but at least consistent with some of his other views. He does not sharply distinguish between the psychological and the physiological, and he does not give ontological priority to individual minds (or 'souls'). He argues against a position that he calls 'atomism of the soul' (BGE 12), according to which minds have a single, unified centre, and traces this idea back to unreflective 'grammatical habits' (BGE 17; cf. TI 'Errors' 3).[19] Since he does not think an ontological or phenomenological core is at the centre of psychological features, the sub-personal drives and instincts are primary. They can subsist even without belonging to anyone's conscious experience, or, at the least, are available to serve in explanations without needing to be attributed to an individual agent.

With these elements of Nietzsche's political philosophy in view, a clearer picture of his objections to the democratic movement becomes possible. There are three sets of considerations that Nietzsche advances to explain why the democratic movement, considered psychologically, is problematic: the democratic movement produces *fragmentation*, *hypertrophy* and *frustration*. The first, *fragmentation*, pertains primarily to the will, although for Nietzsche effects on the will have further implications. Nietzsche characterizes the 'democratic fragmentation of the will' (BGE 208) as an active tendency that produces the 'disintegration' (CW 7) of the capacity for action. Nietzsche's basic idea is that the democratic movement provides an impetus towards the differentiation and separation of interests. By organizing legitimacy claims around the coincidence of individuals' judgements, drives become increasingly particularized and detached from each other. On the macro level, this appears as, in Keith Ansell Pearson's interpretation, 'something fundamentally selfish in which society rests on an individualistic basis, and culture becomes reduced to the pursuit of private gains' (Ansell Pearson 1991, p. 214): movement politics has the ironic result of atomizing the social world, so that claims of private interest come to cancel the possibility of

collective action.[20] Psychologically, Nietzsche thinks, this fragmentation produces a decentring that makes any unified 'working, thinking, feeling' (A 11) impossible.

The second consideration in terms of which Nietzsche criticizes the democratic movement is *hypertrophy*. Nietzsche sees the democratic movement as not only particularizing drives, but, once these drives are particularized, as exaggerating the development of some of them. He offers a general account of this phenomenon: 'No one, in the end, can expend more than they have – that goes for individuals as well as peoples . . . if one expends the quantum of understanding, seriousness, will, self-overcoming, that one is, then it is lacking for other things' (TI 'Germans' 4). As Nietzsche expresses it here, this is a problem specifically with goals: devoting oneself to certain ends precludes the opportunities for pursuing others. At the same time, however, he suggests that it is an existential problem. 'One is' a collection of wills and various other things, and so as these are reinforced or exhausted, what one is changes, too.

In the social manifestation of this problem, we can see why Nietzsche takes Christianity and democracy as especially objectionable movements. The very 'democratic tendency' (BGE 239) is to extend the application of its proper normative commitments from the operation of institutions to all domains. The dynamic of movements generally is for them to take on an independent importance, apart from the ends that they seek. But democracy, more so than temperance, suffrage, labour or agrarian reform, lends itself to be taken as an all-purpose moral or cultural ideal. This is of course true of religions, too; they tend to take on an all-encompassing importance. Nietzsche writes that they tend to 'look after themselves and become *sovereign*, when they want to be ultimate ends and not means among other means' (BGE 62). This is why Nietzsche refers to the movements that he opposes as 'unconditional' ones, in contrast with the countermovement that he supports.[21] Movement hypertrophy manifests itself in the same form that Nietzsche finds objectionable in morality: the unconditional assertion of value commitments that crowd out any possible competition.

The third criticism that Nietzsche levels against the democratic movement, that it produces its own *frustration*, generalizes and explains the other two. Insofar as Nietzsche explains what is wrong with fragmentation and hypertrophy, he usually presents them simply as sicknesses or diseases. The nature of these kinds of unhealth, however, seems to be that they render activity a self-aggravating, internal failure. Activity fails on its own terms, that is, either because one is rendered less capable of action or because the connection between immediate circumstance and ultimate end becomes hopelessly muddled – reason is 'crippled' (AOM 132) or 'subjugated' (WS 48) – or simply because the pursuit of one's ends becomes self-undermining. So Nietzsche's diagnosis of the Germans is that 'they have compromised themselves up to now' and they will not do any better in the future because their 'uncleanliness in *psychologicis* has become manifest' (EH CW 3). In 'compromising themselves,' they act to make themselves less capable of activity and frustrate their own ends – or 'take a great destiny and give birth to a mouse' (EH CW 3), as Nietzsche puts it. Here social agency and movement politics fall under Nietzsche's general diagnosis of modernity as a 'physiological contradiction' (CW 2nd postscript; cf. TI.9.41): that we have somehow become creatures who cannot act except against ourselves.

Movement politics is for Nietzsche a symptom of this general malady rather than something to be analysed on its own terms. He considers movements' actual operations and their public discourses at most as a means to discussing the underlying psychological phenomena. Of course, there were earlier approaches to understanding the political through the psychological, so it is worth distinguishing Nietzsche's approach from the most prominent earlier understandings, the organicism of Plato and Hegel.[22] On such an organicism, the social whole comprises a plurality of differentiated parts, each of which preserves the unity of the whole by working in organic harmony with all the other parts; the social whole is healthy when each part performs its proper function and the various functions harmonize appropriately. For Nietzsche, by contrast, there is no aim at achieving any kind of functional harmony; there is a plurality of drives and instincts that may be more or less coordinated and conflicted. Political agency stems from a diversity of independent psychological forces rather than the realization of a political soul. The justificatory appeal to organic unity is therefore not available to Nietzsche. Instead he appeals to internal failures in the activity of drives and instincts to make his psychological critique. They are defective when they enervate themselves, undermine their own pursuits, or aggravate their own excesses and shortcomings.

Nietzsche's critique of democracy is not aimed at democracy *per se*, but at the ways in which democracy functions at the level of political psychology. Nietzsche's claim is that the democratic movement exaggerates the cultivation of drives and instincts that lead neither towards the realization of their own ends nor to any other satisfaction. In general Nietzsche takes modern movement politics to be pathological in this way: it does not effectively serve the ends that it recognizes, and makes itself less effective in doing so. The democratic movement, as a result of the content of its norms and the character of its organization, is the paradigmatic modern movement for Nietzsche and, psychologically considered, the most destructive.

4 Conclusion

There is a passage in *The Prince* in which Machiavelli writes, 'The principal foundations that all states have . . . are good laws and good arms. And because there cannot be good laws where there are not good arms, and where there are good arms there are bound to be good laws, I shall straightway leave aside reasoning about laws and speak instead of arms' (Machiavelli 1969, p. 69). On the interpretation that I am offering, Nietzsche is making a parallel argument and offering a parallel discussion, about the psychology of political formations. There is little point in discussing political institutions and evaluating their features since we are bound to get the institutions that reflect what we are. Our political psychology is fundamentally important and causally primary.[23] On Nietzsche's account, a 'political event' (SE 4; cf. EH 'clever' 10) has little power to affect us, but our psychology determines the political order that we are suited for.

Nietzsche's critique of democracy is accordingly not about democracy *per se*, but about the forms of social mobilization by which we relate to actual and possible democratic institutions. The democratic movement, according to Nietzsche, is the

expression of an unhealthy psychology, and it is both ineffective at improving institutions and destructive of its own drives and instincts. Oddly, Nietzsche has nothing to say about how social arrangements might shape our psychological features, even as he worries that the new prevalence of movements might represent profound damage to our social possibilities. When a significant change occurs, we simply 'become aware that the new evaluation has acquired predominance in us' (D 534), and accommodate ourselves to this shift; but there is no role for institutions in this process. Nietzsche is deeply interested in the forms of sociality that we participate in, but sees political movements as useless at solving any problems about what forms our future sociality could take. Democracy purports to solve questions about how the social world should be arranged, but is at best anterior to answering psychological questions about what we are and want to be.

Nietzsche's critique nevertheless leaves democracy and even movements largely untouched. If the point of movements is simply that they are instrumentally important in effecting valuable change, then Nietzsche has no objection to that. His claim is not that this is empirically impossible – movements might indeed serve valuable ends – but that the movement politics that emerged in his day was already self-important, self-compromising and psychologically destructive. The overriding importance that Nietzsche places on the psychological, furthermore, both leaves open the possibility of democratic institutions that do not reflect pathological motivations, and implies that undemocratic regimes that suffered from the same maladies would not represent any kind of improvement. All this suggests that there are three possible responses to Nietzsche's concerns about the meaning of democratic movements. If we were to take Nietzsche's concerns seriously, one appropriate response would be to give up on democracy. Another possibility would be to alter how we think about our relationship to our institutions, so that we can accommodate ourselves to them in a less self-destructive way. One final possibility would be to change who we are, becoming the sort of people for whom democratic mobilization was not pathological. This may be, as Nietzsche insists, impossible to accomplish through social arrangements, or it may not be.[24]

Notes

1 See, for example, Shaw (2007), p. 2: 'Nietzsche indeed failed to articulate any positive, normative political theory.' Note: all translations are from the KSA and my own.

2 In none of these passages does Nietzsche unequivocally represent his own views in these terms. The TI passage is about 'what is culturally great', and the EH passages involve a distanced reflection on the text of BT and a self-ascription qualified by 'perhaps' and 'could possibly be'.

3 See, for example, Hatab (1995), Warren (1988) and Connolly (1991).

4 Although I will focus on democracy as my main example in this paper, my claims could just as well apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to other 'movements' that Nietzsche identifies, in particular socialism. Nietzsche's discussion of the feminist movement is importantly different – for one thing, Nietzsche doesn't evince the same

complete lack of interest in gender relations as he does in political and economic arrangements – but that is a topic for another paper.

5 I am not claiming that Nietzsche's approach resembles the contemporary interdisciplinary field called 'political psychology'; I hope to make some of the reasons for this clear in Section 3. The most basic difference, however, is that instead of using the results of psychology to explain political science, and vice versa, Nietzsche's approach is to treat politics *as* psychology. On political psychology see, for example, Sears et al. (1993).

6 See Tilly (2004), p. 5: 'German sociologist Lorenz von Stein introduced the term "social movement" into scholarly discussions of popular political striving.'

7 See Frese (1971), p. 880. Spalding and Brooke (1956), p. 303, trace this metaphor back to Acts 19:23, but this seems strained since the word there is *tarachos* rather than *kinesis* – it's a different metaphor.

8 See Spalding and Brooke (1956), p. 304.

9 See the listing for 'movement', entry 8a, in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2003). Williams (1983), p. 16, discusses the same example. Note that the issue in that context is whether there are outside agitators, or whether the source of the unrest is endogenous.

10 See Frese (1971), p. 881. Tilly (2004), p. 66, notes that this view of historical progress endured: 'It expresses a common inside view of social movement activity in the twentieth century: we are fulfilling history, and we will prevail.'

11 See Frese (1971), p. 881. Note that the influence of the French example extends to J. S. Mill's spelling of the word 'mouvement' as cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2003).

12 This issue is prominent in the *Communist Manifesto*, with respect to the 'Proletarian movement'; see, for example, Marx (2000), p. 130. See also Wilkinson (1971), ch. 2.

13 Tilly (2004), p. 47, points out that the Chartists saw themselves, or at least their activities, as belonging to a movement. I have not been able to find any earlier examples of such self-ascription.

14 See Tilly (2004), p. 3f.

15 Of course, not all movements are progressive or even share a view of history in which that characterization would make sense. The point that Tilly makes, and which is particularly relevant to Nietzsche's views, is about the elements out of which social movements *emerged*, however.

16 For additional discussion of 'imaginary revenge', see Guay (2006a), p. 359f.

17 This optimism, for Nietzsche, manifests itself in a kind of moral monism: Nietzsche reports late modern European political morality declaring, 'I am morality itself, and nothing besides me is morality' (BGE 202).

18 Nietzsche frequently blurs the 'physiological' and the psychological, so that, for example, cognition is a function of metabolism, or value judgements are the rooted in one's natural constitution. On the blurring, see Owen (1995), p. 49f.

19 I discuss this argument and related issues at greater length in Guay (2006b).

20 Nietzsche makes the parallel point with respect to Christianity: a 'private and cosmopolitan God' is the result of this kind of fragmentation in the religious sphere.

21 KSA X.7[21], p. 244, cited in Ansell Pearson (1991), p. 211.

22 I am not claiming that Hegel and Plato have the same position or that espouse organicism in every possible sense of the term. On Hegel's organicism, see Hegel (1999), in particular §271 and the remarks to §286. For Plato's organicism, see

especially *Republic* 462c. On the differences, see Allen Wood's notes in Hegel (1999), p. 442. For a further discussion of Hegel's organicism, see Cheah (2003), ch. 3. For an anti-organicist reading of Plato, see Provencal (1997).

23 Apart from some stark terminological differences, there is some overlap between the interpretative conclusion that I am offering that the 'aestheticization of political action' attributed to Nietzsche in Villa (1992). My reading, too, understands Nietzsche as taking social action as 'self-contained, as immanently valuable' (p. 276) rather than as deriving its value claims from an independent, juridical-normative order, and as rooting his claims in a 'fierce commitment to plurality and difference' (p. 275). On my reading, however, the immanent sphere of value is not properly called 'political' – it is better called the 'psychological' – since Nietzsche's point is that we should understand the familiar realm of laws and institutions in terms of it. And it seems a misnomer to call Nietzsche's position an aestheticization, since he is not appealing to distinctively aesthetic values, but simply denying that moral or economic values are overriding. Of course there are other, non-terminological differences between my reading and Villa's, such as his attribution of 'reductionism' (p. 276) to Nietzsche.

24 I wish to thank Melissa Zinkin for discussions of this topic with me, and Anna Gebbie and Keith Ansell Pearson for their comments on an earlier draft (and an early abstract, and some inchoate ideas, and so on).

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5

Nietzsche's Freedom: The Art of Agonic Perfectionism

David Owen

Every artist knows how far from any feeling of letting himself go his most "natural" state is – the free ordering, placing . . . giving form in the moment of "inspiration" – and how strictly and subtly he obeys a thousand fold laws precisely then, laws that precisely on account of their hardness and determination defy all formulation through concepts.

(BGE 188)

"It is the music in our conscience, the dance in our spirit that makes all the puritanical litanies, all the philistinism and moral sermons sound so dissonant."

(BGE 216)

What is the character of Nietzsche's account of freedom? This question is central to any appreciation or appropriation of Nietzsche's thinking for political theory but has only recently become a subject of significant attention and in ways that focus on rather different aspects of Nietzsche's work. Thus, at the risk of slight caricature, Patton (1993) has approached Nietzsche on freedom in terms of will to power, Ridley (2007) in terms of artistic agency, Siemens (2006) in terms of agonism and Guay (2003) in terms of perfectionism. My own previous work (1995, 2005, 2007) has touched on each of these aspects but without providing an adequate integration of them. To offer such an account is the task of this chapter.

The proposal advanced here is that, in his mature work, Nietzsche draws together three elements that have variously inhabited his thought from the beginning of his philosophical career. The first is art or, more specifically, his concern with artistic agency and the distinctive character of art as a medium of expression which is announced in *The Birth of Tragedy* but which take their relevantly settled form from *The Gay Science* onwards (Ridley 2007). The second is agonism which is initially introduced in the essay 'Homer's Contest' and which, as Siemens (2001, 2002, 2006; cf. also Owen 1995) has shown, pervades his later work. The third is perfectionism, which is already to the fore in the essay 'Schopenhauer as Educator' (Conant 2001) and remains a constant preoccupation of Nietzsche's work from that point onwards (Guay 2002). The task of this chapter is to lay out the argument for this proposal.

This chapter proceeds as follows. I begin by situating Nietzsche in relation to Kant in order to explore his account of agency and autonomy. This section foregrounds the idea of the sovereign individual and, following Ridley, artistic agency in order to provide a formal picture of Nietzsche's account of autonomous agency. In the second section, I turn to fleshing out this formal picture through recourse to Nietzsche's account of self-overcoming, drawing on an apparently paradoxical point raised by Reginster's (2006) recent work on will to power in order to introduce the centrality of the notion of a challenge to Nietzsche's understanding of freedom and to link freedom, perfectionism and agonism. In asking the question of what cultural relations can help sustain the form of practical relationship to self that constitutes freedom on Nietzsche's account, I return to art in its relationship to intellectual conscience.

1 Art, agency and autonomy

It is a notable feature of Nietzsche's work that while he adopts the central elements of the Kantian revolution, he significantly alters the register in which these elements are to be understood. Thus, Nietzsche endorses the shift of focus from certainty to necessity in the deontic modality of entitlements and commitments, and the corresponding focus on agency as rule-governed, where the bindingness of a norm is predicated on our understanding and acknowledgement of it as a norm, as well as the reconciliation of 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.' (Brandom 1994, p. 50). However, at the same time, Nietzsche situates this understanding of human agency within a naturalistic framework in which, as the opening sections of the second essay of the *Genealogy* demonstrate, this view of human beings as capable of binding themselves in normative commitments is seen as a quasi-evolutionary, quasi-historical achievement which grounds both the attribution of an '*instinct for freedom* (in my language: will to power)' (GM II: 18) to human beings as subjects of history and culture, and identifies Nietzsche's fundamental concern with the 'spiritualisation' of this instinct, that is, the ways in which it is sculpted; if the artist – or, better, the model of artistic agency – has a certain primacy for Nietzsche, it is precisely because he acknowledges the point that it is part of the ethology of human beings that they are cultural beings and, consequently, recognizes that *what we are* is intrinsically bound up with how we reflect and act on ourselves. Nietzsche takes the elaboration of existing forms, and the invention of new forms, of practically conceiving ourselves to be a basic mode of artistry – a point illustrated by the example of the priest as artist of the ascetic ideal. (Much of the complexity of Nietzsche's critical project of re-evaluation, including his turn to genealogical investigations, arises from the fact that he takes this point seriously.) In this respect, it is worth noting that the presentation of the slave-revolt in morality in the first essay of the *Genealogy* makes it clear that what drives the revolt is the instinct for freedom on the part of the slaves and what enables the revolt is a piece of artistic invention, the invention of a special and peculiar picture of human agency that is characterized, as Bernard Williams puts

it, by 'a kind of double-counting' in constructing the idea of an agent-cause and an action-effect, where the agent-cause stands behind, and separate from, the contingent conditions in which one is embedded and produces action-effects in virtue of the operation of 'the will,' where 'the mode of causation is that of command' (Williams 1995, p. 73). This fantastic idea, Nietzsche argues, has one overwhelming point in its favour from the slave's point of view; it enables them to experience themselves as agents (Owen 2007).

Let me now turn to Nietzsche's own understanding of agency by noting that Nietzsche's critique of the model of agency adopted in the slave-revolt invokes a rather different account of agency.

When Nietzsche writes 'there is no such substratum; there is no "being" behind doing, effecting, becoming; "the doer" is merely the fiction added to the deed – the deed is everything' (GM I: 13), it is clear that he is not denying that there are agents. Rather he is denying that agency can be conceptualized independently of the embodied and embedded circumstances of agency, that is to say, he is denying only that there are agents with free will in the sense specified by slave-morality. This being so, what is the sense of the final element of this claim: 'the deed is everything'? In adding this element to his claim, Nietzsche is directing us to his positive account of agency (and also making explicit the idea of agency that is expressed in noble morality) which, at the very least, involves commitment to the claim that an agent's intentions (and inner life more generally) cannot be grasped independently of what he does. Thus Nietzsche is, on the one hand, denying that 'the inner' (beliefs, intentions, value-commitments, etc.) is a separate domain that stands behind the agent's actions and, through issuing commands, causes them – and, on the other hand, asserting that 'the inner' is only given determinate expression through 'the outer,' that is, that it is only in action that the agent's intentions become the determinate intentions that they are. Indeed, in arguing that strength cannot but express itself as strength, Nietzsche moves to the broader claim that one's deeds are constitutive of what one is. Unsurprisingly, this view of agency also finds expression in the figure of the sovereign individual in the second essay of the *Genealogy*.

There, you will recall, Nietzsche describes the sovereign individual as the telos of the long pre-history of humanity. The sovereign individual exhibits 'a proud consciousness, tense in every muscle, of *what* has been finally achieved here, of what has become incarnate in him – a special consciousness of power and freedom, a feeling of the ultimate completion of man' (GM II: 2). Nietzsche continues:

> This liberated man who has the *prerogative* to promise, this master of *free* will, this sovereign – how should he not be aware of his superiority over everything which cannot promise and vouch for itself? How should he not be aware of how much trust, how much fear, how much respect he arouses – he "*deserves*" all three – and how much mastery over circumstances, over nature, and over all less reliable creatures with less enduring wills is necessarily given into his hands along with this self-mastery. (GM II: 2)

As Ridley (2011) has argued, we can draw out the relevant dimension of the sovereign individual by contrasting commitments whose success conditions (i.e. the conditions

that entitle one to say that the commitment has been kept) can and cannot be specified externally (i.e. in advance and independent of the execution of the accomplishment). 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 commitment 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*. Another way of drawing the distinction between the two kinds of commitment-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 (Ridley 2011). Take 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 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. (Ridley 2011, p. 190)

This helps to draw out the sense in which the sovereign individual can be represented by Nietzsche as the ethical *telos* of the process of socialization which he is exploring in this second essay of the *Genealogy* since the freedom enjoyed and exemplified by the sovereign individual is only available to persons who are 'socialized . . . all the way down,' that is, have internalized the norms constitutive of the social practices and institutions in and through which they act (in this case, that of marriage). In sum, then, the sovereign individual's entitlement to make commitments consists 'in his capacity to commit himself whole-heartedly to undertakings whose character is inconceivable except in the context of the institutions from which they draw their sense' (Ridley 2011, p. 192).

The importance of these reflections can be elucidated by noting that the model of agency and understanding of freedom illustrated by the figure of the sovereign individual is essentially artistic in the sense of adopting, adapting and generalizing Kant's account of artistic agency. For our current purposes, the crucial aspect of Nietzsche's adoption and transformation of the account of agency found in Kant's philosophy of art is that it identifies Nietzsche's picture of ethical agency as effectively taking artistic agency to be exemplary of agency in general. As Ridley (2007b) has argued, we can see this by considering Nietzsche's commitment to the following three claims: first, fully effective agency requires acknowledging and internalizing

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 freedom. In advancing the first of these claims, Nietzsche is drawing attention to the fact that agency is not opposed to necessities as if they are 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 as his or her *own* 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*' (Ridley 2007b, p. 213). In advancing the second claim, Nietzsche is adapting Kant's claim concerning genius to the notion that *second nature* 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*"' (Ridley 2007b, p. 213). Nietzsche regards such agency as exemplary because the necessities 'that are in operation here are, because unformulable, also inconceivable *except as* internal to what Kant calls the "performance", that is, to the exemplary exercise of artistic agency itself; therefore those [necessities] 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' (Ridley 2007b, p. 214). 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 freedom, Nietzsche is simply drawing the implication of the point 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 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' (Ridley 2007b, p. 214). 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. It is precisely on the basis of this commitment to an expressivist account of agency that Nietzsche can identify freedom as standing in a certain kind of self-relation which he glosses as *becoming what one is* with the will to self-responsibility (TI 38) expressed in the figure of the sovereign individual.

We may also note, in passing, that Nietzsche's commitment to this view explains a central feature of his mode of argumentation, namely, argument conducted through both abstract exemplars (the slave, the priest, the noble, the free-spirit, etc.) and concrete exemplars (Goethe, Wagner, etc.). If one is committed to the view that

agency is best conceived on the artistic model of exemplarity, it is hardly surprising that one's reflections on ethical culture are expressed through a focus on exemplary figures.

Once we have acknowledged the centrality of this artistic model of agency to Nietzsche's thinking, however, we must also recognize that this commitment has three significant entailments.

The first is that I do not stand in any privileged relationship to the specification of my intentions. What I intended can only be gathered from the performance – and this applies to my judgement of my intentions and their success or failure as much to another's judgements of my intentions. Because artistic agency is norm-governed in the sense that it is possible to go wrong and yet what getting it right and going wrong consist in cannot be specified in advance of the activity, the phenomenology of such activity is such that the feeling of going wrong seems to be revealed only in the moment of the apparent breaching of the norm and the feeling of getting it right has the character of finding what one was searching for all along. This phenomenological character can encourage the thought that the feeling that I have got it right (i.e. successfully fulfilled a commitment) amounts to getting it right but this is not the case – what is it that I have done, whether I have fulfilled a commitment and what the character of that commitment is, is a matter which is constitutively open to public judgement. And, of course, we know this in the sense that we are no doubt all familiar with the experience of being too close to ourselves to know quite what it is that we have done or having an action that we performed re-described to us from another perspective in a way that makes perspicuous to us that what we have done is not what we thought we had done. Nietzsche's purpose in drawing attention to this phenomenon is to make the point that the very possibility of ascribing intentions to myself, of experiencing myself as an agent at all, is dependent on the constitutive openness of action to public judgement. What my actions are (indeed, their very status as actions) and, hence, 'what I am' is not something over which I am sovereign. The sovereign individual is not sovereign in this sense (and thus we may note that Nietzsche's 'sovereign individual' is compatible with Arendt's critique of the sovereignty of the agent with respect to their actions.).

To see the second entailment, we need to return to the point that freedom involves internalizing the norms of a practice not as constraints on one's agency but as the conditions of one's agency. Taken in a holistic sense, this is clearly right – the person who regards grammar *per se* as a constraint on linguistic expression doesn't know what linguistic expression is. But this point should not cause us to overlook the equally important point for Nietzsche that the norms of a practice are not (indeed, cannot be) wholly fixed; freedom includes speaking and acting differently in the course of a language game and so modifying or transforming the game (for example, the work of e. e. cummings). Indeed the history of modern art and literature provides an exemplary illustration of this point. This matters for Nietzsche because it links freedom, the modification of the norms of a practice in the course of participation in the practice, and agonistic activity, that is, Nietzsche sees the modification of the norms of any practice as itself an agonistic activity of freedom, as a form of overcoming which is, at the same time, a form of self-overcoming.

The third entailment is that Nietzsche's understanding of freedom is incompatible with any understanding of norms and, hence, normative standards as grounded externally to human practices themselves, that is, to the natural history of humanity as cultural beings.

2 Agonism, perfectionism and will to power

Thus far, then, we have a basic and rather abstract picture of Nietzsche's account of freedom as comprising a relation to oneself in which one understands one's commitments not as constraints on one's agency but as the conditions of that agency being one's own and in which the success conditions of these individualizing commitments are understood as internal to the performance of them and as open to public judgement, that is, to being re-described from other perspectives that may prove more perspicuous than (i.e. superior to) the agent's own self-understanding of their activity. But this picture may be misleading unless we also address it under another aspect in order to draw out more fully the dynamic element of 'the instinct for freedom,' namely, its relationship to self-overcoming.

Consider, first, that on the picture provided, freedom necessarily involves self-overcoming in the sense of overcoming whose desires, impulses, inclinations to wishful thinking or self-deception that obstruct fulfilling one's commitments and are almost inevitable threats to such goals (often masquerading as plausible rationalizations – consider the example of marriage again). Moreover, it is a mistake to construe the place of self-overcoming in this account purely in instrumental terms, that is, as triumphing over obstacles specified as such by reference to a pre-determined goal. On Nietzsche's expressivist account of agency in which intentions become determinate in the process of acting itself, what appear initially as obstacles may become seen as opportunities that involve a revision of the goal at which one is aiming – in becoming determinate, the character of the goal may itself shift. Nietzsche's point can be expressed in terms of an understanding of the nature and normativity of ethical relations to self as the processual relationship of attained to attainable self (to borrow Emerson's terms) rather than the teleological relationship of real to ideal self. Put pictorially, whereas for Kant the moral horizon is fixed even if we, composed of 'crooked timber,' cannot reach it, for Nietzsche, the ethical horizon moves as we move.

But Nietzsche's view goes yet further than this in one important respect, namely, as Bernard Reginster (2006) has argued, that freedom viewed under the aspect of self-overcoming involves the apparently paradoxical claim that willing a goal means also willing resistance to achieving this goal. It is after all one thing to acknowledge that the kinds of promise made when getting married will make demands of self-surveillance, self-discipline and truthfulness in relation to oneself that are likely to be testing (and, hence, it is not a condition lightly to be entered into). It seems to be another thing to say that in willing marriage one wills the testingness of these demands. But is it? Is Nietzsche's claim paradoxical?

On reflection, it is hard to see why one should think so – consider the notion of a 'challenge.' It is of the nature of challenges that, first, they involve overcoming

resistances (no resistance, no challenge); second, they must be realizable (if there is no practical possibility of you achieving X, then X is not a challenge for you); third, that their value is at least partially related to their difficulty (given two challenges distinguished only by their degree of difficulty, the more challenging option is the more valuable); fourth, once a challenge is met (assuming it is the type of challenge that can be finally met), it is no longer valuable as a challenge. Freedom, on Nietzsche's account, involves making commitments, where a commitment involves standing security for ourselves in relation to an unknown future, binding ourselves to a realistically achievable goal regardless of the difficulties or inconveniences that may attend its realization. In this respect, commitments, properly understood, are challenges we take up. Freedom as a practical relation to self is a relation of self-overcoming and Nietzsche's perfectionism – a non-teleological perfectionism – consists in taking up (through ongoing practice) a stance towards ourselves as beings who challenge ourselves.

Thus, suppose I take myself to be committed to writing philosophy. I can stand in different relationships to this activity. On the one hand, I can skate by, never really stretching myself. On the other hand, I can try to extend my abilities, push myself to produce better arguments. Nietzsche's first point is that if I am committed to writing philosophy, I am committed to writing good philosophy or, at least, the best philosophy of which I am capable; hence if I just skate by, it is not clear that I am actually committed to the activity at all. His second point is that the value of the philosophy that *I* can produce is likely to hang on the commitment that I exhibit to it. It may still not be great or even particularly good philosophy in comparison to the work of some (perhaps most) others, but it will be the best of which I am capable. In this sense, I act to realize my philosophical genius, however limited that genius may turn out to be. What, though, are the conditions needed to create and sustain such a processual perfectionist relationship to self? It is with this question that I want to return to art and agonism.

To grasp the essential role of art in this relationship requires drawing attention to the fundamental place of 'intellectual conscience,' of truthfulness, in Nietzsche's account. Consider the well-known 'One thing is needful' passage in *The Gay Science* in which the picture of autonomy exemplified by the sovereign individual is pre-figured in an aesthetic register:

> To "give style" to one's character – a great and rare art! It is practised by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses that their nature has to offer and then fit them into an artistic plan until each appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a great mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of first nature removed – both times through long practice and daily work at it. Here the ugly that could not be removed is concealed; there it is reinterpreted into sublimity. Much that is vague and resisted shaping has been saved and employed for distant views – it is supposed to beckon towards the remote and immense. In the end, when the work is complete, it becomes clear how it was the force of a single taste that ruled and shaped everything great and small – whether the taste was good or bad means less than one may think; it's enough that it was one taste!

> It will be the strong and domineering nature who experience their most exquisite pleasure under such coercion, in being bound by but also perfected under their own law; . . . (GS 290)

There are numerous issues raised by this passage (Owen 2011) but my initial focus concerns the point that Nietzsche takes this process of self-artistry to require the exercise of two capacities. The first is that of intellectual conscience; the second that of art. Why?

In *The Gay Science* (335) entitled 'Long live physics!' Nietzsche remarks that our conscience exhibits a long history of inherited prejudices and that to rectify this condition, we need to exercise a conscience behind our conscience, an intellectual conscience, through which we scrutinize with ruthless honesty our experience, the grounds of our valuing and norms of conduct (an example of such scrutiny is *On the Genealogy of Morals)* in order to determine what is necessary to us and what simply obscures us to ourselves (for example, morality). It is just this intellectual conscience which is needful on Nietzsche's account in surveying the strengths and weaknesses of our nature, in identifying what can be removed or transformed through patient labour on the self and what cannot. In contrast to contemporary self-help gurus, Nietzsche recognizes that there are likely to be weaknesses and uglinesses that cannot be removed or transformed, that are necessities. Ruthless honesty can lead us in the direction of nausea and suicide, Nietzsche observes, but we possess a counterforce in art 'as the *good* will to appearance,' hence: 'Here the ugly that could not be removed is concealed; there it is reinterpreted into sublimity' (GS 290). Nietzsche's point is that art can make ourselves – and existence – bearable for us by foregrounding this element and concealing that, by brightening this feature and shading that. But, it might be objected, isn't this a falsifying of one's self-understanding? Well, do portraits falsify? They can but there is no sense in which they must do so. A woman putting on a light touch of make-up in the morning is not falsifying her appearance but trying to accentuate or highlight certain features rather than others – the brightness of her eyes, the classical line of her cheek-bones, the generosity of her smile.[1] Nietzsche's point does not license – except in extremis – falsification; what it does do is point to the need to be able to accept what is necessary in oneself. Such acceptance is a condition of sustaining one's allegiance to a life worth living, to the demands of freedom, without succumbing to the falsifications that Nietzsche sees in ideas such as providence or the claim the modern milksop represents the pinnacle of civilization.

Yet, and here we move to the role of agonism, supporting the self-relation of 'becoming what one is' is hardly an activity that can be undertaken with any confidence alone. We are all too easily sources of illusion and obscurity to ourselves even as we may think that we are becoming clear to ourselves. To some extent, this problem can be addressed by acquiring the capability of stepping back from oneself, looking at oneself as 'on stage,' and deploying a variety of perspectives in relation to oneself so as to be better able to judge what it is that one is doing and to reflect on one's purposes in doing what one is doing. We can acquire such a capacity insofar as culture makes available to us such a plurality of perspectives – and there is, of course, a clear sense in which the activity of re-description that Nietzsche undertakes in the

Genealogy just is an exemplary attempt to provide another perspective which tries to show his contemporaries that, to borrow a phrase, 'they know not what they do.' Better yet, friends – and adversaries – can bring their knowledge of us to bear on our self-understanding (as Cavell's remarkable essays on the comedy of re-marriage and Foucault's late work on parrhesia illustrate so profoundly). Nietzsche's point is not merely, however, that access to a plurality of perspectives is a source of self-knowledge but also that this pluralism constructs an agon, a relationship between competing perspectives. In this respect, the *Genealogy* – and much of Nietzsche's later work – as articulating an alternative perspective on what we, moderns, *are* can be seen as the attempt to construct an agon in modern culture. But if such an ethical culture is to create and sustain freedom, it must be agonistic in a further sense of attracting individuals to a life of freedom by supplying a plurality of competing exemplars – not for imitation but for following. Exemplars serve, on Nietzsche's understanding, as laying down challenges to us.

Nietzsche's efforts to articulate such a perspective on modern culture took the form of proposing various exemplars and, indeed, trying to represent himself as one. This was perhaps a somewhat desperate tactic but, like Kant in the essay 'What is Enlightenment?,' Nietzsche saw that liberties without exemplars of freedom are insufficient. His concern was also nicely expressed by that great liberal thinker John Stuart Mill:

> In our times, from the highest class of society down to the lowest, everyone lives under the eye of a hostile and dreaded censorship. Not only in what concerns others, but in what concerns themselves, the individual or the family do not ask themselves, what do I prefer? Or, what would suit my character and disposition? Or, what would allow the best and highest in me to have fair play and enable it to grow and thrive? They ask themselves, what is suitable to my position? what is usually done by person of my station and peculiar circumstances? or (worse still) what is usually done by persons of a station and circumstance superior to mine? I do not mean that they choose what is customary in preference to what suits their own inclination. It does not occur to them to have any inclination excepts for what is customary. Thus the mind itself is bowed to the yoke: even in what people do for pleasure, conformity is the first thing thought of; they like in crowds; they exercise choice only among things commonly done; peculiarity of taste, eccentricity of conduct are shunned equally with crime, until by dint of not following their own nature they have no nature to follow: their human capacities are withered and starved; they become incapable of any strong wishes or native pleasures, and are generally without either opinions or feelings of home growth, or properly their own. Now is this, or is it not, the desirable condition of human nature? (cited in Cavell 2004, pp. 96–7)

Nietzsche's hope was grounded on the inheritance that modern man received from the ascetic ideal: unmatched capacities for self-surveillance, self-discipline and honesty towards ourselves. His worry is that we squander that inheritance – and that the instinct for freedom is reshaped into something like a desire for security and comfort. For Nietzsche, life is a challenge and a life of freedom is a life dedicated to affirming

and taking up that challenge. The fundamental cultural question is thus how best to cultivate this ethos – and one part of that question concerns the political arrangements that best cultivate it both within the political arena and in social life.

Note

1 I am grateful to Caroline Wintersgill for unknowingly providing this example.

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6

Reassessing Radical Democratic Theory in the Light of Nietzsche's Ontology of Conflict[1]

Herman W. Siemens

1 Introduction

Do we need to rethink conflict as an irreducible and essential part of vibrant democratic politics? If so, how should conflict be understood such that it is anchored in the deep structure of political life, while remaining within the bounds of democratic principles? These questions encapsulate what 'agonistic' or 'radical democrats' have in common, and what connects them to Nietzsche's thought. Over the past 20 years or so a number of Anglo-American political theorists have appealed to Nietzsche in formulating their agonistic theories of democracy. His hostility to modern democracy is either ignored, played down or softened by agonistic theorists,[2] who look instead for *constructive* resources in Nietzsche's thought, and especially his concept of limited, agonistic conflict, for rethinking democratic politics today. This chapter aims to reassess the critical and constructive potential of Nietzsche's thought for democratic politics by confronting agonistic theory with his concept of the agon and more broadly, his ontology of conflict (will to power). Do existing democratic appropriations release constructive potentials in his thought to which he was blinded by his aristocratic proclivities? Are they viable ways of thinking 'with and against' Nietzsche – or does his thought rather offer insights into democracy and antagonism that expose fatal weaknesses in these appropriations?

The first part of the chapter will consider agonistic democratic theory in the light of Nietzsche's ontology of conflict/power and his concept of the agon. Agonistic theory, I will argue, is informed by an ontology of struggle and power that is post-structuralist in origin and quite distinct from Nietzsche's. What is more, Nietzsche's ontology of conflict opens up critical and corrective perspectives on contemporary conceptions of agonism and especially their reliance on the notion of 'agonistic respect.' The second part of the chapter turns to the question of the constructive resources in Nietzsche's thought for democratic theory. These are located first in Nietzsche's 'philosophy of hatred' with the thesis that for Nietzsche hatred, envy, pride and the like are the springs of agonal action, not respect. Nietzsche's philosophy of hatred opens up a rich and 'realist' phenomenology of enmity unbound by the constraints of 'respect,'

yet profoundly affirmative of the other. The last part of the paper concentrates on the link between pluralism and antagonism made by agonistic theorists. Focusing on the agonism of Chantal Mouffe, it argues that Nietzsche's ontology of conflict overcomes the problems she inherits from Carl Schmitt's 'reactive' theory of power and offers alternative ways to address one of the central tasks for political philosophy today: how to rethink pluralism in a way that addresses its contemporary forms and formations.

2 Agonistic democratic theory and Nietzsche's ontology of conflict

Radical democratic theory emerged in the 1990s from a dissatisfaction with democratic politics and mainstream democratic theory. For the most part, agonistic democrats are left-leaning, Foucault-inspired theorists concerned with the deficits of contemporary democracies – with persistent inequalities and minority groups that remain marginalized and below the threshold of legitimate identity and political participation.[3] Their interest in Nietzsche's agon is, then, driven by questions quite alien to his thought: How to stay true to our democratic aspirations to liberty, equality and justice in face of actual democracy's failures? How to empower those marginalized in their emancipatory struggle against inequality? If these questions are alien to Nietzsche's thought, the connection becomes clearer in their response. What unites them is the claim that *antagonism, division and struggle are inherent to democratic politics*.[4] Their project is to theorize a politics of resistance and struggle that allows for legitimate forms of opposition to existing power-regimes in contemporary democracies *by recuperating the original sense of democracy as incessant contestation*.[5] In broad terms, their claim is (1) that antagonism, struggle, contestation, disagreement and dissensus are ineradicable, a daily and incessant part of democratic politics; but also (2) that they are *desirable*: a valuable (emancipatory, productive) feature of democracy, to be affirmed and celebrated, because they make genuine *pluralism* possible and are essential to questioning, resisting and transforming power-relations. Antagonism is both a descriptive principle and an axiological principle.

These claims encapsulate the key criticisms levelled by agonistic democrats against mainstream democratic theory. Their principle targets are the deliberative theories of democracy that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s with the work of John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas. The agonists' criticisms focus on the key concept of *Public Reason* that can secure the legitimacy of democratic institutions by ensuring that all decisions are the result of an exchange of arguments among free and equal rational citizens; and the concept of an *all-inclusive rational consensus* that resolves disagreements, as the telos of deliberation.[6] The criticisms can be summarized under three headings:

1. *Antagonism or dissensus contra consensus:* Against the deliberative ideal of an all-inclusive consensus, agonists emphasize the importance of dissensus, disagreement as a daily part of democratic life. They also emphasize the structural and conceptual impossibility of all-inclusive consensus, and the

violence, the exclusionary effects and remainders that attend any attempt at closure.[7]

2. *Pluralism is inherently antagonistic:* Against the notion of public reason oriented towards consensus, agonists emphasize the antagonistic character of genuine pluralism. While the antagonistic potential of value-pluralism is acknowledged by liberalism, it is perceived as a threat and confined to the private sphere, effectively de-politicizing pluralism in favour of (overlapping) consensus in a value-neutral public sphere.
3. *Power is inherently antagonistic:* Against the deliberative ideal of a *non-coercive* consensus among rational agents, in which power-relations are absent, agonistic theorists hold that power is constitutive of all identities, subjectivities and sociopolitical relations, and that power is intrinsically antagonistic. This is the familiar anti-liberal Foucauldian claim that power-relations are *constitutive* in both negative and positive senses: constitutive of (macro- and micro-) relations of *domination* – subordination, subjection/subjectification and exclusion; but also *emancipatory* (at least potentially) – as processes of questioning, resisting and transforming power-relations.

All three claims are based on an affirmative notion of struggle or agon that is supposedly derived from Nietzsche, whether directly or indirectly, by way of post-structuralism and Foucault. In order to examine this connection, we can begin by asking what form political agonism is supposed to take. Agonistic theorists are divided over how exactly 'to cash out the notion of politics as struggle,'[8] and it is far from clear what constructive consequences this notion is supposed to have for institution-building and – reform in contemporary democracies. But several authors (Hatab, Owen) emphasize the deep compatibility of Nietzsche's concept of the agon and his agonistic concept of power with liberal-democratic practices and procedures at all levels.[9] Hatab emphasizes the *contest of speeches*, where policy is determined by *winning*; but also the *temporary* and contestable nature of any settlement. Most recently, he has highlighted the agonistic or adversarial style of democratic legal practice.[10] Owen's focus is on the agonistic, dissensual nature of *democratic deliberation and reason-giving*. 'Agonistic deliberation' is conceived as deliberative contestation *within* and *over* the terms of democratic citizenship. That is to say, deliberation involves not just participation in democratic-constitutional institutions, but also deliberation *over* those institutions themselves. In a recent volume of essays on the relation between political agonism and law,[11] he argues against drawing too sharp a distinction between contestation *within* a legal-political order, and contestation *over the terms* of such an order: agonistic deliberation presupposes rule of law, civil liberties and public reason while also opening their implementation up to contestation.

These political agonisms exhibit two *formal* features that bear directly on Nietzsche's concept of the agon in *Homer's Contest (Homer's Wettkampf, HC*):

1. The first is the *open-ended, counter-final* character of agonism: no results are permanent, all settlements remain open to contestation, so that contestation is incessant, continuous. In *HC*, this is implied by the exclusion of the 'hervorragende Individuum' from Nietzsche's account of agon; that is, the

conclusive victor who cannot be challenged. This implies that the agon can only work and thrive where a plurality of antagonistic 'forces (*Kräfte*) or "geniuses"' are engaged in an *inconclusive, open-ended contestation of victory* (HC, KSA 1, 789). The agon admits mastery *between* the contests – temporary, intermittent victors like the Olympic champion or the winner of the contest of tragedies *this year*. The emergence of an absolute victor kills the agon.

2. The other formal element concerns the *scope* of contestation. Contestation does not just take place *within* a specific political-legal-institutional order, but also over the very terms of that order; political agonism does not just follow a set of rules and procedures but is also contestation over those very rules, procedures and criteria. This formal characteristic coheres with the anomalous character of agon as game, as described by Nietzsche in *HC* and *MA 170*.[12] The measure or standard of victory is not given or fixed independently of each contest; it is the actual issue of contestation, so that the agonal antagonist does not just want to win; his ambition is to determine *what counts as winning*, so that you have a contest of judgements of victory or a contestation of justice – of the very standard or measure of victory.

Despite these formal convergences, Nietzsche's account of the agon in *Homer's Contest* does not translate well into democratic practices. This is (1) because the text presents not a recipe for action or recommendation, but a highly stylized, not to say idealized model of the agon focused on martial, artistic, athletic and pedagogic practices, rather than politics. In other, more realist contexts Nietzsche can be highly critical of the Greek agon for its practical consequences, such as stifling lesser talents, and inhibiting the emergence of the individual.[13] This suggests that, in taking inspiration from Nietzsche's idealized model of the agon in *Homer's Contest*, agonistic theorists offer highly idealized accounts of democratic practices which ignore the practical difficulties of real agonistic interaction. Furthermore (2), the relation between the agon and democracy is tenuous at best for Nietzsche. Like his colleague at Basel, Jacob Burckhardt, he was suspicious of modern mass democracies for promoting mediocrity. Both opposed the agon practised by Greek aristocrats not just to modern culture but also to later Greek democracy.[14] By disrupting one-to-one relations and introducing the 'masses' into the equation, democracy actually ruined the agon for Burckhardt, who writes of fifth century Greece: 'The entire praxis of democracy becomes with time an inauthentic agon in which despicable speech, sycophancy etc. come to the foreground.'[15] To relate the agon to democratic practices in affirmative ways, as do political agonists like Hatab, Owen and Connolly, is therefore is to oppose, rather than succeed to Nietzsche. So how exactly do they situate the agon in democracy?

In Hatab's case it begins with the claim that there are deep compatibilities between Nietzsche's thought and democracy, or at least: democracy under a certain description. They concern not just (1) the notion of agon, but also (2) perspectivism and the open category of interpretation (in place of foundationalist claims to absolute, objective knowledge, and (3) the Nietzschean suspicion of the underlying power-claims at stake in moral and cognitive claims.[16] In his 1995 book *A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy*,

he argues that Nietzsche opens the possibility of redescribing democracy in non-metaphysical terms that incorporate critical insights of postmodernism and enable us to dispense with a positive concept of *equality*, with its irreducibly metaphysical/theological foundations. That is to say, Hatab takes one aspect of Nietzsche's critique of democracy on board: the critique of equality, but argues that we can theorize democracy *without* a substantive concept of equality. In place of equality, he proposes an ethos of *agonistic respect* for opponents, grounded in Will to Power (I shall return to this below).

Connolly and Owen advance a perfectionist version of agonistic democratic theory. Their question 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 our fast-paced world.[17] Indeed, in Connolly's view, Nietzsche offers unique constructive resources for rethinking key democratic ideas in a present that seems to be outpacing slow pace of democratic deliberation, as well as the ideals bequeathed by classical democrats such as Rousseau, Tocqueville, Mill, or even contemporaries like Rawls or Habermas.

In all three cases we are clearly dealing with appropriations, rather than interpretations of Nietzsche. Their concern is not to interpret his texts in a way that does justice to their specificity, but to take from them and adapt what is needed for their own 'post-Nietzschean' democratic projects.[18] But the question of interpretation remains: whether what they take from Nietzsche – most notably the affirmative notion of antagonism – is adequate as an interpretation of his thought. In Section 1 of this Chapter I examine what divides Nietzsche's conception of the agon from the notions of antagonism at work in agonistic theory, in order to highlight some of the weaknesses in the latter that emerge out of these differences. Section 2 will then turn to the question of what constructive alternatives, if any, his philosophy of conflict has to offer.

Against 'respect'

In advancing a concept of democratic politics as antagonism, struggle and disagreement, any agonistic theory of democracy must in one way or other confront the problem of limits or measure: How to contain political struggle so that it remains *this side* of mutual annihilation? In *HC* this is the question of the relation between the *Wett-kampf* and the *Vernichtungs-kampf*, between the 'good' and the 'evil Eris.' As part of their response, almost all agonists (Hatab, Owen, Connolly, Mouffe) appeal to some form of respect – 'agonistic respect' – for the other as a legitimate opponent. That is to say, they appeal to self-restraint on the part of the agonist guided by a certain attitude, disposition or ethos. In what follows, two examples will be considered.

1. The first is Hatab. In dispensing with a substantive notion of equality, Hatab tries to replace it with an ethos of equal regard[19] and agonistic respect.[20] This ethos

is supposedly derived from the antagonists' insight into their agonistic interdependence, which in turn is presented by Hatab as a consequence of Nietzsche's Will to Power:

> [T]he will to power expresses an agonistic force-field, wherein any achievement or production of meaning is constituted by an overcoming of some opposing force. Consequently, my Other is always implicated in my nature; the annulment of my Other would be the annulment of myself. [. . .] This is why Nietzsche often speaks of the need to affirm our opponents as opponents, since they figure in our self-development.[21]

– and upon this Hatab builds his concept of agonistic respect. Agonistic respect is a consequence of my insight into the reciprocity and interdependence of antagonistic forces. Since 'the annulment of my Other would be the annulment of myself' (or again: 'The elimination or degradation of the Other would be self-defeating'),[22] I am bound to affirm my opponent as opponent.

Hatab's analysis involves a curious, psychologistic translation of the Will to Power onto the plane of the subjective self-awareness. But I am not a Will to Power, and others are not opposing Wills to Power. We are all derivative, provisional unities resulting from the infinitely complex, pre-conscious, subject-less organizations of Wills to Power. Furthermore, Hatab's is a 'soft,' altogether sanitized interpretation of the Will to Power that dissolves the dynamic of creation-destruction, the activity of expansion through incorporation or functionalization of opposing Will to Power complexes, and the logic of exploitation. In Nietzsche's thought there is a *tension* between the agon and the Will to Power, one that can be traced to the moment of measure or limits in the agon: in precluding injury and exploitation it divides the agon against life as Will to Power, insofar as Will to Power *includes* injury and exploitation.[23] This tension is overlooked by Hatab, who effectively reads agonal restraint back into the 'logic' of the Will to Power. Finally, one can question whether the Will to Power allows for the kind of recognition or acknowledgement of the Other that supposedly motivates agonistic self-restraint. Hegelian dialectics may allow for acknowledgement of the Other in its particular content, but it is unclear whether the logic of exploitation in power-relations implies any more than the instrumental valuation by one power-complex of the resistance offered by another as means for its own expansion.[24]

2. In the case of Connolly, one can see even more clearly than in Hatab that agonistic politics is based on an ontology of struggle and power that is quite alien to Nietzsche. Connolly's point of departure is a theory of identity, supposedly informed by Nietzsche and Foucault. In a world of flux without design, he argues, any life-form or self, in order to subsist as a unity, needs an identity 'to organise and resist the chaos of raw sensibility.'[25] Yet life, understood as an excess of energy propelling possibilities into being, 'exceeds any purpose or identity to which people already conform; for every way of life, settled practice or fixed identity produces difference in and around itself in the very process of specifying itself.'[26] Life, therefore, 'provides a precondition for identity while resisting [because exceeding – HS] the completion of any form of identity' (ibid.).

This account of identity-formation, conceived as a process of 'constituting' or 'producing' difference, rests on a post-structuralist logic of the 'constitutive outside.'[27] In Nietzsche's ontology of life, by contrast, difference – like activity – is a precondition (or presupposition) for (thinking) identity as a life-process. It is only by virtue of differential relations with other forces, in the very process of confronting the resistance they offer, that any derivative identity is possible. Identity, understood as the process whereby a complex or organization of Wills to Power is formed, does not *produce* difference; rather it *seeks out* resistance and difference in order to expand by commanding and incorporating that which resists it.[28] It is not therefore Nietzsche's concept of diversity and difference to which Connolly's agonistic politics of identity and difference is hospitable.

Connolly's post-structuralist theory of identity is designed to address adequately and affirm the specific character of pluralism in late modern democracies; what he calls 'the *paradox of difference* that haunts social life in late modern democracies.'[29] Identity (personal, group, collective) 'is defined and specified by the way it constitutes difference: identity needs difference to be, but difference threatens the security and certainty of self-identity.'[30] Connolly's question is, then: How best to respond to this paradox politically? The paradigmatic response, he maintains, is to deny the constitutive role of the other and to seek the self-certainty of identity through closure against the other; that is, by defining the other as evil or (in the case of deliberative theory) irrational, while making claims to absolute truth and value for oneself.[31] Connolly's agonistic alternative to this response turns on the need to acknowledge the contingency and incompleteness of identity, and its constitutive dependence on difference and opposition. What is needed instead, he argues, are identities that can affirm themselves *without* denying their constructed, relational, paradoxical character; only this will allow for a pluralization of identities appropriate to our contemporary world. The hope is that insight into our agonistic dependence on the other can act as an incentive towards 'agonistic respect,' which he characterizes as an 'empathy for what we are not,' a 'care for difference.'[32] For Connolly, agonistic respect is a 'civic virtue,' one that goes as far as 'deep respect,' by which he means that 'those who bestow it acknowledge the dignity of those who embrace different sources of respect,' that they 'honor different final sources.'[33] Yet Connolly insists that none of this excludes *contesting* other sources of respect, and he enlists Nietzsche's 'spiritualisation of enmity' (*Vergeistigung der Feindschaft*) in order to explicate this peculiar agonistic empathy. He appeals in specific to Nietzsche's 'pathos of distance' and refers to *TI Antinature 3* as a key source:

> The spiritualisation of sensuality is called *love*: it is a great triumph over Christianity. Another triumph is our spiritualisation of *enmity*. It consists in profoundly grasping the value of having enemies [. . .] The church has at all times wanted the destruction of its enemies: we, we immoralists and anti-Christians, see that it is to our advantage that the church exists. . . . In the domain of politics as well enmity has become more spiritual nowadays – much cleverer, much more thoughtful, much more *considerate* [*schonender*]. Almost every party grasps that its interest in self-preservation lies in the opposition party not losing its powers [. . .] (TI Antinature 3, KSA 6, 84)

According to Connolly, this passage illustrates how our insight into the reciprocity and interdependence of enmity leads to an agonistic respect for our enemies.

Despite significant differences in their approaches, Hatab and Connolly have two things in common.

1. Both approach the question of limits *from the position of the subject* and the kind of ethos or attitude that must be adopted for political antagonism to remain this side of mutual destruction.
2. Both theorists start from the subject's insight into the *reciprocity and interdependence implied by relations of antagonism or enmity*, and derive from it an acknowledgement or respect for the antagonist or enemy; that is, the attitude or ethos that limits or contains the subject's antagonism.

Both of these points are, I believe, deeply problematic and can be criticized from a Nietzschean perspective. To begin with the second point: In Nietzsche's passage on the spiritualization of enmity, used by Connolly to support his notion of agonistic respect, there is no talk of 'respect,' let alone respect for one's enemy, much less 'empathy.' Nietzsche writes of a deep understanding, i.e. acknowledgement of the 'the value of having enemies'; but *to value enmity* is by no means the same as *respecting one's enemy* à la Connolly. In Nietzsche's formulation, what is valued (*not* respected) are *relations* of enmity (*not* the enemy), and to value relations of enmity implies only that one values the enemy for the resistance or opposition it offers one, *not* for the specificity of its content. The same difficulty afflicts Hatab's account, as we have seen, since it is the opposition of the other, the resistance it offers, that is constitutive of my Will to Power or perspective, and not its specific content. Both accounts raise the same question: Does the interdependence of antagonistic relations imply any more than the *instrumental* value of the antagonistic other?[34] This concern is completely missed if 'the value of enmity' is allowed to slide into 'respect for the enemy.'

Nietzsche's emphasis on *relations of enmity* is by no means confined to this text. The late Nietzsche writes of 'the *relational character* of all occurrence' (*Relationscharakter alles Geschehens*: KSA 11, 26[36], 157) and develops a relational ontology of tension, attraction-repulsion, action-resistance among forces without substance to describe it. This suggests that there is something amiss with the first point shared by Hatab and Connolly: their attempt to think agonistic interaction and the question of limits from the subject-position. This suspicion is confirmed when we consider that for the young Nietzsche who authored *Homer's Contest*, it was clear that the agon became important and effective as an institution in a context where the Greeks could *not* rely on self-restraint. What drew Nietzsche to the Greek agon was the way it conjugated a heroic pathos, the temptation to *hubris* and excess (*Übermass*) on the part of the *subjects*, with measured, creative conflict in the relations *between* them:

> *Wonderful* process, how the generalized struggle [*Kampf*] of all Greeks gradually comes to acknowledge one δίκη in all domains: where does this come from? The

> contest unleashes the individual: and at the same time, it restrains [or tames: *bändigt*] the individual according to eternal laws. (KSA 7, 16[22], 402)

If we ask with Nietzsche how this was possible, one clue lies in the *social ontology of tension* presupposed by the agon. In *Homer's Contest* he describes the principle of Greek pedagogy as the view that: 'Every gift [talent, capacity: *Begabung*] must unfold [or flourish: *sich entfalten*] through contestation, this is what Hellenic popular pedagogy dictates' (HC, KSA 1, 789). This implies that *each particular capacity, force or genius can only become what it is ('sich entfalten') through antagonistic striving [Gegenstreben] against others*. This social ontology makes *antagonistic relations* essential to the forging of identities in agonal action. However, these relations also act as a medium of resistance that cuts subjective intentions off from resulting action or interaction, so that the identity – the 'who' – disclosed in agonal action is *not* the result of a wilful purpose, but the product of relations of tension that are dynamic and unpredictable in nature.[35] At stake is a resolutely *relational* social ontology that is conditional upon an equilibrium of sorts among a plurality of forces or geniuses: the agonal play of forces (*Wettspiel der Kräfte*), Nietzsche writes, presupposes

> that in a natural order of things, there are always *several* geniuses who stimulate each other reciprocally to deeds, as they also hold each other reciprocally within the limits of measure (HC, KSA 1, 789)[36]

These relations of mutual stimulation and mutual restraint are best understood with reference to the concept of equilibrium (*ungefähres Gleichgewicht*) among more-or-less equal powers, proposed in *Human, All Too Human* as the origin of justice and anticipated in the *Nachlass* note cited above (KSA 7, 16[22], 402) on the agonal origins of δίκη in Greece.[37] By 'equality of power,' Nietzsche does not mean a quantitative measure of objective magnitudes, nor a judgement made from an external standpoint, but the expression of an estimated correspondence between powers, where each power judges itself (as equal) in relation to another power.[38] Unlike the measure of equality, however, the concept of 'equilibrium' can*not* be understood from the subject-position, the standpoint of the single antagonists or powers as their conscious goal. For the antagonists do not *aim* at equilibrium; rather, each strives for supremacy (*Übermacht*) – to be the best. Equilibrium is, then, an 'intersubjective' or relational phenomenon, a function of the *relations between* more-or-less equal forces, each striving for supremacy. So once again, the relational concept of equilibrium inserts a *radical disjunction* between the subject-position of the antagonists – their desires, intentions and claims – and the qualities of their resulting agonal interaction: each wants to be the best, yet an equilibrium is, or can be, achieved; each is tempted to excess and *hubris*, yet limits or measure can be achieved. The relational sense of the agon means that the measure or limit on action is determined *not* by the players' goals, interests or disposition; rather it is the contingent result of dynamic relations that emerge between social forces competing for supremacy. Both the social ontology of tension and the relational concept of equilibrium point to the impossibility of realizing agonal interaction from the subject-position, by adopting a specific attitude or ethos.

3 Rethinking agonistic theory: Nietzsche's constructive alternatives

Nietzsche's relational concept of agonal interaction also has significant consequences for the phenomenology of agonal agency. By inserting a disjunction between the subjects' dispositions (intentions, desires, claims, etc.) and the measured character of their agonal interaction, it frees up the phenomenology of agonal agency from the overriding need to locate sources of measure or self-restraint in an ethos of respect. One of the problems with 'respect' is that it cannot really be felt and, as such cannot be relied on to really motivate or limit agonal action. What can be felt, as Nietzsche points out repeatedly, are envy, jealousy, ambition, hatred: the passions that are the real springs of the agon. Nietzsche's relational concept of agonal interaction opens the space for a much richer, realist account of the subject's dispositions, a phenomenology of enmity that brings the antagonism back into agonism and corrects the emphasis on empathy and reciprocal constitution in agonistic respect. In the following section I argue that agonal interaction is motivated by *hatred*, rather than respect, and that Nietzsche's concept of *agonal hatred* combines antagonism with an affirmation of the other that far exceeds 'agonistic respect.' This forms part of my broader claim that Nietzsche's phenomenology of enmity houses invaluable constructive resources for agonistic democratic theory.

Agonal hatred

As the basis for this thesis I take two texts. The first is a posthumous note from 1881 (the period of *GS*), where Nietzsche attempts a physiological reduction of our moral categories by translating them from the language of 'Reason' into the language of Will to Power, modelled on the organism. As the primary drive in any living being, he takes nourishment (*Nahrung*), assimilation, appropriation (*Aneignung*) or incorporation (*Einverleibung*). In line with the expansionist dynamic of the Will to Power bent upon growth, nourishment or incorporation are understood not just as compensation for energetic losses, but as *over-compensation*:

> Growth and generation follow the unlimited *drive to appropriate*. — this drive brings it [the living being] to the exploitation of the weaker, and to competition with those of similar strength, it [the appropriative drive] struggles i.e. it ***hates***, *fears*, *disguises itself*. Even assimilation is: to *make* something alien like oneself, *to tyrannise* — ***cruelty***. [. . .] (KSA 9, 11[134], 490f.)[39]

Here hatred is referred to the process of ingestion, assimilation, incorporation needed for the organism to grow. But why should we *hate* what nourishes and enables us to grow, when we normally like what we eat!? Hatred needs to be understood with reference to antagonism, i.e. the dynamics action-and-resistance at the centre of Nietzsche's underlying concept of power. To the extent that the other resists being assimilated by us, we must hate it in order to conquer and assimilate it for the sake of growth. But it is significant that in this note Nietzsche distinguishes agonal struggle

among more-or-less equal forces (competition, contest or *Wettstreit*) from the struggle against weaker forces (exploitation, *Ausnützung*). We can, I think, suppose that hatred grows with the degree of resistance to be overcome, so that hatred really comes into its own as *agonal hatred inter pares*.

But assimilation or nourishment is not the only process needed for a living being to grow, and Nietzsche goes on to describe the necessary counter-process: secreting or excreting those parts of what has been assimilated that are no use in the dynamics of growth:

> Every body continually excludes, separates that which is useless to it
> In the beings it has assimilated: that which human beings despise,
> that for which they have revulsion, what they call evil, are the
> excrements. But his unknowing "reason" often designates for him
> as evil what causes him trouble, what is uncomfortable, the other, the
> enemy, he confuses that which is useless with that which is
> difficult to acquire, to conquer to incorporate. (ibid.)[40]

If hatred is felt towards that which is to be *assimilated*, to be conquered through struggle for the sake of growth, revulsion (*Ekel*) is felt towards that which is to be *excreted* as useless, separated off and rejected; it is what we call 'evil.' Of interest is how the designation 'evil' is here attached to a completely distinct process of revulsion-excretion. The same goes for the pathos of contempt (*Verachtung*). The physiological distinction between the process of assimilation associated with hatred on one side, and the counter-process of excretion associated with revulsion on the other, has the effect of *disconnecting* hatred from contempt and the moral designation of 'evil' or 'wicked' in a quite radical way. Hatred is hereby freed up from the gestures of contempt, rejection and moral condemnation, and that means: freed up *towards* attitudes of affirmation and acceptance of the other. And in this context, Nietzsche warns against confusing the two processes, that is: what is hard to assimilate or conquer with what is useless, or what is hateworthy with what is revolting. To reject, despise or condemn as 'evil' the object of our hatred is to misunderstand our body. Presumably whatever is more equal to us in power will offer greater resistance to assimilation, demanding more hatred to be conquered. Yet: assimilated and accepted it must be, if we are to grow and extend ourselves, and none of this precludes affirming, valuing, even loving the other, as Nietzsche writes at the end of the note: '. . ."Love" is the feeling for property or for what we wish to make our property'(ibid.).

This affirmative moment in hatred, where hatred is the affective signature of agonal struggle *inter pares*, is described in more detail in a passage from *Zarathustra*, where Nietzsche writes:

> You may only have enemies to hate, but not
> Enemies to despise. You must be proud of your enemy: then
> The successes of your enemy will be your successes too. (Z, War, KSA 4, 59)[41]

Here hatred takes the form of *pride in one's enemy and in the successes of one's enemy*. Far from seeking to *degrade* its object or reject it, hatred affirms, rejoices and shares in its object's power, thereby enhancing both its object's power and its own. To hate one's

enemy does not mean to distort and condemn him as evil or wicked, but to *rejoice* in his strength and achievements, to *stimulate* and enhance his power. But under what conditions does hatred occur? Zarathustra's answer comes with the distinction between hatred and contempt, *Hass* and *Verachtung*, the same distinction we saw in his physiology of hatred: it can only occur under conditions of *approximate equality of power* among antagonists, it is an agonal hatred *inter pares*, not to be confused with contempt towards an unequal, inferior power (*Verachtung*). Under conditions of relative parity, Zarathustra says, hatred provokes a dynamic of reciprocal affirmation, stimulation and self-empowerment through the affirmative empowerment of the other. Agonal hatred *inter pares* acts not as a depressant that leads one to degrade, reject or distort the other as 'wicked,' but as a tonic or stimulant that unleashes a process of reciprocal affirmation and empowerment.

The notion of agonal hatred sketched above brings a welcome realism back into agonistic theory, where the antagonism is strangely absent or eclipsed by 'respect.' It opens the prospect of a nuanced phenomenology of agonism, where hatred is bound up with love and can include an affirmative pride and joy in the other, just as friend and enemy are entwined in Nietzsche's thought.[42] It is moreover an *embodied* phenomenology that directs our attention to the bodily processes and dispositions involved in our relations to others with important ethical implications: to accept what is hard to assimilate and not to confuse it with moralistic rejectionism. Nietzsche's philosophy of hatred,[43] of ugliness, of envy, of pride, in short, his entire philosophy of enmity with its substrate in the conflictual ontology of Will to Power, deserves further research; as I have tried to indicate here, it is one key area where Nietzsche can have a corrective and constructive influence on current agonistic theories.

Towards a political ontology of pluralism

Another key area in which agonistic theorists can benefit from Nietzsche's thought concerns their central claim that genuine pluralism is inherently antagonistic and needs to be integrated as such into democratic politics (see claim 2, above, p. 85). The linkage between genuine or 'deep' pluralism and antagonism is, I believe, the central Nietzschean doctrine adopted by agonists such as Connolly, Hatab, Owen and Honig. Indeed, according to Connolly, democracy, conceived as an agonistic politics of identity and difference, is uniquely hospitable to the diversity and difference Nietzsche values. Yet Connolly's theory of identity and difference is decidedly post-structuralist rather than Nietzschean, as we have seen, and Nietzsche's relational concepts of power and agon expose a weakness shared by Connolly and other agonistic theorists: a subjectivist reliance on 'respect' that seems to dissolve any real antagonism.

What remains important, however, is the initiative to rethink pluralism in a way that addresses its contemporary forms and formations and does justice to antagonism as an intrinsic feature of vibrant democratic politics today. Perhaps the strongest formulation of this demand, as a central task for political philosophy today, comes from another agonistic democrat, Chantal Mouffe, and her call for a *political ontology of pluralism*. Like Connolly, she draws on post-structuralism – the deconstructive

logic of différance and the 'constitutive outside' – which she considers a much better theoretical framework for grasping the 'specificity of modern democracy' than the deliberative 'consensus' model.[44] As she puts it: 'The notion of the "constitutive outside" forces us to come to terms with the idea that pluralism implies the permanence of conflict and antagonism.'[45] To her credit, however, Mouffe acknowledges that the deconstructive logic of différance on its own will not generate the antagonism she equates with genuine pluralism, and she attempts to fuse or superlay it with a logic of democratic agonism adapted from Carl Schmitt's political ontology of antagonism between collective identities. However, this attempt to fuse Derridean insights with her democratic and Schmittian commitments is theoretically incoherent, as several scholars have pointed out.[46] In the last part of this Chapter I want to suggest that she should be a Nietzschean, not a Schmittian: as I will argue, Nietzsche's ontology of the Will to Power overcomes many of the problems she inherits from Schmitt's concept of power and houses far better resources for a political ontology that does justice to contemporary forms of pluralism, in which collective, political identities are often fugitive and short-lived and command an individual's allegiance as but one among many, often conflicting identities.

Nietzsche's ontology of power does not seem at all hospitable to a politics of equality. In later years, his critique of democracy is largely focused on the democratic principle of equality and equal rights, which is often opposed to real character of life or Will to Power as exploitation, tyranny, commanding, subordination, assimilation and expansion.[47] What is more, his commitment to life, life-affirmation and – enhancement seems to issue in an affirmation of domination, tyranny and cruelty. But does it? After confronting Schmitt and Mouffe with Nietzsche's concept of power, I will go on to argue that Nietzsche's ontology of power culminates not in tyranny, but in affirmative ideals that *exclude* domination, subjection, incorporation in favour of an approximate equality/equilibrium of powers that is compatible with a democratic politics of identity.

Nietzsche contra Schmitt: Active vs. reactive concepts of power

According to Schmitt a properly political unity is a collective unity that can only be formed in the face of an *existential threat of annihilation* by another unity. The antagonistic relation of us against them, friends against enemies is therefore constitutive of the political. This ontology certainly generates the antagonism Mouffe is after. However, it generates *too much* antagonism, since Schmittian antagonism – *the threat of annihilation* as the condition for political unity – cannot be contained within the bounds of democratic principles. What is more, it has no relation to democratic pluralism, since Schmitt's political unities are homogenous, not pluralistic. To deal with these problems, Mouffe makes two moves 'with and against Schmitt.' The first is to *internalise* the logic of antagonism between political unities *within* the democratic community,[48] so as to displace his homogenous political unities with a demos pluralized into multiple us/them relations. Her second move is to place *limits* on Schmittian antagonism by appealing, once again, to an ethos of 'agonistic respect' that acknowledges the antagonist as a legitimate political opponent, not an enemy to

be annihilated.[49] There are however several problems with these moves that undermine Mouffe's account of democratic agonism.[50] In the present context I will concentrate on one that goes to the heart of her Schmittian political ontology.

If for Schmitt the existential threat of annihilation is the condition for political identity, it is because he works with Hobbes's conception of power. Hobbesian power is oriented towards self-preservation in the face of an external threat; it is exercised from a position of weakness or lack (of security, of a future good) in relation or reaction to something external. In Nietzsche's terms it is a '*reactive*' concept of power, in contrast with his own '*active*' conception of power, defined with reference to process (expending energy) or activity (extending power), rather than goals (self-preservation).[51] Nietzschean power is an endogenous source of change, a conception that goes back to Leibniz's dynamic concept of force, so that movement or change is understood, not in mechanistic terms as the (reactive) effect of an exogenous cause or force, but in Leibnizian terms, as the result of a 'living' force, that is, an *endogenous* source of activity.[52]

This active conception of power has two characteristics that are alien to Schmittian-Hobbesian power and essential for an antagonistic ontology of pluralism that is to offer more than the alternatives of annihilation or security. Since active power is not bound to a static telos of self-preservation, there are no pre-determined constraints on the forms that this activity can take. On the one hand, the exercise of power need not be limited to the hostile resisting or overpowering of other powers or power-complexes, but can take an indeterminate number of qualitatively diverse forms. On the other hand, it can also take self-destructive forms of activity and as such, opens the space for the *qualitative transformation* of existing power-complexes, forms of life or political identities into new forms, what Nietzsche calls 'self-overcoming' (*Selbstüberwindung*). Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* is replete with examples of both the qualitative transformation of life-forms and the diverse forms that the exercise of power can take.[53] This touches on the second characteristic of Nietzsche's active concept power, a dimension of power-relations that is completely absent from Schmitt's theory of power. Because Schmittian power is bound to the telos of self-preservation, any opposing power can only signify an existential threat. Nietzsche's active concept of power, by contrast, allows for reinterpretations of the opposition or resistance offered by an external power. Opposition or resistance need not be just a threat or an inhibitor to one's power; under certain conditions, it can act as a *stimulant* (*Reiz*) that provokes or empowers each power-complex to new creative deeds or works: to 'overcome' its opponent through creative self-transformation or 'self-overcoming.' It is this reinterpretation of opposing forces from inhibitors into stimulants that lies at the heart of Nietzsche's description of the Greek agon as a dynamic of reciprocal provocation and reciprocal limitation.

Nietzsche's active concept of power, then, has two features of value for a political ontology of pluralism appropriate to contemporary forms: (1) the capacity for *qualitative self-transformation* (or 'self-overcoming') in life-forms; and (2) the capacity to engage conflicting life-forms or values (not as a threat, but) as a *stimulant* to qualitative self-transformation. For Nietzsche, as we saw, it is clear that this can only occur under conditions of approximate equality among a plurality of powers or power-complexes.

Indeed, as I will now argue, Nietzsche's Will to Power issues in affirmative ideals that *exclude* domination and devastation in favour of relations that are compatible with a politics of equality.

Nietzsche's ontology of power and democratic equality

Nietzsche's philosophy of Will to Power is best understood as an ontology of Becoming; that is, an attempt to redeem the reality of Becoming or change from the substance ontology that has dominated metaphysics, as a metaphysics of Being:

> [. . .] All occurrence, all movement, all Becoming as
> a fixing [making fast] of relations of degree and power, as a
> *struggle* [. . .] (KSA 12, 9[91], 385)[54]

This excerpt articulates in a condensed form the three key concepts or principles of Will to Power: dynamism (*Geschehen, Bewegung, Werden, Prozeß*), pluralism or relations of difference (*Grad- und Kraftverhältnissen*) and struggle (*Kampf*). Becoming, or the reality of 'occurrence' or 'process' is conceived in *relational* terms as an 'in-one-another' (*Ineinander*) of moments or forces without substance, rather than an 'after-one-another' (*Nacheinander*) of causes and effects, conceived as durable 'substances, things, body, soul etc.'[55] On Nietzsche's view, durable things or unities of any kind are not originary, but derivative of an originary multiplicity, complexity, richness and non-identity[56]: they are the result of a fixing or making-fast (*Feststellen*, *Fest-setzen*) or positing (*Setzen*)[57] within an unceasing struggle or conflict of forces. Nietzsche's philosophy of originary multiplicity confronts him with the task of explaining unity out of diversity without smuggling in a unitary ground. So how are we to understand these processes of fixing that form unities or identities out of multiplicity?

His starting point is the concept of force. The idea of a single force that somehow generates relations from within is an absurdity, since force is intrinsically relative or relational. A force cannot be a force in isolation, but only in relation to other forces that limit and determine it, while being limited and determined by it.[58] The only quality of force is activity, but a force can only act in relation to the resistance of (an) other force(s).[59] These relations, then, are relations of struggle or tension (*Kampf*, *Spannung*), of reciprocal action or overpowering and resistance or opposition, and they form a whole when, through processes of subordination and integration (*Unter- und Einordnung*),[60] they constitute a 'complex of mastery' (*Herrschafts-Gebilde*) that (*is* not one but) '*signifies* One':

> All unity is only as *organisation and interplay* unity: not
> otherwise than how a human community is a unity: so,
> *opposite* of atomistic anarchy; therewith a *complex of rule*, which
> *signifies* One, but *is* not one. (KSA 12, 2[87], 104)[61]

Nietzsche's concept of unity is equidistant from an originary unity on one side, and from atomistic chaos on the other. Here and elsewhere (see e.g. note 60) he argues against Hobbes that we need not presuppose a unitary ground or single unifying force ('absolute monarch' or 'subject') in order to understand the unity of the body (politic).

Instead he appeals to processes of self-organization at play among constituents, all seeking out the resistance of antagonists in order to overpower (subordinate and integrate, or functionalize) them:

> [. . .]—Whoever has the most force to degrade others into functions, rules—but those subjected in turn have their subjects—their continual struggles: whose maintenance at a certain level is the condition of life for the whole. The whole in turn seeks its advantage and finds enemies.—(KSA 9, 11[134], 491)[62]

For an originary multiplicity to 'signify One' or a living whole, then, a certain measure (*Maaße*) of antagonism must be maintained among its constituents all seeking to master one another. Antagonism is not, however, confined to the whole within a homeostatic model of unity, but is repeated at the level of the whole or complex of mastery (*Herrschafts-Gebilde*), which seeks out antagonistic complexes or wholes in order to master them as well.

In the logic of enmity governing the Will to Power, pluralism is linked with antagonism in a way that completely escapes post-structuralist accounts. Antagonistic pluralism operates on multiple levels in Nietzsche's ontology of power, from the smallest to the largest scale, all of which are interconnected; the measure of (inner) antagonism needed for a living whole can only be maintained if that whole seeks (outer) antagonists against which to define and limit itself. Both of these features are invaluable for a political ontology that can address the labile character of political identities today, their tremendous range of scale from a person's dietary regime to global protest movements, and the way collective identities can make claims on an individual that conflict with claims of other collective identities. On the other hand, the emphasis on subordination and integration, functionalization and expansion in Nietzsche's logic of enmity raises the spectre of fascism and suggests a politics of domination and imperialism, completely intractable to democratic thought.

This objection is, however, simplistic in its understanding of Nietzschean power and misguided in the political implications it draws. It ignores the many different qualitative forms the exercise and expansion of the Will to Power can take apart from hostile takeovers, including ascetic self-denial and compassion, as noted above. It also ignores the anti-Hobbesian thesis in Nietzsche's account of identity-formation, that the body (politic) does not presuppose a central power, a sovereign or unifying subject, and his challenge to substance ontology: to rethink unities as derivative of processes of self-organization among prior multiplicities. In the third place, it misunderstands Nietzsche's language of commanding and obeying, which are not opposites, but relational concepts. There are base forms of obedience for Nietzsche, but also noble forms,[63] and commanding always presupposes the capacity to obey. This is because obeying is not passive, as distinct from the activity of subordinating or commanding, much less a distinct quality or disposition of some, say 'natural slaves,' as distinct from those born to rule. All forms of life or wills to power share only the one quality of activity (subordination, integration, command); which ones rule or subordinate and which ones obey or are subordinated is not somehow given in advance; it is the contingent outcome of actual power-relations among complexes all bent on subordination

or command. In the model for a living unity described above, it is clear that those subordinated must *actively resist* being subordinated, for the living whole is contingent on the *maintenance* of a measure of internal struggles.

But the strongest response to imperialistic interpretations of Nietzschean power comes if we ask what measure of struggle is needed for the formation of living unities. In Nietzsche's ontology of power, reality is conceived as concrete and situational: *this* concrete power-complex in antagonistic relations with its environment. His 'ontology' is not, in other words, a general theory of reality and so does not offer a general descriptive answer to this question. But a *prescriptive* answer can be offered if we ask what the *best* measure of antagonism is for living wholes, given Nietzsche's commitment to affirm and enhance life as Will to Power. What does it take to enhance and affirm life or reality in its productive and pluralistic character as incessant and multiple *Fest-setzen*? If relations of struggle or tension are necessary for the creation of complex living wholes out of processes of self-organization, then life-enhancement would seem to require a *maximisation of tension*. This suggestion is confirmed at the level of individual lives in several texts, where Nietzsche advocates 'the vehement struggle' of 'deep feelings with their opposites'[64] as the *sine qua non* for creative power:

> One is *fruitful* at the price of being rich in oppositions; one can only remain *young* on the assumption that the soul does not stretch out, does not long for peace . . . (TI Antinature 3, KSA 6, 84)

If we then ask how an individual or rather: a *dividuum* can become and remain 'rich in oppositions,' Nietzsche's answer is one that *excludes* relations of domination, subjection, incorporation or destruction; for it takes a kind of *equilibrium* among a multiplicity of *more-or-less equal forces*, impulses or power-complexes, all bent on extending their power. Only if these impulses or feelings are of similar power can they resist succumbing to subjection, assimilation or domination by their antagonists and hold one another in a certain equilibrium, such that tension is *maximised*. But how then can this productive and dynamic equilibrium within individuals or dividua be sustained, *without* a complete loss of unity – the dis-integration of individuals under the pressure of an unmeasured conflict of more-or-less equal drives?

Individuals do not, of course, live in isolation. If the problem is how to avoid the dis-integration or explosion of individuals under the (outward) pressure of an unmeasured conflict of more-or-less equal drives, the solution would seem to involve the exercise of *inward pressures* from the outside: pressures that neither overpower and absorb the individual, nor are overpowered by it, but would be more-or-less equal to the outward expansionist pressure exerted by the individual. In other words, the measure or degree of tension that allows for a maximization of inner tension consistent with the unity of the individual is given by social, inter-subjective relations among *approximately equal powers*. In this light I would argue that Nietzsche's commitment to life-affirmation or –enhancement implies a politics of equality, not in the sense of universal equal rights that protect us from conflict and incursion, but a politics of enmity among more-or-less equal powers that allows individuals to be productive multiplicities while maintaining their unity as individuals. This is opens an ontological-normative domain for agonistic conceptions of democracy that is more profoundly pluralistic and nuanced than

anything Schmitt can offer. The question is what kinds of political institutions and settlements would make for such an equality of power among the diverse and shifting identities that characterize contemporary democracies. This, it seems to me, is the challenge posed by Nietzsche's thought for the construction of a viable ontology of democratic pluralism today.

Notes

1 This essay is an attempt to bring together and synthesize a number of papers, published and unpublished, on agonistic political theory and its relation to Nietzsche. The published papers are: Siemens 2012a, 2012b. See also Siemens 2001. Translations from Nietzsche are my own.
2 Hatab (1995), who devotes a chapter to Nietzsche's critique of democracy, is the exception. See also Schrift 2000.
3 Connolly 2007, p. 144; Mouffe 2005, pp. 6, 20; Honig 1993, p. 14; Villa 2000, p. 225.
4 Mouffe 2005, pp. 15f., 32f.; Fossen 2012.
5 Villa 2000, pp. 225, 242. Also: Owen 1995, pp. 16–19.
6 Mouffe 2005, pp. 45ff., 81ff.
7 Honig 1993, p. 129; Connolly 1991, p. 93; Mouffe 2005, p. 45.
8 Fossen 2012.
9 '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.' (Hatab 1995, p. 63).
10 Hatab 2008, p. 185f.
11 Schaap 2009.
12 See Siemens 1998.
13 In KSA 8, 5[146], 78 Nietzsche writes of the '[m]any powers in an embryonic state that were stifled' by the great talents in the history of Greek literature, and goes on to write: 'The agonal [das Agonale] is also the danger in all developments; it over-stimulates the creative drive. – The most fortunate case in developments when several geniuses hold one another in check.' On the denial of individuality to the poets in agonal Greek culture, see KSA 7, 16[8], [9], 396.
14 See Janssen 1979, pp. 26ff.
15 Cited in Janssen 1979, p. 137.
16 Hatab 1995, pp. 55–77 (ch. 3).
17 Connolly 2008, pp. 128ff. See also Owen 2008, pp. 162ff.
18 As Connolly puts it, it is a matter of taking from Nietzsche's texts what is needed in order to 'construct a post-Nietzscheanism one is willing to endorse and enact'

(Connolly 1991, p. 197). While there is no 'true interpretation, there are, however, false interpretations.

19 Hatab 1995, pp. 60, 97–9, 107.

20 Ibid., pp. 68–70, 189, 191, 220.

21 Ibid., p. 68.

22 Ibid., p. 69.

23 'Life itself is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of that which is foreign and weaker, oppression, hardness, imposition of one's own forms, incorporation and at the very least, the very mildest, exploitation' (BGE 259). In *HC*, this divide is articulated in the crucial difference between the *Wett-kampf* and the pervasive *Vernichtungs-kampf,* without however being problematized as life-negation.

24 The strongest challenge to Hatab's 'complicity' comes from Müller-Lauter's account of Nietzsche's strong type: 'To whatever extent the strong type [. . .] takes ideals opposed to his into account, even invoking their existence: they remain for him something from which he is divided by an unbridgeable gulf. To know them [*erkennen*] cannot mean for him to acknowledge them [*anerkennen*]. More precisely: only their *counter*-action [Gegenwirken] is acknowledged, because it is suited to maintain and intensify his own power, – not however the particularity of their contents' (Müller-Lauter 1971, p. 122).

25 Possibly a reference to the Nachlass note 9[106] (KSA 12, 395): 'the opposite of this phenomenal world is *not* "the true world", but the formless-unformulable world of the chaos of sensations,—*thus another kind* of phenomenal world, one that is "unknowable" for us'

26 Connolly 1993, p. 194f.

27 See also Connolly 1991, p. 64. A similar logic can be seen in Mouffe 2005, pp. 12, 21, 32, 48, 135. The formulation 'constitutive outside' is from Staten 1984, p. 16.

28 See Aydin 2007.

29 Connolly 1993, p. 190f.

30 Ibid.

31 For a lucid account of this 'politics of enmity' and a Nietzschean critique based on the 'spiritualisation of enmity' in *TI Antinature*, see Bergoffen 2008.

32 See Connolly 1991, p. 10: 'The primary question is not for a command that answers "why" or a ground that establishes "what" but for ways to cultivate care for identity and difference in a world already permeated by ethical proclivities and predispositions to identity.' See also: Connolly 1991, pp. 159, 166, 178; 1997, p. 8; 2000, p. 313; 2007, p. 142.

33 Connolly 2007, p. 142f.

34 See Müller-Lauter 1971, p. 122 (cited above, note 24).

35 This brings Nietzsche close to Arendt's concept of public, political action or praxis, as I have argued elsewhere (Siemens 2005).

36 'daß, in einer natürlichen Ordnung der Dinge, es immer *mehrere* Genies giebt, die sich gegenseitig zur That reizen, wie sie sich auch gegenseitig in der Grenze des Maaßes halten'.

37 For more detailed accounts see: Siemens 2001; 2005.

38 Gerhardt 1983, pp. 116–17.

39 Dem unbegrenzten *Aneignungstriebe* folgt Wachsthum und Generation. – Dieser Trieb bringt es in die Ausnützung des Schwächeren, und in Wettstreit mit ähnlich Starken, er kämpft d.h. er ***haßt***, *fürchtet*, *verstellt sich*. Schon das Assimiliren ist: etwas Fremdes sich gleich *machen*, *tyrannisiren* – ***Grausamkeit***.

40 Fortwährend scheidet jeder Körper aus, er secernirt das ihm nicht Brauchbare an den assimilirten Wesen: das was der Mensch verachtet, wovor er Ekel hat, was er böse nennt, sind die Excremente. Aber seine unwissende "Vernunft" bezeichnet ihm oft als böse, was ihm Noth macht, unbequem ist, den Anderen, den Feind, er verwechselt das Unbrauchbare und das Schwerzuerwerbende Schwerzubesiegende Schwer-Einzuverleibende.

41 Ihr dürft nur Feinde haben, die zu hassen sind, aber nicht Feinde zum Verachten. Ihr müsst stolz auf euern Feind sein: dann sind die Erfolge eures Feindes auch eure Erfolge.

42 See Bergoffen 1998, and several texts by van Tongeren: van Tongeren/Schank 1999; van Tongeren 2000; 2003/2004.

43 In a note from 1875 Nietzsche writes of the 'sombre philosophy of hatred, which has not yet been written, because everywhere it is the pudendum that everyone feels' (KSA 8, 5[117], 71).

44 Mouffe 2005, pp. 17, 32.

45 Mouffe 2005, p. 32f.

46 See Fritsch 2008; Rummens 2009; Siemens 2012a.

47 See BGE 44 (cf. KSA 11, 37[8], 58); BGE 259; AC 17 (KSA 6, 184); KSA 13, 14[97], 273; KSA 13, 14[192], 378; KSA 12, 2[179], 155.

48 Rummens 2009, p. 3.

49 Mouffe 2005, pp. 14, 102.

50 See articles in note 46.

51 See Patton 2001, p. 153.

52 Abel 1984, pp. 16ff.

53 See Patton 2001; Saar 2008. Saar shows how the three essays of the *Genealogy* exhibit three distinct kinds of power.

54 '[. . .] Alles Geschehen, alle Bewegung, alles Werden als ein Feststellen von Grad- und Kraftverhältnissen, als ein *Kampf*. [. . .]'

55 'The unchanging sequence of certain appearances does not demonstrate a "law", but rather a power-relation between 2 or more forces. [. . .] — It is not about a *sequence* [lit. after-one-another: *Nacheinander*], — but rather an *interconnectedness* [lit. in-one-another: *Ineinander*], a process, in which the single moments that follow one another condition one another *not* as causes and effects. . .

The separation of the "doing" from the "doer", of the occurrence from one (something) that *makes* [it] occur, of the process from one (something) that is not process, but is enduring, substance, thing, body, soul etc., – the attempt to understand occurrence as a kind of displacement and position-change of that which "is", of that which remains: this ancient mythology has made fast the belief in "cause and effect", after it had found a fixed form in the grammatical functions of language. –' (KSA 12, 2[139], 136).

56 'Everything that enters consciousness as a "unity" is already incredibly complex: we never have more than an *semblance of unity*.

The phenomenon of the *body* is the richer, clearer, more tangible phenomenon: to be given methodological priority, without making any claims concerning its ultimate meaning' (KSA 12, 5[56], 205).

57 See also: KSA 11, 34[88][89], 449; 26[359], 244; 39[13], 623; KSA 12, 2[139], 135f.; UM III 3, KSA 1, 360; GS 370, KSA 3, 622; AC 58, KSA 6, 245.

58 '[. . .] a force *without* limits, and at the same time *with* all the limits, [a force] that engenders all relations—that would be a force *without* specific force, a nonsense.

—Thus the limitedness of force, and the placing itself of this force in relation to others is "knowledge". *Not* subject [in relation] to object: rather, something different [. . .]' (KSA 9, 6[441], 312).

59 On Nietzsche's dynamic, relational concept of force (*Kraft*) and its sources, see Abel 1984, pp. 6–27; Mittasch 1952, pp. 102–13. On Nietzsche's concept of power (*Macht*), see Gerhardt 1996, pp. 155–61, 203–45, 285–309.

60 'The human being as multiplicity: physiology gives only an intimation of an astounding intercourse among this multiplicity and [relations of] subordination and integration of the parts into a whole. But it would be false to conclude from a state the necessity of an absolute monarch (the unity of the subject)' (KSA 11, 27[8], 276).

[Der Mensch als Vielheit: die Physiologie giebt nur die Andeutung eines wunderbaren Verkehrs zwischen dieser Vielheit und Unter- und Einordnung der Theile zu einem Ganzen. Aber es wäre falsch, aus einem Staate nothwendig auf einen absoluten Monarchen zu schließen (die Einheit des Subjekts)]

61 Alle Einheit ist nur als *Organisation und Zusammenspiel* Einheit: nicht anders als wie ein menschliches Gemeinwesen eine Einheit ist: also *Gegensatz* der atomistischen *Anarchie*; somit ein *Herrschafts-Gebilde*, das Eins *bedeutet*, aber nicht eins *ist*.

62 – Wer am meisten Kraft hat, andere zur Funktion zu erniedrigen, herrscht – die Unterworfenen aber haben wieder ihre Unterworfenen – ihre fortwährenden Kämpfe: deren Unterhaltung bis zu einem gewissen Maaße ist Bedingung des Lebens für das Ganze. Das Ganze wiederum sucht seinen Vortheil und findet Gegner.—

63 Commanding and obeying are intrinsically related to one another (see Gerhardt 1996, pp. 231ff. on their sociological meaning). Hence Nietzsche's s critique of obedience where it precludes commanding: as a passive self-subjection, slave attitude or fear of commanding (D 108, KSA 3, 96; KSA 12, 7[6], 275; KSA 10, 16[86], 530). Instead he pleads for an activistic 'nobility in obeying' as freedom under the law (KSA 10, 3[1]/358, 97); for a self-commanding out of strength, presupposing obedience (KSA 9, 14[20], 629; Z Self-Overcoming 12, KSA 4, 147); for co-commanding (*Mit-Befehlen*), that is, to interpret duties as self-imposed laws: "ich soll, was ich *will*": KSA 9, 4[111], 128); but also for an overcoming of obedience and constraint through love (KSA 10, 5[1].124, 201).

64 'Whoever has the capacity for deep feelings must also suffer the vehement struggle between them and their opposites. One can, in order to be perfectly calm and without inner suffering, just wean oneself from deep feelings, so that in their weakness they arouse only weak counter-forces: they can then, in their sublimated rarity, be overheard and give human beings the impression that they are quite in harmony with themselves . . . — [. . .]' (KSA 9, 6[58], 207f.).

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7

Spinoza vs. Kant: Have I Been Understood?

Alan D. Schrift

> *Unsound instinct in all and everything, anti-nature as instinct, German* décadence *as philosophy* – that is Kant! –
>
> The Anti-Christian, 11

> *. . . in five main points of [Spinoza's] doctrine I recognize myself; this most unusual and solitary thinker is closest to me precisely in these matters: he denies freedom of the will –; teleology –; the moral world-order –; the unegoistic –; and evil –;*
>
> Postcard to Franz Overbeck, 30 July 1881, KGB III: 1, 111

> Error of philosophers. – *The philosopher believes that the value of his philosophy lies in the whole, in the structure: posterity finds it in the stone with which he built and which can, from then on, be used to build many more times and better: in the way, that is, that the structure can be destroyed and* nonetheless still *has value as material.*
>
> Mixed Opinions and Maxims, 201

What Nietzsche has to offer political thought has been since the early years of the twentieth century a complicated and controversial question. As a young medical orderly in the Franco-Prussian War, Nietzsche witnessed first-hand the maximal carnage now possible via the mechanization of military weapons like the French Reffye *mitrailleuse*, which during that war became the first rapid-firing weapon deployed as standard equipment by any army in a major conflict.[1] Of what he witnessed, he wrote to his mother on 29 August 1870, that 'With this letter comes a memory of the terribly devastated battlefield, littered with countless sorrowful remains and the strong stench of corpses' (KGB II: 1, 138). Yet when he, less than 8 years later, remarks that present European humanity 'requires not only wars, but the greatest and most terrible wars' (HH 477) or that, in his final work, 'I know my fate. One day my name will be associated with the memory of something monstrous – a crisis such as the earth has never seen, a profound collision of conscience, a decision conjured up *against* everything up till now believed, demanded and sanctified. I am not human, I am dynamite' (EH IV: 1),[2] these remarks are taken at face value as belying

an insensitivity to suffering the likes of which few other philosophers can match.[3] Yet like his comments on war, his comments on politics can be both hyperbolically aggressive and subtly nuanced.

While other chapters in this volume will address Nietzsche's comments on politics directly, in my remarks to follow, I want to approach the question of Nietzsche and political thought less directly by suggesting that Nietzsche offers a set of ideas that allow one to avoid what, since Kant, has been seen to be the necessary assumption for doing politics or even ethics. That assumption is that one must make an appeal to something or someone transcendent in order to legitimate one's political or ethical position. While one might expect such an appeal in a conservative theocratic polity, we also find a near universal acceptance of this assumption within liberal democratic polities. As a result, Kant stands today at the origin of what to a large extent have come to be regarded in the West as the only *reasonable* ethical-political positions worth defending, namely, the Rawlsian and the Habermasian positions.

We know, of course, what Nietzsche thought of Kant: his vision was simply the same old Platonic-Christian transcendent ideals, now viewed through the mist of scepticism (cf. TI 'World'). While Plato and Christianity regarded these ideals as still attainable, for Kant they were merely regulative, that is, they can continue to be appealed to though we can have neither access to them nor any knowledge of them. Nietzsche's judgement of Kant is thus the same as his judgements of Plato and Christianity: this trio is the holy trinity of nihilism, the willers of nothingness who judge the world as it is that it ought not to be and who determine what ought to be as existing in a world beyond this one (cf. KSA 12: 9[60]). The question that remains to be asked, however, is whether a move to the transcendent is indeed necessary for a politics or an ethics? Or is a radically immanent politics possible?

To show how widely accepted this Kantian framework is, I'd like to start in what might seem a rather exorbitant conceptual space, namely, the discussions of radical evil among neo-Lacanians and their critics.[4] Joan Copjec, in the introduction to a collection of essays entitled *Radical Evil*, suggests that in order to explain the horrors of the twentieth century, we must invoke a concept put forward by Kant in *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone,* the concept of *radical* evil. By *radical* evil, Kant refers to that evil which is 'a natural propensity, *inextirpable* by human power,' one that 'corrupts the ground of all maxims.'[5] Why, one might ask, would someone want to retrieve this idea of a radical, metaphysical evil in our post-metaphysical age? The answer, I believe, is two-fold. First, it works to justify the importance of Lacan's reflections on ethics in his seventh seminar, throughout which Lacan appeals to Kant to establish the ethical framework within which Lacan can reflect on 'the ethics of psychoanalysis.'[6] And second, as was the motivation behind much of the Kantian critical philosophy itself, it makes the world safe again for faith, faith in the necessity of an appeal to both the transcendent and the transcendental. These two answers, of course, are not unrelated, for as Kant could still appeal to the regulative ideas of free will, an immortal soul, and God once the limits of reason were transcendentally established, so too Lacan appeals to the Law as the transcendental guarantor that constitutes one's desire even as it prohibits its satisfaction.

What Copjec says of Kant is equally true of Lacan: they both argue that 'our only consciousness of the law is our consciousness of our transgression of it. Our guilt is all we know of the law.'[7] Is this what postmodernity has led to? I can hear Nietzsche crying 'Bad Air! Bad Air!' Where Nietzsche sought in the Second Essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality* to explain the origin of guilt and bad conscience in terms of the immanent relations between creditor and debtor and the this-worldly internalization of the desire to exercise the right of the master and to make suffer, Lacan makes his Kantian gesture and looks beyond the immanent productivity of desire to its transcendental prohibition in (1) the name/No of the Father or (2) the Law. Are Lacan and the Lacanians not here appealing to that very same 'hangman's metaphysics' that Nietzsche associated with Christianity, that metaphysics that creates supersensible fictions (the Law, the Soul) in order to condemn human beings to 'guilt,' 'bad conscience,' and the like? Such a metaphysics was, as Nietzsche correctly diagnosed, the essence of nihilism: the willing of nothingness. And while the motivations of contemporary political theorists of a Rawlsian or Habermasian or Lacanian persuasion may not be the motivations of a hangman (though about the Lacanians' motivations, I'm not always so sure[8]), their appeal to the ideology of transcendence may be no less nihilistic than these ideologies Nietzsche so thoroughly rejected in his own day.

The Lacanians' radical evil, no less than Kant's, is thus a thoroughly transcendental concept. But after Auschwitz, after the Holocaust, after the killing fields, after the Rwandan genocide, after 11 September, do we really need to move to the transcendental to account for radical evil? When one looks to recent political discourse in the United States, one might be persuaded that one does. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke to Congress on the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he spoke for a little over 7 minutes, mentioned the word 'attack' eleven times, did not mention 'evil' once, and concluded 'I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, 7 December 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.'[9] When, 3 months shy of 60 years later, President George W. Bush spoke to the nation on the evening of 11 September 2001, he opened by stating that today 'our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts.' Bush spoke for a little under 4½ minutes, told us that 'today our nation saw evil,' mentioned 'evil' four times in all, and quoted from the 23rd Psalm. The following day, he spoke again very briefly to the nation, concluding his remarks by noting that 'This will be a monumental struggle of good versus evil, but good will prevail.'[10] And 1 month later, in the first formal White House press conference of his administration, and the first after the September 11 attacks, the President mentioned 'evil' or 'evildoers' 12 times, recalling 'the evil that was done to us' and reminding us that 'on our TV screens the other day, we saw the evil one threatening' (the reference to the 'evil one' would appear to be to Osama bin Laden, but it might refer to Satan as well). Perhaps most distressing, we are told that 'We learned a good lesson on September the 11th, that there is evil in this world,' and that the President thinks 'it's essential that all moms and dads and citizens tell their children we love them and there is love in the world, but also remind them there are evil people.'[11]

If we want a politics that will refrain from making this transcendental move which frames thisworldly events in terms of a Manichean struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil, we must look for an alternative to the Kantian paradigm that so thoroughly dominates political discourse today.[12] Gilles Deleuze suggests we will find an answer in the immanentism of Spinoza. Spinoza, writes Deleuze, 'was the philosopher who knew full well that immanence was only immanent to itself and therefore that it was a plane traversed by movements of the infinite, filled with intensive ordinates. He is therefore the prince of philosophers. Perhaps he is the only philosopher never to have compromised with transcendence and to have hunted it down everywhere.'[13] Deleuze is, of course, right about Spinoza, but he is not right in suggesting that Spinoza is perhaps unique in this regard, for Nietzsche too is equally engaged in a project of hunting down transcendence everywhere. After all, was Nietzsche's attempt to conceive 'the world seen from inside, the world determined and characterized on the basis of its "intelligible character" [as] "will to power" and nothing else' (BGE 36) not an attempt to conceive a purely immanent metaphysic, one which located all that is in terms of the fundamental animating force of life? And is this not precisely what Nietzsche is doing when he suggests we could succeed 'in explaining our entire life of drives as the taking shape and ramification of a basic form of the will – namely of the will to power, as *my* proposition has it –; supposing that we could trace all organic functions to this will to power and were able to find in it the solution to the problem of reproduction and nutrition – which is one problem – then we would have earned the right to unequivocally determine *all* effective force as: *will to power*' (BGE 36).

We see clearly Nietzsche's and Spinoza's hunting down of transcendence and their shared repudiation of transcendent values in their rejection of the concept of evil in favour of a ethics grounded in the opposition between 'good and bad.' Deleuze, who more than anyone else has noticed points of convergence between Nietzsche and Spinoza,[14] marks a sharp distinction in Spinoza between an ethics and a morality: Spinoza, he writes, shows us how ethics, which 'is a typology of immanent modes of existence, replaces Morality, which always refers existence to transcendent values.'[15] In contrast to the fictitious moral ideas of good (*bonum*) and evil (*malum*) as intrinsic values that exist in themselves, Spinoza claims that these ideas 'indicate nothing positive in things, considered in themselves, nor are they anything other than modes of thinking, or notions we form because we compare things to one another' (IV Preface).[16] Rather than transcendent and universal values, Spinoza defines good as 'what we certainly know to be useful to us' (IVD1) and what 'agrees with our nature' (IVP31), while *malum* – which can be translated equally well as 'evil' or 'bad' – is defined as 'what we certainly know prevents us from being masters of some good' (IVD2) and what 'does not agree with our nature' (IIIP31c). Insofar as *bonum* and *malum* are here being defined naturalistically as what is advantageous or disadvantageous, it seems that *malum* is more appropriately translated as 'bad,' as Spinoza's translator Edwin Curley does at one point, towards the end of the Preface to Part IV of the *Ethics*. There, shortly after Spinoza denies that the terms *bonum* and *malum* indicate anything 'positive in things,' he clarifies his point with an example: 'music is good for one who is melancholy, bad for one who is mourning, and neither good nor bad to one who is deaf.' The translator here recognizes that Spinoza cannot have meant that

music would be morally evil to someone in mourning, and, as Deleuze would suggest, I think there is good reason to extend this to Spinoza's entire discussion of *malum*, understanding it always as 'bad' in the naturalistic sense in which we would say that it is bad for someone allergic to strawberries to eat a strawberry. In so doing, we see that for Spinoza, good and bad are concepts with an objective meaning: good is what is useful to preserving our being, and increases or aids our power of acting, and bad is what is harmful to preserving our being and diminishes or restrains our power of acting (IVP8d). What is objectively bad limits what a body can do and is thus linked to affects of sadness, while what is objectively good enhances what a body can do and is productive of joyful affects. Spinoza's theory of the affects thus turns us away from seeking a transcendental moral standard for judging what is good or evil, and returns us to immanent questions concerning modes of existence and what we are capable of doing.

Spinoza's proximity here to Nietzsche is obvious. Nietzsche is well known for being the philosopher who sought to go 'beyond good and evil,' but it is equally important to remember, as Nietzsche noted explicitly at the close of the First Essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*, that to go 'beyond good and evil' 'does *not* mean [to go] "Beyond Good and Bad"'. The difference between 'Good and Evil' and 'Good and Bad' is the principle topic of the *Genealogy*'s First Essay, and Nietzsche marks the distinction precisely as one between the immanent and natural and the transcendent and otherworldly. Where the ethical values of 'Good and Bad' remain grounded in what is natural, the moral values 'Good and Evil' are grounded in the divine: where the noble originators of determinations of 'Good and Bad' had sufficient confidence in their own natural instincts to establish these normative categories on their own and ground them in the immanent realities of their existence, the slavish originators of judgements of 'Good and Evil' lacked this confidence and they sought a transcendent justification for their judgements in the will of God. Allowing Deleuze to guide us once again, we should take note that he opens *Nietzsche and Philosophy* by addressing this point, recasting Nietzsche's distinction between the natural and the divine by distinguishing between the immanent, ethical difference between noble and base that grounds evaluative judgements on one's 'way of being or style of life,'[17] and the transcendent moral opposition between good and evil that grounds evaluative judgement on an absolute and otherworldly ideal. For this reason, Deleuze writes that the philosopher must be 'a genealogist rather than a Kantian tribunal judge or a utilitarian mechanic.'[18]

Whenever Nietzsche talks about values, his appeal is to the values *immanent* within life, as we see, for example, in his famous analysis, in the Second Essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* (16), of the psychology of bad conscience, not as the voice of God in man, but as the instinct of cruelty that turns back on itself after it can no longer discharge itself externally. When Nietzsche argues that it is the immanent necessities of social existence required by human beings' entry into community that result in the 'internalization of man' that stands at the origin of the 'soul' and the entire inner world, his thinking, like Spinoza's, challenges the assumption that one must ground one's politics or ethics in something transcendent, be it the Platonic Good, the Christian God or the Kantian categorical imperative and autonomous moral self.

In his own day, Nietzsche understood himself to be witnessing the complete success of slave morality having established the transcendent set of guidelines that Nietzsche's revaluation of all values sought to dismantle. And while the sun had set on Plato, and Nietzsche hoped to hasten its setting on Christianity, it was now Kant whose ideas were supplying the primary support for slave morality. Kant was the one whose arrival 'caused the rejoicing . . . that went through the German scholarly world [in which] the theologian-instinct in the German scholar guessed *what* was now possible again . . .'

> A hidden path to the old ideal stood open, the concept '*true* world', the concept of morality as *essence* of the world (those two most wicked errors that there are!) were once again, thanks to a craftily clever skepticism, if not provable, then at least no longer *refutable*. . . . Reason, the *right* to reason, does not stretch that far. . . . Reality had been turned into an 'appearance'; a completely *mendacious* world, that of Being, had been turned into reality. . . . The success of Kant is merely theologian-success: . . . (A 10)

This theologian-success marks the triumph of the forces of anti-nature (*Widernatur*) that Nietzsche seeks to isolate and exorcize throughout his works of 1888, and his hostility towards the forces of anti-nature are never far removed from his hostility towards both Kantian and Christian morality. What horrifies Nietzsche at the sight of Christian morality is that anti-nature is presented as morality itself and remains 'posted up as law, as categorical imperative for humanity!' (EH IV: 7). The departure from nature into the transcendent ideal is what for Nietzsche lies at the basis of the hostility towards life that he diagnoses at the core of both Christianity and Kantian idealism. In opposition to those immanent facts of life that Nietzsche takes seriously in 'Why I Am So Clever' – nutrition, location and climate, forms of recreation – Christianity and Kant place 'God,' the 'Beyond,' the 'true world,' 'spirit' and 'immortal soul' – all concepts created 'to denigrate the body and make it sick' (EH IV: 8).

To look at one final example of Nietzsche's framing of his analysis in terms of immanence versus transcendence, let us turn again to *The Anti-Christian*, this time looking at the way he drives a wedge between the lessons of the Nazarene and the lessons of Paul. One of the central arguments in *The Anti-Christian* is that 'there was only one Christian, and he died on the Cross' (A 39). This argument depends on distinguishing between Jesus and the Christ, and this distinction is essentially that between the immanent life of Jesus of Nazareth and the transcendent hagiography surrounding the resurrected Christ. To those familiar only with Nietzsche's general criticisms of Christianity, confronting the relatively high regard he expresses for Jesus in the pages of *The Anti-Christian* comes as something of a shock. Blessedness, we are told, is not promised by Jesus, but is taught by him as 'the *only* reality. The *result* of such a situation projects itself into a new *practice*, in fact, evangelical practice. "Faith" does not distinguish the Christian: the Christian acts, is distinguished by a *different* method of action.' And, moreover, 'The life of the Redeemer was nothing other than *this* practice,' and his 'glad tidings' taught 'how one should *live* in order to feel "in heaven," in order to feel "eternal"' (A 33). While Jesus 'died as he lived, as

he *taught* – not in order to "redeem humanity," but to show how one should live,' the history of Christianity is one long misunderstanding of these teaching (A 35, 37). And at the basis of this misunderstanding is the redirection of attention from and the revaluation of the value located in the immanent life lived by Jesus towards the transcendent significance of the death of the Christ. The early followers, and most importantly *Paul*, thus turn attention away from Jesus's practices and focus instead on the death on the cross and the subsequent resurrection? 'Who killed him,' they asked? 'Ruling Jewry' was the answer. 'And why was this death necessary,' they asked? 'Because we have sinned' was the answer. 'If you transpose life's main emphasis, *not* into life but into the "Beyond" – *into nothingness* – you completely remove life's main emphasis' (A 43), and this is precisely what Paul does by revaluing what was important in the immanent life and replacing it with what was the significance of the death and the transcendent values associated with it: judgement, reward and punishment, and the immortality of the soul (A 40–2).

Is it too much of a stretch to link Nietzsche's association of Paul's priestly revaluation of the life of Jesus and the death on the cross of the Christ with what, earlier in *The Anti-Christian*, he identified as the theologian-instinct, an instinct that leads him to conclude that 'the success of Kant is merely theologian-success' (A 10)? Perhaps it is not, especially when we recall that in *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche refers to Kant as 'a *deceitful* [or *disingenuous*, *hinterlistigen*] Christian' (TI 'Reason' 6). Nietzsche's *The Anti-Christian*, his 'Curse on Christianity,' was part of a 'Declaration of War' that runs through many of his last works, and this declaration announces a war against both Christianity and the transcendence it champions.

That one should turn from Kant to Spinoza to pursue the question of Nietzsche and political thought should not surprise us. When Spinoza links the good with what preserves our being, he showed that he understood that to do ontology *was* to do ethics. And when Nietzsche thought what is as will to power, and diagnosed the value of what is in terms of a typology of will to power (strong vs. weak, healthy vs. sick, life-affirming vs. decadent), he showed he understood the very same thing. Moreover, when Spinoza linked preserving and persevering in being with the power of acting, as he did not only in the *Ethics* but in the *Political-Theological Treatise* and *Political Treatise*, he showed that he understood that to do ontology was to do *politics* as well. Nietzsche, too, recognizes this, although he is, unlike Spinoza, not that interested in affirming the mere perseverance in being. In fact, in one of only three philosophically significant references to Spinoza in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche alludes to an 'inconsistency' of Spinoza as a source for the overvaluation of the drive for self-preservation. The passage is important enough for understanding the connection between Nietzsche and Spinoza to be cited in its entirety:

> The physiologists should stop and think before positing the drive for self-preservation as the cardinal drive of an organic being. Anything that lives wants above all to *discharge* its strength – life itself is will to power –: self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent *consequences* of this. – In brief, here as everywhere beware of *superfluous* teleological principles! – such as the drive for self-preservation (for which we have Spinoza's inconsistency to thank –).

> This is demanded by method after all, which must essentially be the economy of principles. (BGE 13)

What is this inconsistency of Spinoza? I would suggest that it is his conflation of the two distinct characteristics in terms of which he defines *conatus* as 'the actual essence of a thing.' Consider the following three propositions from Book III of Spinoza's *Ethics*:

> IIIP6: Each thing, insofar as it is in itself [*quantum in se est*], strives [*conatur*] to persevere in its being.[19]
>
> IIIP7: The striving [*conatus*] by which each thing strives to persevere in its being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing.
>
> IIIP12: The mind as far as it can, strives to imagine those things that increase or aid the body's power of acting.

While Spinoza puts this last proposition in psychological terms (the mind imagining), this proposition is thought to make the stronger, more general claim that 'each thing not only strives to persist in existence, but also strives to prevent any decrease in what Spinoza calls power of acting (*agendi potentia*) and indeed strives to do whatever will increase its power of acting.'[20] And here we see what Nietzsche refers to as Spinoza's inconsistency: he characterizes the essence of a thing (*conatus*) in terms of striving to persevere in existence *and* striving to increase its power of acting (*agendi potentia*). But while the physiologists Nietzsche refers to in BGE 13 have seized upon and privileged the former – the *superfluous* teleological principle of the drive to self-preservation – Nietzsche privileges the latter: 'Anything that lives wants above all to *discharge* its strength – life itself is will to power.'

Like Spinoza, Nietzsche too links this power to act that is will to power to both ethics and psychology:

> What is good? – All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to 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. (A 2)

And what is wrong with slave morality is precisely its intent by means of the morality of 'good and evil' to restrict our power to act. It is in this sense that, for Nietzsche, we are all slaves suffering under the weight of slave morality – for a slave is someone who is prevented from doing what they are capable of, who is under the authority of another who tells him what he can and cannot do. Nietzsche's positive goal is to create a culture not unlike the society imagined by Spinoza, in which the role of the state was to facilitate individuals doing what they are capable of. Like Spinoza, Nietzsche says that we do not yet know what the body can do, but he goes beyond Spinoza in critiquing our slavish, base morality for not *wanting* to know what the body is capable of doing and for instead creating rules – morality – to instil in us the fear of allowing

ourselves, and others, the right to do what we are capable of. In a note from early 1887 in which Nietzsche cites and comments at some length about 'Spinoza's psychological background,' we find the following:

> 2) the naturally-selfish view point: virtue and power identical. It does not give up, it wants, it does not fight against, but for nature; it is not the destruction, but the *fulfillment* of the *most powerful* affect. Good is what advances our power: evil [*böse*] the opposite. Virtue follows the quest for self-preservation. 'What we do, we do to preserve and increase our power'. 'By virtue and power I understand the same thing'. (KSA 12: 7[4], 261)

This last cited remark is the final definition at the beginning of Book IV of the *Ethics*, and what facilitates this identification of virtue and power in Spinoza is his account of joy and sadness as affects which increase or decrease our power to act (IIIP11 and P11s), and which, as a corollary, bring us to a greater or lesser perfection (III Definition of the Affects 2 and 3). Ultimately, all of the other affects are simply variations on these two and, as a consequence, the fundamental Spinozist ethical directive is to maximize joy, minimize sadness, and thereby increase our power to act.

Spinoza's metaphysics here offers us something that is, however, only implicit in Nietzsche insofar as he largely refrains from moving from the ethical to the political. Spinoza, on the other hand, can move seamlessly from the ethical-psychological directive to maximize joy, minimize sadness, and thereby increase our power to act, to a political one insofar as there is no substantial difference in Spinoza's metaphysics between a singular and a plural subject. 'By singular things,' Spinoza writes in the *Ethics*, 'I understand things that are finite and have a determinate existence. And if a number of individuals so concur in one action that together they are all the cause of one effect, I consider them all, to that extent, as one singular thing' (IID7). This understanding of individual and collective, which Spinoza elaborates in his political works in terms of his concept of the multitude, departs from both the Kantian and contract-theory traditions. And it allows for the establishment of a collective political subject insofar as the call to maximize joy and minimize sadness is also a call to interact with others who will compose with us new collective or composite individuals whose power of acting will have been increased, as will the power to act of the individuals who now comprise this collective individual, and to avoid interacting with individuals who will decompose us and diminish our power to act.

When Spinoza writes that 'no one has yet determined what the body can do' (IIIP2s), he is talking not just about an individual human body, but about a political or collective body as well. Deleuze tells us that 'if we are Spinozists we will not define a thing by its form, nor by its functions, nor as a substance or a subject. . . . A body can be anything: it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea; it can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity.'[21] Elsewhere, Deleuze writes:

> A body is not defined by the form that determines it nor as a determinate substance or subject nor by the organs it possesses or by the functions it fulfills. On the plane of [immanence] or consistency, *a body is defined only by a longitude and a latitude*: in other words the sum total of the material elements belonging to it

> under given relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness (longitude); the sum total of the intensive affects it is capable of at a given power or degree of potential (latitude).[22]

Deleuze credits Spinoza for calling attention to these two dimensions of the body, and he notes that these longitudes and latitudes constitute Nature, 'which is constantly being altered, composed and recomposed, by individuals and collectivities.'[23]

Nietzsche, no less than Spinoza, has an expansive notion of the subject, and although he does not develop this in an overtly political direction, he rejects the isolated, atomistic subject as one of the 'more disastrous' prejudices of the philosophers. This prejudice has been 'taught best and longest' by Christianity in the form of 'the belief that holds the soul to be something ineradicable, eternal, indivisible, a monad, an *atomon*' (BGE 12). And the modern incarnation of this prejudice is the Kantian moral subject, whose isolated autonomy gives itself the moral law. Escaping from this prejudice opens the way for 'new conceptions and refinements of the soul-hypothesis,' and in *Beyond Good and Evil* 12, Nietzsche names three: 'mortal soul,' 'soul as subject-multiplicity,' and 'soul as social structure of drives and affects.' It is these latter two – 'soul as subject-multiplicity,' and 'soul as social structure of drives and affects' – that allow Nietzsche to follow Spinoza in escaping the constraints of the isolated, substantive ego that dominated modern philosophy from Descartes to Kant and that continues to ground liberal democratic notions of rights. And with this new, expansive notion of the subject, Nietzsche encourages human beings to develop their multiplicities within, to cultivate their inner tensions, for in opposition to that alien 'desideratum of former times, "peace of soul," a *Christian* desideratum,' Nietzsche argues that 'One is only *fruitful* at the cost of being rich in contradictions; one only stays *young* on condition that the soul does not relax itself, does not desire peace' (TI 'Morality' 3).

Nietzsche's exemplar of this expansive subject is Goethe, who, it must be emphasized, is described in what follows as 'the antipode' to Kant:

> He was able to muster history, natural science, antiquity, likewise Spinoza, and practical activity above all; he surrounded himself with clearly defined horizons; he did not break off his connections with life, he took part in it; undaunted, he took as much as was possible upon himself, above himself, within himself. What he wanted was *totality*; he fought against the separation of reason, sensuality, feeling and will (– preached by *Kant* with alarming scholasticism, the antipode to Goethe), he disciplined himself into wholeness, he *created* himself. (TI 'Skirmishes' 49)

Goethe immersed himself in life, experiencing the delight of the individual who is able to obey its own command and who thereby experiences itself as, these are Nietzsche's words, a 'well constructed and happy community' (BGE 19). For Nietzsche, as for Spinoza and Deleuze, 'our body' – no less than the body politic – 'is after all only a society constructed of many souls' (BGE 19), and the healthy body, whether individual or collective, will be characterized essentially by tension and openness. This healthy body, like Goethe's, like that of the healthy Greek state, will manifest a 'more mysterious pathos' than the 'pathos of distance,' a 'craving in

the soul for every new expansion of distance, the development of ever higher, rarer, more remote, more widespread and comprehensive states' (BGE 257). To the *agon* that stood at the centre of Greek culture when it was at its apex, Nietzsche adds an internal *agon*, manifested in the contest between competing drives and interests (see, e.g. GS 333[24]), which makes possible 'the continual "self-overcoming of humanity",' a process that, for Nietzsche, is one and the same with 'every enhancement so far in the type "human being"' (BGE 257).

These new bodies will be, in Spinoza's sense, joyful and their power to act will be increased. Is not what Spinoza names 'joy' what Nietzsche names 'will to power': not the desire to possess something – power – but the having of this power in order to act upon the world. This is why Nietzsche can speak of psychology as 'the path to the fundamental problems' when it is understood, as he understands it, 'as morphology and *theory of the development of the will to power*' (BGE 23). For Nietzsche no less than for Spinoza, life just is the incessant process of acting on and being acted upon, which for Spinoza is expressed in terms of actions and passions (or more technically, active affects and passive affects), while for Nietzsche these are expressed in terms of the forces of strength and the forces of weakness.

Where for Spinoza, the question of ethics asks: 'has our power to act in the world been increased or decreased?' Nietzsche challenges traditional morality by suggesting that one should do all that one is capable of doing, that 'good' is doing that which one is capable of doing, and that 'bad' is being prevented from doing what one is capable of doing. Moving from this ethical register to a political one, Nietzsche would appear to follow Spinoza's claim that right is coextensive with power, that 'it is certain that nature, considered absolutely, has the supreme right to do everything in its power.'[25] And from this, Spinoza continues,

> But because the universal power of the whole of nature is nothing beyond the power of all individuals together, it follows from this that each individual has a supreme right to do everything in its power, *or* that the right of each thing extends as far as its determinate power does.[26]

Such a view would appear to lead Spinoza and Nietzsche to the position that 'might makes right,' but I would argue that neither of them holds this position. How then do they avoid it? The first point to note is that they refuse to appeal to any transcendent law or principle that will override one's right to do what one has the power to do. Instead, they look to factors immanent to social existence, as we see perhaps most clearly in the second chapter of Spinoza's *Political Treatise*. As Edwin Curley has noted, Spinoza adopts a 'pragmatic attitude toward politics,' which Curly finds exemplified in the opening paragraph of the *Political Treatise*:

> Philosophers think they perform a godly act and reach the pinnacle of wisdom when they have learned how to praise a human nature which exists nowhere, and how to assail in words the human nature which really exists. For they conceive men not as they are, but as they wish them to be. That's why for the most part they have written satire instead of ethics, and why they have never conceived a politics which can be put to any practical application. The politics they have conceived would be

> considered a chimera, and could be set up only in utopia, or in the golden age of the poets, i.e., where there was no need for it at all. In all the sciences which have a practical application, theory is believed to be out of harmony with practice, but this is most true of politics.[27]

Having noted that one has a natural right to do what one has the power to do, Spinoza notes as well that while human beings '*should* live according to the mere dictate of reason,' they are in fact 'more led by blind desire, than by reason' (TP II.5; my emphasis). And so rather than look to reason to appeal to some transcendent norm according to which we might limit our rights, Spinoza suggests we can look instead to our appetites, whereby we 'are determined to action, or to seek our own preservation.' But our appetites lead us to community, in part out of fear, as Hobbes had already noted, but also out of our desire to act, our desire to increase our power to act, insofar as 'if two come together and unite their strength, they have jointly more power, and consequently more right over nature than both of them separately' (TP II.13). This increase of power is proportional to the numbers who join into the alliance, as is the increase of the rights of the collectivity. But as the collectivity increases in power, its power, and *ipso facto* its rights, come to exceed those of the individual, so that 'every individual has the less right the more the rest collectively exceed him in power' (TP II.16). Here we have arrived at the multitude, who through its collective power has attained a new right which is called Dominion (*Imperium*) (TP II.17), and it is via this dominion, justified entirely in terms of the immanent relations of power operating within and among the citizens of the collective, that constraints on the individual's right to exercise its power are legitimated.

Nietzsche, I would argue, arrives at a similar conclusion via psychology rather than politics: the truly strong find no advantage in exercising their power over the weak. While they would have such a right, by virtue of their strength, they would lack the desire, for there would be no challenge, and only what challenges one's strength will result in the enhancement of that strength. For that reason, Nietzsche argues that the strong will seek out only 'worthy enemies,' enemies against whom they can test their strength. Nietzsche addresses this point explicitly in *Ecce Homo* when he notes that while 'attack is one of [his] instincts, [*t*]*o be able* to be a foe, to be a foe – that demands a strong nature, at all events it is a prerequisite in every strong nature. It needs defiance, consequently it *seeks* resistance.' The passage continues:

> The strength of an attacker is a sort of *gauge* for the opposition needed; all growth reveals itself by seeking out a mightier opponent – or problem: for a philosopher who is warlike also challenges problems to a duel. The task is *not* to become complete master over resistance, but over what every power, skill and prowess-in-arms must mobilize against – over *equal* opponents . . . equality before the foe – first requirement for an *honorable* duel.

For this reason, Nietzsche concludes, he has been selective in what he has attacked, choosing only what has been victorious, choosing to attack alone, choosing to attack ideas that are widely held rather than the individuals who hold them, and choosing to attack only that which he respects (EH I: 7).

Elsewhere, in a famous passage from *On the Genealogy of Morality* (II 10), Nietzsche connects this psychological observation to politics when he notes that 'As its power increases a community no longer takes so seriously the transgressions of the individual.' Where the weakness of the creditor had required that all debts be repaid in some form or other, when 'the power and self-confidence of a community grow, then its penal law always becomes milder.' When Nietzsche writes that 'The "creditor" has always become more humane to the degree that he has become richer; ultimately how much impairment he can endure without suffering from it even determines the *measure* of his wealth,' it is not so much monetary wealth but abundance of power that is his interest: 'A *consciousness of power* in society could be imagined according to which society would afford itself the noblest luxury available to it – that of letting its offender *go unpunished*.' The section thus concludes that while the old model of justice demanded that all debts be paid, it will remain 'the privilege of the most powerful' to suspend justice, and to this 'self-suspension of justice' it will give a 'beautiful name – *mercy*.'

Such ideas appear throughout Nietzsche's writings, from early to late. In *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, he wrote that while '[g]etting angry and punishing are our gifts from the animal world,' humans will advance and will 'first come of age when they return this gift from the cradle to the animals.' 'Some day,' he continues, 'we will *no longer have the heart* for the *logical* sin that lies concealed in anger and punishment, whether practiced individually or socially' (WS 183). And much later, while acknowledging again that the strong have the right to do what their power allows them to be capable of doing, one finds nevertheless that 'When exceptional people handle those who are mediocre more gently than they do themselves or their peers, this is not just politeness of the heart – it is simply their *duty*' (A 57), a duty that takes us very far from any notion of duty one might find in Kant.

It is with this sort of political *physis*, comprised of diverse and manifold bodies governed by immanent relations of power, that a politics of immanence can avoid recourse to the transcendent. This new conception of the body politic, not as an abstract idea but as an intensive living being with an infinite capacity for becoming other, moves questions of politics from those of individual rights and common goods to questions of what this body, itself comprised of other bodies, can do. Because the bodies that conjoin to form the body politic are no longer conceived primarily as the bodies of individuals who possess transcendent rights, they will be continuously capable of becoming something else, at times identifying and forming assemblages with their own bodies, at other times with the bodies of others, and at still other times with the bodies of their family, their clan, their community, their nation or their planet.[28]

In titling this essay 'Spinoza vs. Kant: Have I Been Understood?' I chose to invoke the final words of Nietzsche's final book. Nietzsche's alternative of '*Dionysus versus the Crucified . . .*' was his way to address the antithesis between the values immanent to life and those of the beyond. These words are offered in answer to a question that Nietzsche repeats three times: 'Have I been understood?' (EH IV: 7–9). Nietzsche first answers this question by saying that what defines him is that he uncovered Christian morality to be harmful to life insofar as 'it is the lack of what is natural, it is the completely ghastly

state of affairs whereby *anti-nature* itself received the highest honors as morality and stayed posted up as law, as categorical imperative for humanity!' (EH IV: 7). Nietzsche's second answer highlights how the harmfulness to life manifests itself in the creation of a series of values that lead one to a transcendent realm.

> Whoever uncovers morality has uncovered the worthlessness of all values that people believe in or have believed in; . . . The concept 'God' invented as counter-concept to life – everything harmful, poisonous, slanderous, the whole deadly animosity toward life, brought into a horrendous union! The concept 'beyond', 'true world', invented to devalue the *only* world there is – so there remains no goal, no rationality, no task for our earthly reality! The concept 'soul', 'spirit', and ultimately even 'immortal soul' invented to denigrate the body and make it sick – 'holy' – to produce a horrible superficiality toward all things in life worth taking seriously, the questions of nourishment, lodging, spiritual diet, treatment of the sick, purity, the weather! . . . (EH IV: 8)

And then there is Nietzsche's third and final answer: 'Have I Been Understood? – *Dionysus versus the Crucified . . .*' (EH IV: 9). I would suggest that this antithesis summarizes Nietzsche's entire philosophical project, a project that, for all its inconsistencies, remained steadfast in its opposition to any move towards transcending what he called, quite simply, 'this world.' 'The god on the cross,' Nietzsche writes in his notebooks, 'is a curse on life, a signpost to seek redemption from life; Dionysus cut to pieces is a *promise* of life: it will be eternally reborn and return again from destruction' (KSA 13: 14[89]). Contra Heidegger, it is too late for a god to save us now. For that reason, I think political theory must rephrase Nietzsche's antithesis in terms of another fundamental choice: Spinozist immanence versus Kantian transcendence. And confronting this choice, it seems to me, is precisely where a Nietzschean politics of immanence must be located.

Notes

1 Invented in 1866, the firing rate of the Reffye *mitrailleuse* was 100 rounds per minute, with an effective reach of about 2,000 yards.

2 But note how this section ends: 'Then the concept of politics will have been completely taken up into a spiritual war, all the power arrangements of the old society will be detonated – all of them rest on the lie: there will be such wars as there have not yet been on earth. Only after me will the earth have *grand politics*'. While Nietzsche's critics are quick to link 'there will be such wars as there have not yet been on earth' with World Wars I and II, they neglect to note that Nietzsche is talking here about a new concept of politics that will engage in a 'spiritual war', a *Geisterkrieg*. Here and in what follows, I use the translations of HH, MM, and WS by Gary Handwerk, BGE and GM by Adrian Del Caro, and TI, AC, and EH by Carol Diethe that will appear in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming). Translations from the KSA and KGB are my own.

3 A recent case in point is Derek Parfit's treatment of Nietzsche in the second volume of *On What Matters*. While Parfit can be, at times, very sensitive to the nuances of

Nietzsche's prose, he has no problem taking Nietzsche's militarism and 'murderous phantasies' (579) at face value, equating them with the thoughts of Himmler and Hitler (cf. esp. 575–80).

4 Several of the following paragraphs are drawn from an earlier discussion focused on Deleuze in Schrift 2006.

5 Kant 1960, p. 32.

6 See Lacan 1992. Lacan shares the view that ethics and morality are possible only within a Kantian framework, as he notes, following his mention of the categorical imperative, that 'In truth, I believe that the achievement of a form of subjectivity that deserves the name of contemporary, that belongs to a man of our time, who is lucky enough to be born now, cannot ignore [*The Critique of Practical Reason*]' (77).

7 Copjec 1996, p. xiv.

8 Deleuze regards Lacan's École Freudienne de Paris as a 'statutory organization' in ways that recall Nietzsche's account of the establishment of the Church in Deleuze 1987, p. 85.

9 Roosevelt 1941.

10 Bush 12 September 2001.

11 Bush 11 October 2001.

12 For an interesting treatment of Rawls that highlights his Manichean leanings in *Laws of Peoples*, see McBride 2008.

13 Deleuze and Guattari 1994, p. 48.

14 I have explored this point elsewhere; see Schrift 2009.

15 Deleuze 1988, p. 23.

16 Unless otherwise noted, I have used Edwin Curley's translation of Spinoza's *Ethics* and cite it parenthetically using the following standard abbreviations: Roman numeral = Part; D = Definition; P = Proposition; c = corollary; d = demonstration; s = scholium. Thus IIIP35s = *Ethics* Part III, Proposition 35, scholium.

17 Deleuze 1983, p. 2.

18 Ibid.

19 I follow Michael Della Rocca in preferring to translate this Proposition more literally than does Curley; see Della Rocca 1996, p. 257, n. 4.

20 Della Rocca, p. 210.

21 Deleuze 1988, p. 127.

22 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 260; cf. Deleuze 1988, pp. 127–8.

23 Deleuze 1988, p. 128.

24 That Nietzsche was intrigued by the metaphysical possibilities of viewing the self/soul as a multiplicity of competing drives, interests, or instincts, and the psychosocial implications of this metaphysical view, is evidenced by his numerous comments in the notebooks of 1885–88; see, for example, KSA 11: 40[42]; 12: 7[60], 9[98], 10[19].

25 Spinoza (nd), XVI.2 (Curley translation).

26 Ibid., XVI.4. While the argument is somewhat different, Spinoza makes the same claim in *Political Treatise* II.3 (Elwes translation): 'every natural thing has by nature as much right, as it has power to exist and operate'. Subsequent citations from the *Political Treatise* will appear parenthetically as TP, followed by chapter and paragraph, from the Elwes translation.

27 Cited in Curly 1996, pp. 328–9.

28 In making this point in this way, I am intentionally suggesting that a politics of immanence might cultivate a non-anthropocentric attitude in which one could

identify with the planet in the same way one could identify with one's clan or nation. That is to say, taking the notion of multiple body-assemblages seriously implies to me that, for example, the differences between family, clan, nation and planet should be viewed as differences of degree rather than kind.

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8

Kairos and Chronos: Nietzsche and the Time of the Multitude

Gary Shapiro

> The problem of those who wait. *Strokes of luck [*Glücksfälle*] and many incalculable factors are needed for a higher human, in whom the solution to a problem sleeps, to go into action at the right time – "into explosion," you might say. This does* not *usually happen, and in every corner of the earth people sit waiting, hardly knowing how much they are waiting, much less that they are waiting in vain. And every once in a while, the alarm call will come too late, the chance event that gives them "permission" to act, – just when the prime of youth and strength for action has already been depleted by sitting still. And how many people have realized in horror, just as they "jump up," that their limbs have gone to sleep and their spirit is already too heavy! "It's too late" – they say, having lost faith in themselves and being useless from that point on. – What if in the realm of genius, the "Raphael without hands" (taking that phrase in the broadest sense) is not the exception but, perhaps, the rule? Perhaps genius is not rare at all: what is rare is the five hundred* hands *that it needs to tyrannize the* kairos*, "the right time," in order to seize hold of chance by the forelock! [*um den Zufall am Schopf zu fassen*!]*
>
> (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 274)[1]

Let us read this passage carefully, in the context of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, in order to explore his conception of time and political change. More precisely let us consider the question of timing in relation to Nietzsche's political categories of multitude, nomad and hybridity, which modify or supersede more traditional ideas of people, nation and state; these categories take us beyond the 'Peoples and Fatherlands' which form the ostensible theme of the eighth chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil*. This reading should articulate his suggestions about the *kairos*, or right time, with what he says more specifically about *his* time, which he calls 'the century of the *multitude [Menge]!*' (BGE 256). In BGE Nietzsche is thinking about what it means to have a philosophy of futurity, that is of the unexpected, unpredictable, incalculable event. Further he provokes us to ask what it is to think in the time of the multitude, a diverse collection or assemblage of hybrid, nomadic human types who are culturally attuned to spectacle, to theatre in the widest sense. The task of those who would be vigilantly alert for opportunities of significant political change in such a world depends on their

comprehending what the character of their time is, a time called 'the century,' and on their ability to avoid the seductions of theatre and political theatre to which the multitude is liable. To clarify this line of thinking it will be necessary to follow Nietzsche more closely than most of his readers have done in distinguishing the multitude from some of his other categories of social and political analysis, such as masses, herd or rabble.

In Nietzsche's published and unpublished writings the term *kairos* appears only once (according to the digitalized version of his works from de Gruyter). As the aphorism on '*The problem of those who wait*' indicates – and as we will soon confirm – this word is not easy to translate. Its provenance is both classical and Biblical. The *kairos* is, roughly, the right time, significant moment, turning point or unexpected and unique hinge of opportunity. It is a 'stroke of luck,' a serendipitous moment, incalculable, unpredictable – it partakes of the character of the event in some of the senses given this term by thinkers like Heidegger, Deleuze, Derrida and Badiou (a critical history of thought from Heidegger to Badiou could revolve around explicating some of the senses and implications of 'event'). Since 2001 two book-length English language commentaries have appeared on *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future.* Yet neither of them mentions this expression, and neither treats the aphorism in which it appears in any depth.[2] Perhaps BGE is the least understood, the least well-read of Nietzsche's major texts. This prelude to a philosophy of the future still has a future. The theme of *kairos*, the opportune moment, would seem to be central to any philosophy of futurity, of the *Zu-kunft*, of that which arrives, arises or emerges.

Given that futurity is precisely that which cannot be calculated or intentionally produced, in the perspective of a '*Philosophie der Zukunft'* it would be pointless or at least distracting to engage in speculation about any specific character or content that the future might have. Nietzsche's project, articulated most explicitly in *Beyond*, is to think, not the content of the future, but futurity itself, and to provoke his readers to a certain vigilance in their time and place. 'The problem of those who wait' is 'our' problem so far as we are moving deeper into the questioning indicated by the title of *Beyond*'s final chapter, 'What is Noble?' in which the aphorism on waiting appears. In other words, it is (first) a problem that concerns our understanding and evaluation of those who wait among the other types, roles and characters which we are assessing in terms of the possibility of nobility. Yet it is also the problem posed *to* those who wait, a problem of which they may not even be aware. The aphorism encourages us to formulate the problem of waiting, a problem which is also necessarily ours as thinkers of futurity. Some 'wait' completely unconsciously, waiting only in the sense that they have a set of skills, instincts, aptitudes and thoughts that could respond creatively and responsibly to the stroke of luck, the quick passage of a fortunate chance, the *kairos*. Some sense with varying degrees of awareness what might be possible, yet the event in the strong sense tests and transforms the limits previously given to the possible. Articulating the problem of those who wait, articulating it *as* a problem, is itself a form of vigilance, a watchful, self-aware, questioning waiting. Indeed, what is a problem? Is it a question? Or, as Deleuze suggests, does a philosophical problem have the form of a complex of questions that are multiply linked and associated, but which exhibit no

unique internal order or hierarchy (Deleuze, pp. 157–67, 195–204). A problem, then, calls for a judgement that either reduces the problem to an ordered series of questions (like Kant's determinate judgement) or provides some less structured, more pluralizing way of exploring the complexity (variations on Kant's reflective judgement that go by the names of hermeneutics, genealogy, deconstruction and the like).

Whether Nietzsche's chapter on the question of nobility answers the question or multiplies and deepens it is not obvious. Some readers, supposing that it promises a certain kind of answer, have judged the chapter and the book to be incomplete; some say that the concluding aphorisms are so scattered that 'things fall apart' (Acampora and Pearson, pp. 209–11). Yet to take the text at face value, to read rather literally, we should ask whether in this unique reference to *kairos*, Nietzsche may be encouraging us to think together the questions of futurity and nobility. *Does nobility then involve a certain relation to futurity?* In this case 'the problem of those who wait' would be central to its intent. Nobility, it must be remembered, is not only an individual character trait, but a form of social and political distinction, even when decoupled from ideas of hereditary aristocracy.

What is the right time, the *kairos*? How can we recognize it and be prepared for it? To paraphrase Meno's challenge to Socrates, how will we know it when we see it? And how can we search for it when we don't know what it is? To these we must add a temporal dimension that Plato neglected when he turned the issue into one of *anamnesis*: how can we recognize, catch it and respond to it at the right time? How can we be worthy of the event? The Greeks acknowledged this problem in their personification of *kairos*; he became a figure with locks of hair above his face, but bald in back. His appearance and passage are quick and unpredictable. *Kairos* must be seized by the forelock as soon as he appears, in a face to face encounter; you can't hesitate until he has passed and the chance is lost.

The future cannot be known by prediction or prophecy, but precisely, as Derrida reminds us, it is that which is *à venir*, a *Zu-kunft* which has yet to manifest itself. Therefore it is not a future that we plan, install or force, but one assembling itself through 'happy accidents' and 'incalculable circumstances.' *Beyond Good and Evil* names the site of arrival, the place from which the *kairos* might become evident, might be seized by the forelock and possibly even tyrannized. Yet since great events slip by everybody or almost everybody, even those with the resources for greeting them, those who might have been equal to the event, are almost always too late.

What is the problem of those who wait? The phrase can be read in at least two ways. In one sense, the emphasis would be on the situation of waiting itself; in another, it would be a question of what the problem is that finds them waiting for a solution. Nietzsche's explicit concern in the aphorism seems to be with the first: what does it mean to wait for an opportunity, a happy chance, that never comes? What of those who see it come too late, when waiting itself has exhausted their 'best youth and power'? These are perhaps the unhappiest of those who wait, for they see the moment slipping through their hands. And what should we say of those who, having the powers to seize the *kairos*, remain unaware that this is their vocation, and consequently allow it to elude them? Nietzsche's reference to this last possibility indicates that from his perspective there is a kind of objective waiting, a waiting of which one can be unaware.

Such 'Raphaels without hands' do not know that they are capable of rising to the occasion, or that there could be an occasion that would call forth their powers.

The *kairos* of this aphorism should be understood as part of a system of terms including events, great events and great noon. Events, that is genuine events, as Nietzsche says both here and elsewhere, are rare and unpredictable (Shapiro 2010). Yet we should not hear Nietzsche's frequently hyperbolic rhetoric as implying that only the rarest of types, for example the *Übermensch*, is capable of recognizing, yielding to, and ultimately tyrannizing the event. The events in question are much rarer, according to BGE 274, than are those who might catch and tyrannize them. Indeed, this passage should be read alongside the much quoted lines in *Schopenhauer as Educator* where Nietzsche says that in principle all people could look beyond themselves to discover an exemplar or educator (*SE* 6; cf. Cavell); this theme is explicit in the passage from Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* to which Nietzsche's phrase 'Raphael without hands' alludes. There the Prince of a small Italian renaissance state has become infatuated with Emilia, the daughter of a rival, who is promised to another. The painter Conti appears at the beginning of the play and shows the Prince two paintings, first of his last month's love and then of Emilia. When the Prince heaps extravagant praise on the painting, the artist replies with this speech:

> Nevertheless, this picture still left me very dissatisfied with myself. And yet, on the other hand, I am very satisfied with my dissatisfaction with myself. Ha! What a pity that we do not paint directly with our eyes! How much is lost on the long path from the eye, through the arm, into the brush! But the moment I say I know what has been lost here and how it has been lost, and why it had to be lost: I am just as proud of that, in fact prouder, than I am of what I did not allow to get lost. Because from the former I recognize more than from the latter that I am really a great artist, but that my hand isn't always. Or do you think, Prince, that Raphael would not have been the greatest artistic genius had he unfortunately been born without hands? Is that what you think, Prince? (Lessing, pp. 7–8).

What can it mean, then, to *tyrannize* the *kairos*, to actualize the power of the five hundred hands of those who wait? Earlier in BGE Nietzsche characterizes the Stoics as spiritual tyrants who insisted on seeing nature as Stoic:

> some abysmal piece of arrogance finally gives you the madhouse hope that because you know how to tyrannize yourselves – Stoicism is self-tyranny–, nature lets itself be tyrannized as well: because isn't the Stoic a *piece* of nature? . . . what happened back then with the Stoics still happens today, just as soon as a philosophy starts believing in itself. It always creates the world in its own image, it cannot do otherwise; philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to the "creation of the world," to the *causa prima*. (BGE 9)

Stoic tyranny involves the thinker forgetting or denying that she has imposed a meaning on the world; the thinker claims to discover what she has herself constructed. In his comment on the Stoics, Nietzsche admires the decisive energy of such tyranny while resisting its temptations. But is this what he means by tyrannizing the *kairos*?

Part of the problem of those who wait is understanding what kind of tyranny is possible with regard to the *kairos*. What is the relation of tyranny and time? This tyranny will *not* be a capture or seizure. In BGE 279 we hear that sad people are prone to grasping and clutching at their *Glück*, a response that Nietzsche's worldly wisdom realizes will only drive it away. This would be an unsuccessful tyranny, as Brecht reminds us in *Der Dreigroschenoper*: those who chase after *Glück* will always find that it runs away faster than they can pursue it. Therefore Nietzsche speaks of *Glücksfälle*, happy accidents. What is *Glück*? As BGE 274 suggests, it is not a state or condition or experience that can be held, exchanged or distributed, but an emergent event, so the word itself is appropriately translated as 'happiness,' 'fortune,' or 'luck.' The history of the English word 'happiness' provides an instructive parallel. It derives ultimately from the somewhat archaic 'hap,' used to describe in the most general way the occurrence of any sort of event; 'happen,' 'perhaps,' 'mishap,' and similar words are derived from it. In recent language, events 'happen,' in one of the few remnants of the middle voice in English. To be happy was to experience a fortunate happening. Only in later usage does 'happiness' become something to be deliberately pursued, possessed, grasped or held as a treasure. One of Nietzsche's translators has, happily, translated *Glücksfälle* as 'serendipities,' a word that owes its origin to the supposed wonderful chance discovery by European explorers of the marvellous island of Serendip (Ceylon or Sri Lanka), which should remind us of *Zarathustra*'s *Glückselige Inseln* (Z II: 2–18).

Much of Nietzsche's thinking and questioning in 'What is Noble?' is apotropaic, warding off the premature embrace of the all too timely, on the one hand, and, on the other, resisting the resigned skepticism that blinds itself to that which arrives. It is not so much inconclusive as it is a complex set of warnings against premature conclusions. It is directed at keeping the five hundred hands as primed as they can be. What is nobility now, for those who wait? Among other things, it is avoiding premature, precipitate action and knowing how to avoid such temptations. In BGE 277 Nietzsche reminds us of the classic paradox that once you've built your ideal house you have already thought beyond it to what it should have been. We should learn not to be over-eager in anticipating the moment. We are also reminded of the necessity of masks and disguises, to protect us in our condition of vigilance from those who would interfere if they knew our vocation; so we are advised on the value of feigning stupidity through enthusiasm (288) and of the strategic necessity of writing in order to hide our thoughts (289). This advice can be read as an amplification of the aphorism that precedes and introduces 274 where Nietzsche names the *kairos*. The one who strives for great things will see others as obstacles, stepping stones or resting places – even when she becomes involved with them she remains solitary at a deep level (273).

The apotropaic dimension of *Beyond Good and Evil* gains a more specific focus by considering another form of temporality which informs the situation of those who, wittingly or not, are waiting for a *kairos*. This is the character of the time in which Nietzsche and his readers live. It is not a privileged moment but a stretch of time, a manifestation of modernity, or, to take the classical contrast with *kairos*, it is *chronos* (roughly duration, discussed further in what follows). To think of futurity philosophically, it is necessary to think not only time as event and *kairos*, but time as our time, the time in which we are waiting.

So it should be possible to articulate what Nietzsche has to say about the *kairos* with his analysis of his own time. Specifically, let us concentrate on the apparently definitive statement 'this is the century of *the multitude [Menge]*!' (BGE 256). Coming at the end of the chapter 'Peoples and Fatherlands,' this declaration asks to be taken seriously as an emphatic judgement about the age of nationalism under analysis.

'Peoples and Fatherlands' addresses a number of questions having to do with states, nations and the future of Europe. (Europe is understood here as a cultural rather than a strictly geographical entity, including all peoples whose cultures and polities are strongly indebted to a complex of social, artistic and political practices which arose in geographical Europe in modern times, that is roughly from the time of the scientific revolution and the establishment of independent national states in the seventeenth century). The definitive claim – 'this is the century of *the multitude [Menge]!*' – appearing as an interjection set off by dashes, could be said to be the chapter's conclusion, implying as it does that we must think *beyond* peoples and fatherlands in order to understand the emerging political contours of modernity.

This thesis comes at the end of a chapter ostensibly devoted to 'peoples and fatherlands' – specifically Germany, France, England, the Jews and others – yet it undermines or significantly qualifies the assumption, with which a reader might have begun, that Europe consists essentially of nation-states on which its future and its politics depend. That assumption is also put into question by the repeated observation that 'Europe wants to be one' (256); that claim has attracted some attention, typically in connection with Nietzsche's references to 'the good European.' However, it has not been sufficiently noted that Nietzsche is *reporting* this desire; if he endorses it, it is not obvious why he does so. He does not see the desire as leading immediately or directly to social homogeneity (which Nietzsche tends to designate with words like 'masses [*Massen*]' or 'herd [*Heerde*]') but to new forms of diversity and multiplicity, that is to the formation of a multitude. The multitude arises because Europeans have become increasingly nomadic and detached from their origins or ancestry. This must eventually weaken the power of the nation-state and its claims to legitimacy (HAH 472, 475). In the process, as Nietzsche illustrates by discussing a number of exemplary cultural figures from Napoleon to Wagner, these contemporary Europeans take on hybrid forms, creating new mixtures drawn eclectically from a variety of traditions. They develop *beyond* peoples and fatherlands. It is the multitude's century, not the nation-state's, and it is also not the century of the masses. The multitude's roots in national identities have been significantly loosened and they have become an audience for those leaders of the near future whom Nietzsche describes as tyrants, including the most spiritual sort (242). Indeed, it is a condition of the appeal of these tyrants that they can compete for the allegiance of a multitude. This account recognizes that the politics of the era of the multitude will have a strong dimension of theatre and spectacle.

Philosophical commentators tend to neglect Nietzsche's formulation. Consequently they miss some important suggestions about what it means to articulate a philosophy of the future and of futurity. Consider a representative critical remark at the conclusion of an otherwise insightful article on some of Nietzsche's complex position(s) on race. Yirmiyahu Yovel says that 'there is a marked lacuna in [Nietzsche's] thinking – the lack of a positive philosophy of the "multitude." Politics

is not about the happy few, but about those ordinary people, the modern mass or "herd" which Nietzsche did not care about and did not make the topic of any positive philosophical reflection.' Yovel goes on to say that this political lacuna left (and still leaves) Nietzsche open to abuse by fascists, Nazis and the like (Yovel, 132). Here Yovel like many other readers assumes that the terms 'multitude,' 'mass' and 'herd' are identical. Whether Nietzsche has a 'positive philosophy' of the multitude – and what this would involve – remains to be seen, but we must begin by reading his words. The chief elements in the makeup of the herd appear to be lack (not loss) of individuality and unthought, unquestioning submission to the herd's shepherd or acceptance of its collective, instinctive behaviour. The terms 'mass' and 'masses' suggest great numbers and homogeneity, and one can often hear Nietzsche attempting to transvalue what he thought socialists were saying about the masses when he uses this term. The multitude of BGE, however, is composed of diverse individuals and is strongly inflected by many hybridic and nomadic strains (cf. 242, 256). Another obvious sign that Nietzsche's thesis has been neglected or misunderstood is found in the inconsistencies in English translations. The Cambridge translation renders '*Menge*' in BGE 256 as 'masses,' following the lead of the century-old Zimmern version. Masses, however, are almost always taken to be homogeneous in Nietzsche (and in many other nineteenth century writers), lacking the diversity of the *Menge*. Walter Kaufmann's 'crowd' is somewhat better, especially because an audience can be spoken of as a crowd. *Menge* appears in a number of other contexts in BGE and the translations tend to be inconsistent in their renderings. So the *Menge* not only designates a multitude but oddly gives rise to a multitude of meanings. Deeper perhaps than the problem of linguistic translation is a continuing practice of reading Nietzsche as an exclusively aphoristic writer whose books are without structure. More recently, readers have become alert to Nietzsche's development of systematic arguments in specific books, especially in the case of the *Genealogy of Morality*.[3] Nietzsche insisted that his writings be approached through slow and careful reading (GM Preface). More specifically, in GM I he undertakes a discriminating, differentiating look at the terms used to name human groups or types. Nietzsche advertized GM as an expansion and clarification of BGE (cf. KSA 14.377). There Nietzsche asks us to pay attention to distinctions, even subtle nuances, in the oldest Greek and Latin terms that the masters and slaves use to describe one another. He notes the nuances of tenderness or compassion in some of the nobles' names for the slaves, urging us to hear 'the almost kindly nuances which the Greek nobility, for example, places in all words that it uses to distinguish itself from the more lowly people [*das niedere Volk*]' (GM I.10). Nietzsche reinforces the methodological point, proposing that some learnt academy invite the submission of essays on the question of how linguistics illuminates moral concepts (GM I.17). While we can be grateful for the work of scholars like Mauss, Benveniste and Foucault who have made exemplary genealogical discoveries in this spirit, we should also apply it to the reading of BGE for which GM is said to serve as a clarification.

It seems clear that *Pöbel* (rabble), *Heerde* and *Massen* are always employed with a tone of contempt in BGE and elsewhere. Nietzsche is appalled by the possibility of the formation of a strong, uniform herd; disdainful of the rabble, he sees the homogeneity of the masses stifling the rise of noble individuals. There is little or no contempt when

he speaks of the *Menge*. Accordingly, I seek to convey a more neutral tone, following Grimm in linking the term to the Latin *multitudo*, translating it with the English *multitude* (we might also think of words like 'throng').[4] I take the dominant note here to be multiplicity, a multiplicity that does not (or does not *necessarily*) denote uniformity.[5] Elsewhere Nietzsche explicitly distinguishes *Menge* and *Masse* in terms of the greater diversity of *Menge*. In *Gay Science* he says that in Greece 'there must have been a multitude of diverse individuals [*eine Menge verschiedenartige Individuen*],' contrasting this, later in the aphorism, with the homogeneity of the *Masse* (GS 149).[6] In this aphorism Nietzsche makes a very clear distinction between *Masse* and *Menge*. The topic is '*The failure of reformations*'; Nietzsche asks why Luther, who he generally describes as a vulgar peasant, was able to accomplish a reformation in northern Europe when much more gifted spirits like Pythagoras, Empedocles and Plato failed. He concludes that

> Every time the reformation of an entire people fails and only sects raise their heads, one may conclude that the people is already very heterogeneous [*vielartig*] and is starting to break away from crude herd instincts and the morality of custom [*Sittlichkeit der Sitte*].

BGE 256 develops this thought about the multitude by examining the careers of exemplary cultural figures whose hybridity and internal multiplicity reflects both the heterogeneity of the *Menge* which idolizes them (cf. 269) and the European *Menge*'s desire to be one; but just as Greek reformations failed, so such unification is unlikely so long as the population remains diverse. In 'Peoples and Fatherlands' Nietzsche discusses both factors which could encourage unification (such as the slow generation of adaptable supra-national and nomadic types [242]) and the actual diversity that leads not to homogeneity but to varied forms of hybridity. These artists and political figures, whose achievements arise from mixing and synthesizing novel combinations of various cultural traditions, resemble one another in the form but not the content of their hybridity (e.g. Heine's German-Jewish persona is distinct from Stendhal's Franco-Italian one). The *Menge*, it seems, is like these hybrid cases so far as its members too tend to be of mixed but not uniform heritage.

As the context of BGE 256 suggests, the *Menge* is, among other things, an audience. From the beginning of the aphorism we are in the world of theatre, as Nietzsche explains that the nationalistic politics of the day is 'a politics of dissolution [auseinanderlösende Politik]' which necessarily can only be a politics of the theatrical interlude ('*Zwischenakts-Politik*'). They are those listening to such cultural stars as Wagner, Stendhal and Heine; these and others first taught their century the concept 'higher man.' The chapter begins and ends with attempts to assess Wagner in terms of his presumed exemplification of German national culture; in each case the supposed identity is considerably loosened under examination. He is to be understood as a performer in his relation to his audience, the multitude or throng. Given this theatrical context, we should recall that the *Menge* plays a prominent role in Goethe's *Faust*, where it is the subject of a dialogue that frames the play. Goethe is one of Nietzsche's constant touchstones and is included in his list of the century's unconscious seekers for 'the soul of Europe, the one Europe.' In Goethe's 'Prelude in the Theater' the *Menge* is the audience. As the dialogue of director,

poet and clown shows, the *Menge* is not a universal class, but rather those attending the play; there is no indication that they are a representative sample of the people at large. The director wants to please them, especially because they 'live and let live.' They want a surprise, and 'even if their taste is not the very best, they have read quite a bit.' This suggests a semi-educated but reachable audience. The director's long description of the *Menge* is worth quoting because it emphasizes their variation in mood, attention and interest, as well as implicitly acknowledging that they are all likely to be comfortably situated in social and economic terms:

> Do not forget for whom you write!
> They come when they are bored at night,
> Or gorged on roast and relish, spice and capers,
> And – this is the most wretched plight –
> Some come right after having read the papers.
> They come to us distracted, as to a masquerade,
> Propelled by nothing but curiosity;
> Their dresses and their jewels, the ladies would parade,
> And act without a salary. . .
> One half is cold, one half is raw.
> After the play, one hopes to play at cards,
> Another for an orgy in a harlot's bed (Goethe, pp. 73–5).

Later in this dialogue, the clown emphasizes other internal differences in the *Menge*, especially between the young and old.

While the poet speaks disdainfully of the *Menge*, the clown and director ridicule his interest in perfection and the judgement of posterity. To think of this as the century of the *Menge* then, is to see this as a time in which power is obtained through spectacle presented to a variegated audience. Now appeals to 'peoples and fatherlands' – national identity or traditional patriotism involving essentialist or autochthonist claims – are not likely to be effective, except insofar as these are ingredients of a successful spectacle. While Nietzsche observes that all of the exemplary hybrid cultural figures he cites as the time's first educators with respect to the idea of higher men had severe limits (e.g. all relapsed into Christianity), they did delineate the structure of the emerging political arena.

Nietzsche's references to the multitude in BGE, while never admiring, are rather nuanced. Consider BGE 213, where the philosopher is said to have been born and bred for a 'higher world' and enjoys the 'sovereignty of his ruling gazes and downward gazes'; accordingly he feels his 'separation from the multitude with its duties and virtues.' Nothing derogatory is said here about the multitude, with their own duties and virtues. The philosopher is also separated from everybody else. If the philosopher were simply said to be separated from the rabble, the masses or the herd, all of whom are typically described with disdain, the separation would not be as definitive as Nietzsche wants to make it.[7]

That the *Menge* is not a universal class of all human beings, or all those within a certain territory or political unit, is evident from a discussion of their reverence for 'great men' (269). Here the multitude is again understood as an audience, one that often

admires unwisely, but is distinguished from a more universal class. This admiration is typically naïve; in contrast 'the psychologist' is aware of the pitiful shortcomings of the figures generally considered to be great. The psychologist – a role Nietzsche plays when he analyses the 'higher humans' (as in 256) – suffers from observing their admiration: 'Perhaps the paradox of his condition becomes so horrible that the multitude, the educated, the enthusiasts [*die Menge*, *die Gebildeten*, *die Schwärmer*] develop a profound admiration for the very things he has learned to regard with profound pity and contempt . . .' Nietzsche takes this contemporary phenomenon as a clue to 'what has happened in all great cases so far: the multitude worshiped a god, – and that 'god' was only a poor sacrificial animal!' The apposition of 'multitude, educated, enthusiasts' indicates the relative selectivity in the concept of multitude, as opposed to herd and masses. They are those with sufficient interest and motivation, whatever their other differences, to care seriously about 'great men.' While such things may always have happened with the multitude and the objects of its admiration, we are now living in the very time of the multitude, their century.

One more surprising distinction is evident when Nietzsche describes women's attitude towards the presumed great men. While the multitude adores its 'great men' without qualification, not everyone does.

> It is easy to imagine that they [higher humans] will soon be subject to eruptions of boundless and most devoted pity from women in particular (who are clairvoyant in the world of suffering and whose desire to help and save far exceed their ability to actually do so). The multitude, the adoring multitude, above all, do not understand this pity . . .[8]

Recently Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt, Etienne Balibar and others have spoken about the multitude as a social, political and revolutionary agent. Nietzsche's use of the concept should be distinguished from these contemporary versions, and from Spinoza's, which is typically cited as their precedent. Spinoza's multitude are the people at large, the many, understood as a combination of individuals that can act collectively; Balibar emphasizes the potential for affective community which enables such action.[9] This conception of the multitude is much more inclusive than the theatrical one, as Nietzsche conceived it, and specifically attributes a form of agency to the multitude. However, one might think that much of the global audience which follows international music, soccer and the Olympics, film, and the spectacles of war and terrorism could be described a contemporary version of the *Menge*, indeed as a multi- and inter-cultural expansion of it. Like Nietzsche's *Menge* it does not assume uniformity among the multitude, but preserves the strong possibility of differentiation. For Spinoza, the multitude is not as passive as the later thinker deemed the herd, the masses and the rabble. Hardt and Negri claim to follow Spinoza in *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. They see the multitude as a collective agent composed of diverse individuals in a world of hybridity and nomadism. In contrast to the multitude they understand the masses as a rather dated concept, tied to the industrial economy that dominated classical Marxist thinking. While Nietzsche does not look forward to the *Menge* taking political power, so far as they form an audience, it is their applause or boos, favour or disfavour, that determine which would-be leaders hold

power and for how long. Those who want to deploy Nietzsche's thought in behalf of an agonistic democracy might find this combination of the political and the theatrical of mixed value.[10] The multitude has some power here, but it is understood in terms of its response to competing spectacles. Perhaps the 'tyrants of all sorts, including the most spiritual' that Nietzsche sees emerging include those who stage media spectacles and even own or control the media; they might range from media powers, moneyed interests and politicians waging television campaigns to terrorists staging attacks like that of 11 September 2001.

Why have Nietzsche's readers ignored the distinctive qualities of the multitude? The frequent conflation of multitude, herd and mass, assumes that Nietzsche sees Europe on the way to producing a uniform, homogeneous, heteronomous population – if it is not already there. However, his position is more complex. The multitude is formed by a mixing of races, cultures, ethnicities, and so on. This might result eventually in the formation of herds and masses, but it need not. Exemplary here is Nietzsche's discussion of the emergence of what we think of as the Greeks from a mixing of Mongols, Semites and others (KSA 8.96; cf. Cancik). Mixing was the necessary precondition for creating the Greeks. Neither they nor any other group has a simple or pure origin. In BGE Nietzsche looks forward to the possibility of something analogous issuing from Europe's contemporary mixing. If Europe wants to 'become one,' if this is the form of its desire, the 'truth' or upshot of this desire (as Hegel would say) is that it becomes a great mixing bowl that could generate a new ruling caste. While this thought can be and has been abused, it is quite distinct from any view about the inevitable dominance of the uniform herd. In this respect it is compatible with much recent political thought focuses on questions having to do with the movement and mixing of peoples, the formation of new cultural configurations, and the constitution of a diverse population. Nietzsche's terms for these phenomena are nomadism, hybridity and multitude.

The multitude, like the throng Zarathustra finds in the marketplace, are enthralled with the spectacle of the moment; they are likely to be fascinated with a rope-dancer or give their ears to the fire-hound who barks and howls about political ephemera. *Grosse Menschen*, if there were any, would be associated with great events, in the manner of Hegel's world-historical figures. Nietzsche approaches the situation of the multitude through the figure of the psychologist who studies 'the more select cases,' those often taken to be *grosse Menschen*. The psychologist discovers that 'it seems to be the rule that higher people come to ruin.' He is tormented by repeatedly uncovering the 'eternal and all-encompassing "Too-late"' of these higher people, anticipating what will be said just a few aphorisms later about those who see the *kairos* only after it has flown by. The psychologist must resist the temptation of pity – precisely the situation of Zarathustra with the higher humans. At this point he finds himself in opposition to the *Menge*:

> The paradox of his situation may even reach the frightful point where those cases that have triggered in him great pity as well as great contempt, have triggered in the multitude, the educated, the enthusiasts, a feeling of great reverence; theirs is a reverence for "great humans" and performing animals, for whose sake we bless and esteem the fatherland, the earth, the dignity of humanity, and ourselves; men whom we ask our children to look up to and to emulate (269).

Note that Nietzsche has silently enlisted the pity of his reader for the psychologist, so that we find ourselves in (or resisting) a situation parallel to his. The misplaced reverence of the crowd prevents them from detecting genuinely great people or events. The melancholy of the psychologist threatens an equivalent oblivion regarding the future. As noted earlier, 'the multitude, the educated, the enthusiasts' are *not* the herd, masses or rabble. These noisy and exaggerated enthusiasts fail to see that their 'stars' are not so different from performing animals. They see the 'great humans' as justifying the earth, the fatherland and their own dignity.

Perhaps, Nietzsche continues, it has always been so with the multitude, adoring an imagined 'god' who was 'only a poor sacrificial animal.' The 'great humans' themselves are woefully unprepared for the *kairos* because they are 'precipitous in their trust and distrust,' 'people of the moment,' and likely to be swayed by 'intoxicated flatterers.' Nietzsche's sample list of such supposed great ones – Byron, Musset, Poe, Leopardi, Kleist, Gogol – overlaps with the one provided in BGE 256. Such figures often become the target of women's 'limitless, utterly devoted *pity*.' Here Nietzsche draws a distinction between women and the general, reverent crowd, which admires rather than pities. Perhaps the point is to introduce a revaluation of what Christianity – for Nietzsche a feminized religion – saw as the distinctive *kairos*, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Indeed, most of the discourse on *kairos* for the last two thousand years, beginning with Paul's letters, has centred on this presumed messianic moment (the pre-Christian sense of the theme tended to reappear under the name Fortuna). Nietzsche refers to this as a 'holy tale and camouflage.' Perhaps Jesus, whose demands for love knew no limits, and had to be disappointed by all human love, had to become a martyr for a God he constructed as all love. Nietzsche would then be deconstructing the Christian *kairos* by seeing it as a misunderstanding born of enthusiasm, pity and a misunderstanding of love.

At the end of this aphorism Nietzsche reflects, asking us to acknowledge our own involvement, perhaps our pity, first for the unnamed psychologist and then for Jesus: 'But why should we muse on [or give ourselves up to (*nachhängen*)] such painful things? Assuming that we are not compelled to do so.' But are we not compelled to think about such 'painful things' in so far as we are becoming thinkers of futurity? Is it not the promiscuous identification of great events and false *kairoi*, surrounding us in the century of the multitude, that compels such musing on these painful things? Is this not a major dimension of the problem of waiting in our time – to avoid the simulacra of great events that are the daily work of the society of the theatre and the spectacle?

In 'Peoples and Fatherlands,' Nietzsche describes our age of democratization – that is, of the multitude, with its increasingly nomadic, cosmopolitan and hybrid population – as 'an involuntary exercise in the breeding of tyrants – understanding that word in every sense, including the most spiritual' (242). Is 'our time' then helping to breed spiritual tyrants who can recognize and tyrannize the *kairos*? This question calls for thought about both time and tyranny. What do we mean by time here? *Kairos* is typically thought in relation and in contrast to *chronos*, that is to a progressive, devouring time, what John Locke called 'perpetual perishing.' *Chronos* typically extends into such measures as days, years and centuries. When Nietzsche says that 'this is the century of the multitude!' I take him to be speaking the language of *chronos*, indicating

a relatively extended stretch of continuous time (it is *chronos* which lends itself to the spatialization of time that Bergson and others subject to critique). He is not suggesting that this is a span of exactly one hundred solar calendar years, but naming an epoch that could be the context of *kairos*. As the *Grimm Wörterbuch* confirms, *Jahrhundert* is a translation of the Latin *saeculum*; the latter means something like an age or an epoch, the span of the longest human life. Thus a *saeculum* or *Jahrhundert* is finished, when the last people to have experienced that era have died.

Giorgio Agamben cites a telling definition of *kairos* and *chronos* in his study of Paul, *The Time That Remains*:

> In general, *kairos* and *chronos* are opposed or heterogeneous, which is certainly true. But decisive here is not simply the opposition, but the relationship between them. What do we have when we have a *kairos*, an occasion? The most beautiful definition of *kairos* I have ever found is in the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, and it is one which in fact characterizes *kairos* with respect to *chronos*. I will quote this definition: *chronos esti en ho kairos kai kairos esti en ho ou pollos chronos*, "the *chronos* is where we have *kairos* and the *kairos* is where we have a little *chronos*." Mark the extraordinary implication of the two concepts, which are literally the one within the other. The *kairos*—to translate it simply as "occasion" or "chance" would be trivial—is not another time: what we get when we grasp a *kairos* is not another time, but only a contracted and abridged *chronos*. The precious pearl in the ring of chance is only a small portion of *chronos*, a time which is left (Agamben, pp. 68–9).

Kairos is a temporal contraction, the time that ushers in the event. This is perhaps why Nietzsche is careful with his terminology in BGE 274. At first he simply refers to those who are waiting (whether they know it or not) for the right time (*zur rechten Zeit*). This is a first approximation to the problem of waiting, but when Nietzsche names the *kairos* at the end of the aphorism, the phrase '*die rechte Zeit'* appears in apposition and in quotation marks, indicating that this is at best an approach, a translation, because the time in question is not simply a passing moment, even one that has been marked for a mundane event, like an appointment in one's daily agenda. It is precisely that quickening and condensation, that unpredictable moment of turning, that cannot be scheduled. Perhaps at best we can clear away the obstacles that stand in the way of our vigilance. Much of 'What is Noble?' concerns such questions of vigilant strategy.

The philosopheme of time's contraction has appeared earlier in BGE. We should be alert to the emergence of such contractions; yet, Nietzsche argues, our modern virtues stand in the way of acknowledging these moments. The hypercultivation of the historical sense encourages us to place all times and events on the same plane, leaving us unprepared to 'seize chance by the forelock.' In 'Our Virtues' he writes:

> Perhaps our great virtue of historical sense is necessarily opposed to *good* taste, at least to the very best taste, and it is only poorly and haltingly, only with effort, that we are able to reproduce in ourselves the brief and lesser as well as greatest serendipities [*Glücksfälle*] and transfigurations of human life as they light up every now and then: these moments and marvels [*Augenblicke und Wunder*]

> when a great force stands necessarily still in front of the boundless and limitless–, the enjoyment of an abundance of subtle pleasure [*Überfluss von feiner Lust*] in suddenly mastering and inscribing in stone [*Bändigung und Versteinerung*], in settling down and establishing yourself on ground that is still shaking (224).

Taste is understood here as a temporal sense. In the long aphorism that that these words help to conclude, Nietzsche has been discussing what he sees as a distinctively modern weakness, the European historical sense which is an effect of 'the democratic mixing [*Vermengung*] of classes and races.' We moderns may claim this as a sixth sense, he says. If so, the implicit point may be that it replaces taste, a more vital and crucial sense, also sometimes said to be the sixth. Nietzsche speaks of a mixing or *Vermengung* here, a becoming-multitude which is itself an 'enchanting and crazy *half-barbarism*' and which leads to a weakness for the barbaric and ignoble. The century of the *Menge*, again, is the condition with which he contrasts the higher taste for the transformative moment. As so often, when Nietzsche thinks of seizing the moment, one of his leading counter-texts is Hegel's world-history and his concept of the great event. Hegel sees the barbarism of the Germanic tribes as a virtue; it was their unformed and receptive nature, at the transition to the European era (variously called Christian, romantic or Germanic) that allowed them to embrace Latin Christianity and the remnants of classical culture it brought in its wake (Hegel, pp. 347–54).

In a letter to Jacob Burckhardt, Nietzsche characterized *Beyond Good and Evil* as saying everything that was said in *Zarathustra*, but doing so very differently; in *Ecce Homo*, he specifies the difference, beginning the section on BGE by saying 'After the Yes-saying part of my task had been solved, the time had come for the No-saying, *No-doing* part. . .' (KSB 7.254). Reading this hermeneutic advice from the perspective of 'the problem of those who wait,' we could see their situation as the other side of the 'great event' or 'the great noon' that are promised in *Zarathustra*. Elsewhere I've attempted to show that Nietzsche's great event must be understood as a great event of the earth, in contrast to the nineteenth century's default Hegelian concept of the great event as involving the state (Shapiro, forthcoming). It is a question of the world of world-history as opposed to the human-earth of mobile habitation. Similarly, Nietzsche's futurity should be heard as the counterpart of the Hegelian 'end of history.' We hear one echo of these great events in BGE 32, where Nietzsche distinguishes the premoral, moral and postmoral epochs; the moral epoch first took hold with the rise of civilization ten thousand years ago, while we may now be on the verge of the postmoral period. BGE 285 notes how difficult it is to perceive great events, because their light reaches us only many years later, like that from distant stars. Nevertheless, Nietzsche maintains the possibility of a disciplined vigilance. It is the last human who can no longer imagine the *kairos*, and so has lost all sense of this deeper form of waiting. At best, the last men and women revere the temporary stars of the spectacle. The problem of those who wait is the problem of living in 'the century of the *Menge*,' in the age, *saeculum* or tranche of *chronos* that we can also call the epoch of theatre and spectacle. The distraction of the time places all of us in danger of falling into oblivion of the *kairos*. Oblivion is more than forgetting. Those who have been immersed in the river Lethe not only forget, but forget that they have forgotten. In contrast, *Beyond Good and Evil* enacts its *Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, close to what Nietzsche

sometimes calls 'philosophy for the day after tomorrow,' by awakening the thought of serendipity, *Zufall, Glücksfall* and *kairos*, while offering strategies for dissolving false interventions of and misplaced enthusiasms for supposed great humans and great events.

Notes

Portuguese version of some parts of this essay appears as '*Estratégias de serendipity: Nietzsche e vigilância kairótica*', in *Potências e Práticas do Acaso*, ed. Maria Cristina Franco Ferraz and Jonathan Pollock (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2012). These sections are published here with permission of the editors. I am grateful to Fredrika Spindler for allowing me to read an unpublished paper on the concept of multitude.

1 *Das Problem der Wartenden*.—Es sind Glücksfälle dazu nöthig und vielerlei Unberechenbares, dass ein höherer Mensch, in dem die Lösung eines Problems schläft, noch zur rechten Zeit zum Handeln kommt—'zum Ausbruch', wie man sagen könnte. Es geschieht durchschnittlich *nicht*, und in allen Winkeln der Erde sitzen Wartende, die es kaum wissen, in wiefern sie warten, noch weniger aber, dass sie umsonst warten. Mitunter auch kommt der Weckruf zu spät, jener Zufall, der die 'Erlaubniss' zum Handeln giebt,—dann, wenn bereits die beste Jugend und Kraft zum Handeln durch Stillsitzen verbraucht ist; und wie Mancher fand, eben als er 'aufsprang', mit Schrecken seine Glieder eingeschlafen und seinen Geist schon zu schwer! 'Es ist zu spät'—sagte er sich, ungläubig über sich geworden und nunmehr für immer unnütz.—Sollte, im Reiche des Genie's, der 'Raffael ohne Hände', das Wort im weitesten Sinn verstanden, vielleicht nicht die Ausnahme, sondern die Regel sein?—Das Genie ist vielleicht gar nicht so selten: aber die fünfhundert *Hände*, die es nöthig hat, um den καιρόσ, "die rechte Zeit"—zu tyrannisiren, um den Zufall am Schopf zu fassen! (*Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, p. 274)

2 Cf. Lampert (2001) and Burnham (2007). Acampora and Pearson suggest that the narrative continuity of Nietzsche's book breaks off at this point in the final chapter, constituting an interlude or *Zwischenspiel* of more personal and episodic observations before the final two aphorisms; Acampora and Pearson, pp. 204–5.

3 Nevertheless, two recent commentaries on BGE, by Lawrence Lampert and Douglas Burnham, which are valuable attempts to understand the book as a whole, give scant attention to Nietzsche's theme of the multitude and its political significance. While both offer discussions of the herd and herd morality, neither notes the place of 'herd' within an array of distinguishable concepts designating various types of groups.

4 See *Menge* in Grimm's *Wörterbuch*: http://germazope.uni-trier.de/Projects/WBB/woerterbuecher/dwb/wbgui

5 Some further linguistic evidence concerning Nietzsche's emphasis on the diversity and multiplicity of the *Menge* may be found in mathematical discourse. The *Menge* is the sheer multiple, a set of diverse elements. While the set may have a definition (the set of all odd numbers, all engaged in productive work, all who live in Europe, etc.), they are internally diverse. The mathematician Georg Cantor was developing set theory (*Mengenlehre*) around the time Nietzsche was describing a world of limitless multiplicity. I find no evidence that Nietzsche knew of Cantor's discoveries. However, he was clearly interested in analogous concepts, such as the Darwinian idea of a population, as opposed to an essentially defined species (e.g. GS 1,149).

6 Another crucial passage: 'Statistics prove that there are laws in history. Indeed, it proves how common and disgustingly uniform the mass [*Masse*] is. You should have tried statistical analysis in Athens for once! The lower and more non-individual the mass [*Masse*] is, the statistical laws are that much stronger. If the multitude [*Menge*] is finer and nobler, the law goes to the devil' (KSA 7.642; cf. KSA 4.18, 7.119, 9.462, 12.96).
7 One apparent counter-example: 'It is a great achievement when the *grossen Menge* (people of all kinds who lack depth or have speedy bowels) have finally had the feeling bred into them that they cannot touch everything. . .' (263). Here the phrase is *grossen Menge*, however, which suggests a more inclusive group than the *Menge* as such; most translators correctly choose 'masses'.
8 In this aphorism Nietzsche sometimes speaks of '*grosse Menschen*' and sometimes of specifically gendered '*grosse Männer*'.
9 Cf. Étienne Balibar (1989), who does not distinguish among terms such as masses and multitude and seems to use them interchangeably.
10 See Acampora (2003) and works cited there.

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9

Nietzsche and the Engine of Politics

Nandita Biswas Mellamphy

Inexorably, hesitantly, terrible as fate, the great task and question is approaching: how shall the earth as a whole be governed? And to what end shall "man" as a whole—and no longer as a people, a race—be raised and trained?

WP §957

Let your will say: the Übermensch shall be *the direction of the earth!*

TSZ I, 'Zarathustra's Prologue' §3

In the long run, it is not at all a question of human being; it is to be overcome.

WP §676

In the following chapter, I want to explore the manner in which Nietzsche's 'overhuman' (*Übermensch*) is related to his articulation of physiology and thus to the politics of 'thinking the future transhumanly.'[1] By 'politics' I do not mean discourses analysing or criticizing institutions, norms or ideologies; for this sense of politics we would find more cohesive resources in thinkers such as Kant, Marx and Hegel. My focus instead is on Nietzsche's peculiar materialist view of politics as the physiological activity of 'overcoming' within a living environment for which he coins the term known as 'will to power.' 'Life is not the adaptation of inner circumstances to outer ones, but rather the "will to power" which, working from within, incorporates and subdues more and more of that which is "outside",' writes Nietzsche.[2] As we see in this passage, will to power is not based on the application of laws of 'adaptation' as articulated in biological, economic or social theories of evolution, production and signification (e.g. Darwin's theory of natural selection). The engine of Nietzsche's physiological will to power is primarily driven by the movement of 'overcoming': the activity of *Überwindung* (over-turning) that guarantees the continuity of life-forming processes that work by incorporating and subduing 'that which is outside.'

Operating upon this physiological platform, all of Nietzsche's thinking is driven by the ontogenic vision of will to power's constitutive or 'form-shaping' activity of over-powering, which consists in 'incorporation' and 'subjugation' at the physical, biological and technical levels of life, but also, simultaneously, at the political, symbolic and

normative levels of life (hence Nietzsche's lifelong interest in pre-Platonic physiology and philosophical materialism on the one hand, and in domination/subjugation and *resistance* to mastery, or 'affirmation,' on the other). The physiological engine of overcoming produces life in all forms – including human bodies – and while it is certainly propelled by human values and codes, it is not itself oriented towards the human being, but rather towards the *overhuman*. Nietzsche's conception of physiology is driven by an overhuman engine in which all dominant value codes (cognitive, textual, social, hermeneutic) are subordinated to a-signifying forces that cannot be resolved, synthesized or mediated once-and-for-all by any higher or metaphysical operation. In this sense, a-signifying forces are auto*chthon*ous[3] materials belonging fundamentally only to the earth (*chthon*) ('In man there is material, fragment, excess, clay, dirt, nonsense, chaos. . .,' *BGE* aphorism 225); they are not *for* humans and therefore do not indigenously correlate to any human system (they cannot be 'gathered' in the Heideggerian sense of *legein* and cannot be domesticated by Olympian devices).

These irreducibly heterogeneous a-signifying forces are nonetheless *politically* and *materially* active in shaping humans (in developing mnemonic, affective/sensory and linguistic constructs). Reading Nietzsche *physiologically* is not a 'question of taking refuge in a neutral and historical reading, nor in the labour of a Nietzschean reading, without having to enter as contradictorily *and without mediation* into an intense scene of forces, pulsions and relations of power that are no longer textual or signifying "in the last instance",[4] as François Laruelle argues in *Nietzsche versus Heidegger: Theses for a Nietzschean Politics*, and as I will emphasize throughout this chapter. Nietzsche himself points out the erroneous and misguided interpretations of the term:

> The word "overman" as the designation of a type of supreme achievement (as opposed to "modern" men, or to "good" men, to Christians and other nihilists), a word that in the mouth of Zarathustra—the annihilator of morality—becomes a very pensive word, has been understood almost everywhere with the utmost innocence in the sense of those very values whose opposite Zarathustra was meant to represent: that is, as an "idealistic" type of a higher kind of man, half "saint", half "genius".[5]

So, the *chthonic* (material/physical) answer to Nietzsche's question of 'how shall the earth as a whole be governed?' (*WP* 947) is this: the governance of the earth shall be returned to the earth, and the human shall be the agent and amanuensis (and also 'bridge' as Zarathustra proclaims) of this inevitable occurrence/recurrence. In what follows, I will suggest that Nietzschean physiology is oriented towards affirming this chthonic, subversive (self-overcoming, overhuman, a-signifying) drive which is 'never given upon the surface of the text, never reparable by the labour of the signifier, never decipherable by the grid of Marxist politics, never interpretable as historical meaning,'[6] but only interpretable in terms of *will to power*: 'Thus the essence of life, its *will to power*, . . .[involves] the essential priority of the spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, form-giving forces that give new interpretations and directions.'[7] The aim of this chapter is to explore will to power's 'form-giving' activity in light of this overhuman, a-signifying force of resistance through which, to use Laruelle's words, 'Nietzsche invents a new concept of revolution as *active resistance* to dominant powers—the politics, if we

can call it that, of the *resistant* instead of the *excluded* quarter.'[8] In contrast to what many others would argue,[9] my underlying contention is that the Nietzschean notion of the overhuman is one of the key notions bequeathed to us by Nietzsche. In posing the political question of rule in terms of the physical, physiological question of the production and direction of form-giving (but ultimately autho*chthon*ous, a-signifying) forces, the notion of the overhuman appears to be Nietzsche's strategy for (but not his solution to) radically re-thinking the place and the fate of human life-forms in relation to wider non-signifying, non-conscious, non-human, often inhuman as well as transhuman form-shaping forces. Will to power is synonymous with the im-mediacy of forces and pulsions that are generative ('form-giving') but fundamentally a-signifying and a-textual. It is in this *im-mediate* (non-mediated, hence non-resolvable) fact of 'physiology' that, I argue, the Laruellean reading locates the inherently 'political' aspect of Nietzsche's thinking:

> From the Nietzschean point of view, hence also from the point of view of the political self-critique of Nietzsche's text, the classic codes that fulfil linguistic or hermeneutic functions are unintelligible outside of their essence: force as pulsion and power. Abstracted from this political process or from these complex relations of power that make them produce their own effects, these codes induce readings [that are] not immediately political, or political by secondary delegation and effect.[10]

In so far as it driven by the a-signifying engine of a physiological process, I interpret the 'overhuman' as the non-linear, unequal, heterogeneous, reticular (or 'networked') process of overcoming as it is inscribed and embodied in living media through human and non-human materials. I take the Nietzschean overhuman *not* as an ideal to be reached (or conversely impossible to reach), but rather as a presently-unfolding overhuman physical process in which the 'human being' is but one material and informational expression. As Zarathustra says, the human is 'a dangerous crossing, a dangerous wayfaring, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous trembling and halting: it is a "rope" stretched across the abyss between the animal and the overhuman—a "bridge" *(eine Brücke)*, not a "purpose" *(kein Zweck)*.'[11] In this chapter, the human will be considered, not in terms of its individualized formal characteristics, but as a *bridging function* within an extra-human field of forces. 'Man is a bridge, not a goal, but the bridge (man) and the goal (overman) are one, related immanently, as in the "lightning-flash" that emerges from out of the "dark cloud" that is "man".'[12]

Historically interpretations of the Nietzschean *Übermensch* have been framed in the language of type and typology[13] (even by Nietzsche himself), and consequently scholarship has tended to approach the term *juridically* – that is, from a framework that sets out laws, morals and ideals to be followed. But when articulated *physiologically*, the *Übermensch* becomes the choreographic motor of a transhuman chthonic machine which orients and directs will to power's incessant 'form-giving' and 'self-overcoming' activities by way of a-signifying (*qua* autochthonic) forces. Indeed, I translate the Nietzschean term as 'overhuman' to highlight the perpetually overcoming, emergent and non-linear mechanics of such a-signifying but form-shaping forces. Nietzschean physiology, as such, does not merely encompass a study of the biological basis of life,

but also refers to 'an active science of material becomings' that asks 'how forces vie with each other and how some become formative of a body.'[14]

While my proposed perspective moves away from humanistic interpretations of Nietzsche's thought (namely those that place a premium on a speaking or textual subject), positing the overhuman as the 'engine' of a Nietzschean physiological machine – as I do – does not amount to jettisoning the human altogether. Rather, it involves an accounting for how the human is the material to be ingested, incorporated, assimilated, and thereby transmuted by overhuman form-shaping forces that take the human beyond 'the human' by way of its animal machinery (its mnemonic, affective/instinctual and sensory networks). As Nietzsche notes,

> hitherto the human is like "an embryo of the man of the future"; "all the form-shaping forces directed toward the latter are present in the former"; "because they are tremendous, the more a present-day individual determines the future. This is the profoundest conception of suffering: the form-shaping forces are in painful collision.—The isolation of the individual ought not to deceive us: something flows on underneath individuals".[15]

The human is the material that is to be shaped, individuated and directed within a wider overhuman (autochthonic) matrix of complex and heterogeneous activity that continuously creates and overcomes.

In so far as it is concerned only with tuning into the vicissitudes of will to power, Nietzschean physiology is not primarily concerned with the language of man and its paradigm of the speaking or thinking *subject*, but rather with an overhuman *physis* and physiology of *forces* that make use and abuse of the human – in addition to nonhuman formations – as its material and medium of inscription hence articulation (a type-*writing* rather than a *type*, in this sense). '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.'[16] Commenting on 'reason' in philosophy, Nietzsche laments that 'I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar.'[17] Nietzsche's writings continuously acknowledge that humans are animals that communicate linguistically and symbolically, but from a primarily physiological view of will to power, language and knowledge are already products of a political and physiological translation (*übertragen*) process in which collisions of force-quanta are translated into nerve-stimuli, which are then subsequently translated into image and then into language.

In his 1873 essay *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense*, Nietzsche writes:

> What is a word? It is the copy in sound of a nerve stimulus. But the further inference from the nerve stimulus to a cause outside of us is already the result of a false and unjustifiable application of the principle of sufficient reason. . . . To begin with, a nerve stimulus is transferred into an image: first metaphor. The image, in turn, is imitated in a sound: second metaphor. And each time there is a complete overleaping of one sphere, right into the middle of an entirely new and different one.[18]

Nietzsche does not abandon this physiological view even a decade later when he writes in an 1884 note: 'First *images*. . . . Then *words*, applied to images. Finally *concepts*, possible only when there are words—the collecting together of many images in something nonvisible but audible (word).'[19] Another note of 1885–86 reads: 'Has a *force* ever been demonstrated? No, only *effects* translated into a completely foreign language.'[20] 'The mechanistic concept of "motion" is already a translation of the original process into the sign language of sight and touch.'[21] '[W]e have not got away from the habit into which our senses and language seduce us. Subject, object, a doer added to the doing, the doing separated from that which it does: let us not forget that this is mere semeiotics and nothing real. Mechanistic theory as a theory of motion is already a translation into the sense language of man.'[22]

Nietzschean physiology refuses any metaphysical structuring that would posit the priority of the suprasensible or mental ('mind') over the material physiological ('body'), as in any form of idealism: 'To study physiology with a clear conscience, one must insist that the sense organs are *not* phenomena in the sense of idealistic philosophy; as such they could not be causes!'[23] Nietzsche argues that sensory information cannot be a 'cause' because he believes that even the senses are an effect of something more fluid and conditional. '[A]ll organic functions can be traced back to this will to power,'[24] but will to power can neither be conceptualized monadically nor reductively, as in materialistic atomism in which the source of causation lies is some kind of indivisible substance or monad ('as an *atomon*'),[25] nor in terms of a mechanistically-determined law. Willing-to-power is nothing other than the play of unequal and colliding force quanta, the transient but ongoing 'establishment of power relationships,'[26] a struggle 'between two or more forces'[27] of 'unequal power.'[28] On this conceptual basis, Nietzschean physiology would also ultimately have to reject the idealist account of phenomenological consciousness in which causal power is attributed to the human mind, because for Nietzsche, human cognition does not differ fundamentally from that in any other living structure:

> the same equalizing and ordering force that rules in the idioplasma, rules also in the incorporation of the outer world: our sense perceptions are already the result of this assimilation and equalization in regard to *all* that is past in us.[29]

Even subjective experience is not a cause but a sign or symptom of will to power. It is will to power that interprets physiologically, *not* a subject: 'The will to power *interprets* (—it is a question of interpretation when an organ is constructed—): it defines limits, determines degrees, variations of power'[30]; '*The mistake lies in the fictitious insertion of a subject*.'[31]

Nietzschean overhuman physiology takes the process of embodiment (i.e. the form-shaping of forces) as a methodological starting-point, and for this reason it is tied to a discourse of naturalism that does suffer from its own anthropomorphisms and contradictions. Nonetheless, Nietzsche's physiology squarely sets itself against metaphysical and metaphysiological discourses, which posit, maintain and reify the distinction between the 'natural' (the empirical, affective, physical, apparent, contingent, transitory) and the 'extra-natural' (the rational, moral, mental, essential, necessary, eternal).[32] Such a physiological perspective rejects the metaphysician's 'faith

in opposite values'[33] in favour of a view in which there are no substantive or essential differences between the organic and the inorganic – the human, the animal and the machinic – or even between life and death ('Let us beware of saying that death is opposed to life. The living is merely a type of what is dead, a very rare type'[34]). 'The general imprecise way of observing sees everywhere in nature opposites (e.g. 'warm and cold') where there are only differences of degree.'[35] For Nietzsche, metaphysical schemas are primarily identifiable by their faith in hierarchical dichotomies (the positing of separation between two distinct realms or orders in which one realm is valued as superior or prior to the other): 'metaphysical philosophy has hitherto surmounted this difficulty by denying that the one originates out of the other and assuming for the more highly valued thing a miraculous source in the very kernel and being of the "thing in itself"'.[36] Hence Nietzsche argues that '. . .*"being conscious*" is not in any decisive sense the *opposite* of what is instinctive':[37] '[e]ven if *language* . . . will not get over its awkwardness and will continue to talk of opposites where there are only degrees and many subtleties of gradation.'[38]

At once engaging and condemning Darwin's theory of evolution (based largely on his adoption of Wilhelm Roux's notion of 'inner' rather than 'external' evolutionary forces[39]), a Nietzschean physiological perspective starts with 'the body'[40] but does not seek to make the *human* body an *idée fixe*. As Nietzsche notes in 1885,

> The assumption of one single subject is perhaps unnecessary; perhaps it is just as permissible to assume a multiplicity of subjects, whose interaction and struggle is the basis of our thought and our consciousness. . . . *My hypothesis*: The subject as multiplicity.[41]

Again, in a note from 1886 to 1887, he echoes this thought about body as multiplicity:

> Everything that enters consciousness as a "unity" is already tremendously complex: we always have only a semblance of unity. The phenomenon of the body is the richer, clearer, more tangible phenomenon: to be discussed first, methodologically, without coming to any decision about its ultimate significance.[42]

What makes 'body' a better starting point for Nietzschean physiology than 'mind' or 'consciousness' is the fact that the former affirms a matrix of irreducibly multiple and heterogeneous forces upon which all forms – from single-cell organism to human social and techno-scientific systems – emerge as transduced stabilities or metastable equilibria. According to Nietzsche, all instances of cognition are first and foremost physiological occurrences primarily channelled through the 'instincts'[43] (also called 'drives').[44] Every idea – every norm, law or value – is to be viewed as emerging out of the collision of instinctive (autochthonous) forces within a complex physiological process or condition involving (but not limited to) organisms within an environment and leading to the ongoing transmutation of these organisms and environments (in this sense, Nietzschean physiology would rely on an ecologically emergent model rather than either atomistic or holistic ones predicated on the interactional dynamics of wholes and parts).

> Man as a species does not represent any progress compared with any other animal. The whole animal and vegetable kingdom does not evolve from the

> lower to the higher—but all at the same time, in utter disorder, over and against each other.[45]

Nietzschean physiology 'overcomes' unitary, stable, essential and substantive interpretations of consciousness[46] by affirming methods, aims and conclusions that preserve *overhuman* multiplicity and contingency.

In what sense could Nietzschean physiology be both *a-signifying* (and thus im-mediate) and still *readable*? Wouldn't its read-ability imply signification? The Nietzschean notion of physiology would be a method for deciphering processes involving the confrontation of a multiplicity of a-signifying, unequal forces networked through a 'common mode of nutrition . . .[called] "life"'.[47] When combined with *genealogy,* physiology offers a mode of interpreting relationships of power quanta by tracking and reading the signs of will to power's machinations in becoming em-bodied. Cognition, language, textuality: these are all only *signifying* effects of an underlying a-*signifying* and 'machinic' 'syntax' to which all signification is subordinated. '[It] is predominantly from the point of view of the genetic difference of this syntax that Nietzsche breaks with the linguistic ideal of the formal-transcendental reduction of the given,' argues Laruelle.[48] In other words, the syntax underlying Nietzsche's kind of physiological thinking is a-signifying, but nonetheless 'genetic,' or 'generative'/'productive' of difference, but it is not a syntax primarily located in any linguistic, logical or legal model. It is a syntax that is 'genetic' in that it has a 'form-shaping' function; Laruelle calls these syntaxes 'machinic' (what I have herein called 'autochthonous') to distinguish them 'from nihilist ideologies of the signifier and of the dialectical form of contradiction':[49]

> In the sense that one speaks of logical or mathematical machines, reading machines, calculators, infernal machines, there is a "Nietzsche Machine", but with a way of operating that is specific to it since it is an intrinsically political machine rather than logical or mathematical. First and foremost, machine here means an ensemble of relations (of power) without terms, crossed within a chiasmus or a problematic. . . . No doctrine, the Nietzsche-thought is a question of immanent syntax and of fluid matter proper to this syntax.[50]

Nietzschean physiology articulates the genesis of the human *programmatologically* as an inscription and translation process (from force-quanta, to cell, to word, to concept) in which will to power's form-giving capacities are programmed into the very constitutive informational nexus of life. Writing, for Nietzsche, is not merely a representation of the spoken word as it was for Plato; it is will to power's very mode of expression and materialization. 'Of all that is written I love only that which one writes with his blood. Write with blood, and you will experience that blood is spirit.'[51] Nietzsche is the one to tells us that it is will to power, not a subject, that interprets: things, institutions, values – all life – is, physiologically speaking, a production of will to power's 'interpretative' process, which proceeds by way of an overhuman transcriptive, programming, material, form-shaping activity from the quantum and subcellular levels of life ('force-quanta' to 'nerve-stimulus') and programmes the memory-making (neural) structures of the human organism,[52] which are simultaneously given form within the grammatical, metaphorical and symbolic practices.[53] Friedrich Kittler also proposes a similar view when he suggests that in

his use of the typewriter to philosophize, Nietzsche envisioned the human itself is a kind of type-writing, a kind of formative, informational, or better yet, *telegraphic*[54] technology (or a 'teletechnic'[55]) beyond human determination: 'it is thus Nietzsche's "philosophical and scandalous surmise that "humans are perhaps only thinking, writing, and speaking machines"'.[56]

Plato's dialectical philosophy is a paradigmatic instance of metaphysical thought that posits speech as ontologically prior to writing. In his retelling of the tale of Thoth and Thamus, Socrates tells Phædrus that the written word, like painting, is but the image and representation of something far more fundamental: 'an intelligent writing which is graven in the soul of learner, which can defend itself, and knows when to speak and when to be silent.'[57] Were it not animated by truth, writing would only be 'dumb characters which have not a word to say for themselves, never adequately expressing the truth.'[58] Even in his early 1871–72 introductory lectures on the dialogues of Plato (in the days when he was still a professor at the University of Basel),[59] Nietzsche found that the status of writing is key to understanding Plato's dialectical philosophy. Why does Plato write?

> Plato says that writing has no signification exception for one who already knows, and is hence like a means of remembering. . . . This is why the most accomplished writing must imitate the oral form of teaching: with the aim, consequently, of reminding the one who knows how he acquired his knowledge.[60]

We should not, as such, consider the Platonic dialogue from the point of view of an aesthetic criterion such as the perfection of a norm: 'the dialogue should not be considered something dramatic but like a recollection of the dialectical approach. As such, the degree of perfection is not a critical principle whereas the goal of recollection is a truth.'[61]

The Platonic view of dialectical writing founds a metaphysics of writing in which the written word is justified only as a means for *remembering* and *signifying* a previously stated (oral, voiced) truth; dialectical writing is the technique for remembering and signifying the voice of truth. Against the Platonic metaphysico-metaphysiological view which defines the human primarily in terms of speech and language or rational consciousness, Nietzsche's genealogical physiology begins with forgetfulness and privileges writing by considering the human in terms of an ongoing process of grammatization wherein forces ('unequal power-quanta') are continuously transcribed into the organic – specifically 'mnemotechnical' or memory-making – fabric of the animal organism. These nerve-stimuli ('instincts' and 'drives') in turn undergo translation and inscription, establishing the signifying, discursive, textual infrastructure of values that is necessary to uphold and reproduce any symbolic system. In *The Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche lays out his physiological account of how the 'forgetful animal' without speech (*i.e.* the 'barbarian'[62]) evolves through a technical process of grammatization in which memory and will are inscribed into the animal system, transforming the animal into a speaking subject capable of making promises and of honouring them:

> To breed an animal that *is entitled to make promises*—is that not precisely the paradoxical task nature has set itself where human beings are concerned? . . . The

> fact that this problem has to a great extent been solved must seem all the more astonishing to a person who knows how to fully appreciate the power which works against this promise-making, namely *forgetfulness*. Forgetfulness is not merely a *vis interiae [a force of inertia]*, as superficial people think. Is it much rather an active capability to repress, something positive in the strongest sense, to which we can ascribe the fact that while we are digesting what we alone live through and experience and absorb into ourselves (we could call the process mental ingestion *[Einverseelung]*), we are conscious of what is going on as little as we are with the entire thousand-fold process which our bodily nourishment goes through (so-called physical ingestion *[Einverleibung]*).[63]

Before the animal can be transformed into a speaking subject capable of making and honouring contracts and of paying debts, it must undergo a technical process of memory-inscription which physiologically transforms the actual organism; this 'mnemotechnics' of pain (*pathein-mathein*)[64] corporealizes 'bad conscience' by imprinting and thereby giving form to the affective force-network of the body.[65] Physiologically, the emergence of the bad conscience (and the priestly, sickly, but nonetheless interesting animal) occurs in tandem with the mnemotechnical process of transcription which forges an internal space (*choreo-graphein*) that comes to be known as the 'soul.'[66] Again, Nietzsche's physiological approach does not adopt the metaphysical or metaphysiological – logocentric or phonocentric – model of the speaking subject, but instead hypothesizes the subject as a process of *mnemotechnical inscription and mental and physical ingestion* ('*Einverseelung*' and '*Einverleibung*'), albeit one beyond the bounds of its own consciousness. Whereas the humanist conceives of the human in subjective, discursive and textual terms, the Nietzschean physiologist approaches it from the perspective of an overhuman physiology which sees subjectivity – this discursive entity – as the grammatization of im-mediate form-giving forces inscribed as and into the animal flesh. In 'Nietzsche and the Machine,' an interview with Jacques Derrida, Richard Beardsworth suggests that 'the problematic of will to power exceeds the axiomatic of subjectivity': 'life, in the difference of its forces, precedes both "being" and "humanity".'[67] Derrida agrees with Beardsworth on this point: 'any living being in fact undoes the opposition between *phusis* and *techne*'; 'life is always inhabited by technicisation'; 'life is a process of self-replacement'; 'the handing-down of life is a *mechanike*, a form of technics'; 'in Nietzsche there is indeed no opposition between technics and life.'[68]

Although Nietzsche uses the term physio-*logy*, he does not privilege *logos* (speech, human reason) over *physis* (growth, will to power), nor signifying forces over a-signifying ones; quite the opposite, in fact: privilege is given in his *physio*-logy to the force of *physis*, the a-signifying form-giving process. 'Nietzsche . . . has written that writing—including his own—is not in fact subordinate to the *logos* . . . . Heideggerian thought would *reinstate* rather than *destroy* the instance of the *logos* and of truth of being as *primum signatum*.'[69] Metaphysiology would uphold the primacy and authenticity of the human–its speech, its voice, even its hand, notes Friedrich Kittler. Indeed for Heidegger, 'man himself acts [*handelt*] through the hand [*Hand*]; since the hand, together with the word, is the essential distinction of man . . . . And the word as script is handwriting.'[70] But for Nietzsche – after his turn to the typewriter, that is, after

1882 – 'the hard science of physiology did away with the psychological conception that guaranteed humans that they could find their souls through handwriting and rereading.'[71] Pointing to the second essay of *The Genealogy of Morals*, Kittler brings to the fore the difference between Heidegger and Nietzsche:

> [K]nowledge, speech and virtuous action are no longer inborn attributes of Man. Like the animal that will soon go by a different name, Man derived from forgetfulness and random noise—the background of all media. To make forgetful animals into human beings, a blind force strikes that dismembers and inscribes their bodies in the real, until pain itself brings forth a memory. . . . Writing in Nietzsche is no longer a natural extension of humans who bring forth their voice, soul, individuality through their handwriting. On the contrary: . . . humans change their position—they turn from the agency of writing to become an inscription surface. Conversely, all the agency of writing passes on in its violence to an inhuman media engineer. . . .[72]

This process of incorporation and grammatization, physiologically speaking, is not dialectical/dialogical/dualistic; its operationality does not depend on the mediation of two hierarchically positioned *logoi* by negation (this would be a *metaphysiological* approach); but can be considered 'emergent' and 'transductive' in that its 'syntaxes' are adaptive to the aleatory interplay of autochthonous, sub-individual, non-linear, unequal, multiple, networked events. As Laruelle writes,

> Nietzsche invents in a latent manner a new discipline that we will call "political Materialism"[73] destined to occupy and displace the positions of "historical materialism". He gives himself his object by posing all reality (equivalent to relations of production and superstructures) as power and relations of power. He gives himself his determining material cause in the last instance: the libido. He gives himself his "laws", syntaxes or articulations: they are not dialectical, and presuppose a new concept of contradiction. We will call them "machinic".[74]

What Laruelle means by 'machinic' here bears close resemblance to that which the 'mechanologist' Gilbert Simondon elaborates in terms of his methodologically non-dialectical model of 'transduction':

> The method consists in not trying to compose the essence of a reality by means of a *conceptual* relation between two extreme terms, and [not trying] to consider all true relation within ranks of being [*ayant rang d'être*]. Relation is a modality of being; it is simultaneous with respect to the terms the existence of which it assures. A relation must be grasped as relation within being, relation of being, manner of being and not simply [as a] relation between two terms that can be known adequately through concepts because [these latter] effectively have a separate existence. It is because the terms are conceived as substances that the relation is [understood as] relation of terms, and being is separated within terms

> because being is primitively conceived as substance anterior to all examinations of individuation. . . . By "transduction" we mean an operation—physical, biological, mental, social—by which an activity propagates itself, slowly but surely, within a domain, by grounding this propagation within a structuring of the operative domain from place to place: each constituted region of structure serves the next region as constitutive principle, such that a modification spreads progressively at the same time as this structuring operation. . . . [T]he result is an amplifying reticular structure.[75]

The dynamism of transductive systems does not come from the dialectical tension between two homogeneous terms (e.g. matter and form, or cause and effect) but rather from the latent, pre-individual and conflictive in-formational tensions or tendencies that are characteristic of heterogeneous, non-linear and emergent environments (what I have herein called its chthonic, 'overhuman' matrix). Nietzsche's physiological account of the human as a transcriptive process (of will to power from quantum/sub-atomic to cellular then cognitive/linguistic levels) is, I would argue, transductive rather than dialectical in so far as the goal of the human is to propagate an environment of heterogeneous complexity, *not* synthetic unity. As Simondon notes – very much consistent with Nietzsche's physiological axiom concerning the non-distinction of seeming opposites – in the example of temperature (indented below), transduction attends to the medium that generates heterogeneity rather than to explaining the relation between opposing terms (as in hylemorphic[76] schemas that begin with the essential distinction between 'matter' and 'form'):

> The primary use of sensation is transductive rather than relational: sensation enables [one] to grasp how the medium is prolonged into more hot on one side, and more cold on the other; it is the medium of temperature that spreads and divides into directions of more hot and more cold; the dyad is grasped from its centre; it is not synthesis but transduction.[77]

Against the (Platonic and dialectical) view of the human as the text upon which *Logos* writes its truth, a pro-grammatologically informed reading of Nietzschean physiology would offer a view of the human characterized not by dialectical, subjective and textual thinking, but as formative and informational material that conducts an overhuman in-formation processing machine. It is Nietzsche himself who connects the overhuman to this ongoing autochthonous, machinic, physiological process (or 'secretion' as he calls it):

> The need to show that as the consumption of man and mankind becomes more and more economical and the "machinery" of interests and services is ever more intricately integrated, a counter-movement is inevitable. I designate this as the secretion of a luxury surplus of mankind: it aims to bring to light a stronger species, a higher type that arises and preserves itself under different conditions from those of the average man. My concept, my metaphor for this type is, as one knows, the

> word "overman". . . . Once we possess that common economic management of the earth which will soon be inevitable, mankind will be able to find its best meaning as a machine in the service of this economy—as a tremendous clockwork, composed of ever smaller, ever more subtly "adapted" gears . . . the production of a synthetic, summarizing, justifying man for whose existence this transformation of mankind into a machine is a precondition, as base on which he can invent his *higher form of being*.[78]

In this notable passage, Nietzsche – consummate critic of mechanistic metaphysics and modern decadence – tells us that to think of the human as a 'machine in the service' of an overhuman 'economy' is a 'precondition' for the ongoing invention of our living forms. But what is most notable, perhaps, is that this passage can be read both *physiologically* (from a perspective that is directed towards the overhuman) and *metaphysiologically* (from a perspective that is directed towards the human). When read *metaphysiologically* (i.e. positing the essentialist distinction between natural matter and extra-natural form), the economic machine is interpreted as producing a messianic individual being – the 'overman' – which represents synthesis (rather than contradiction), and which will come in the future to redeem humanity. Dualistic and dialectical, this viewpoint interprets 'counter-movement' and 'transformation' in terms of negation between two terms/units: machine/organism, synthesizing/fragmenting, higher being/average man, economic management/transformation and so on.

When read *physiologically*, however – that is to say, materially, non-dialectically and transductively – any essential opposition between human and overhuman, machine and organism, is undone: the human is a 'machine' the materiality of which produces and 'secretes' 'a luxury surplus' which Nietzsche conceptualizes metaphorically in terms an 'overman.' But this 'higher form of being' does not transcend its materiality ('the human' being the material in question); it is itself only conceivable as an overflowing expression of its materiality (or 'secretion'): in this case, 'the human' is not identified dialectically (i.e. primarily as linguistic, textual, subjective) but rather transductively, as a function of a transindividual informational process that uses the human to produce and express the overhuman (in biological, linguistic and symbolic terms). In the hierarchy of types loosely traced in various parts of Nietzsche's *œuvre*, a 'higher type' is characterized by its capacity to direct, affirm and overcome its overhuman (that is to say, its form-shaping/in-formational, emergent, manifold and heterogeneous) activities: 'the higher type represents an incomparably greater complexity—a greater sum of co-ordinated elements: so its disintegration is also incomparably more likely. The genius is the most sublime machine there is—consequently the most fragile.'[79]

In conclusion, I would argue that the political question in Nietzsche's thought can be interpreted in light of the paramount methodological and material importance of overhuman physiology. To this end, my strategy has been to emphasize not textual, discursive or subjective interpretations, but readings that emphasize hypertextual, a-signifying and emergent/transductive interpretations (chiefly drawn herein from Laruelle, Simondon and Kittler, and secondarily from Deleuze). While Simondon does

not draw upon Nietzschean thought in any explicit or concerted manner, Laruelle, Kittler and Deleuze do. Deleuze indeed highlights – as I do – the fact that 'Nietzsche's method,' as a 'truly active science,'[80] is 'opposed to dialectics.'[81] I should not over-emphasize Deleuze's interpretation however, since (on the one hand) it is based in large part upon Simondon's transductive schema[82] and (on the other hand) because Deleuze seems to fall back into a dialectical – hence metaphysiological – account of Nietzsche in his actual accounts of the latter. For instance, in *Nomadic Thought*, he sets up a kind of dialectical schema between the kind of thinkers and thinking that 'code' (through 'the law, the contract and the institution'[83] which characterize State discourses) and those that try to 'uncode' rather than 'encode' (this being characteristic of Nomadic discourses), for example, Nietzsche.[84] Deleuze further deepens the dichotomy between these two terms when he argues that Nietzsche stands squarely on the side of 'extrinsic nomadic unity opposite intrinsic despotic unity' founding a discourse that is 'first and foremost nomadic, whose utterances would be produced not by rational administrative machine . . . but by a mobile war-machine.'[85] Although the Deleuzean thinking of Nietzschean immanence gestures towards the claim that Nietzschean thought operates along the lines of something beyond a merely dialectical model, Deleuze places Nietzsche within a binary logic that leaves unanswered the problem of just what kind of non-dialectical schema *would* account for the overhuman envisioned as a productive 'secretion' of the 'common economic management' of the earth (see *WP* §684).

In order to think politically with Nietzsche in *physiological* (or *machinic*) rather than *metaphysiological* or *dialectical* terms, François Laruelle's distinct and developed interpretation of Nietzsche is a refreshingly instructive and compelling one for schematizing the specifically *non-dialectical* but nonetheless *political* design of Nietzsche-thinking. Although Laruelle does not articulate his interpretation within the context of *physiology* – but rather, in terms of 'political' and 'machinic' *materialisms* – he does carefully sustain the fundamentally *overhuman* orientation of Nietzschean physiology: its non-linguistic, non-subjective and non-dialectical material tendencies. For Laruelle, the specifically political feature of the 'Nietzsche-machine' resides in its *intensive a-signifying* (non-linguistic, non-subjective, non-dialectical) tendencies, *not* its extensive, signifying functions. '[A] scene of signifying practice or of textual domination on the one hand,' writes Laruelle; 'on the other: a-textual, intrinsically political, forces, and Resistance against textual mastery. . . . [T]he Nietzschean practice will imply, at once, an intervention or a detachment of a-textual forces, of anti-signifying powers *within* the signifying scene, and a 'supremacy' of the relation of terms upon those terms themselves.'[86] Unlike Deleuze, who places Nietzsche on one side of a dichotomous relation (e.g. 'the nomadic' against the 'fascistic'), Laruelle articulates Nietzsche's thought (what he calls 'Nietzsche-thinking'[87]) along the lines of a fourfold/quadripartite/chiasmic political operation. Fascism, Revolution, Mastery and Rebellion make up the syntactical elements of Laruelle's 'Nietzsche-Machine' which operates, not unlike Kafka's penal apparatus,[88] along two bisecting polarities or tendencies that 'cut' through the political subject (Mastery/Rebellion and Fascism/Revolution). Laruelle introduces this complex relation of four terms in 'Theses' Two and Three of *Nietzsche versus Heidegger: Theses for a Nietzschean*

Politics. Since no published English translation is currently available, it is useful to quote these at length:

> *Thesis 2.*
>
> Nietzsche is, in a double sense, the thinker of fascism: he is, *in a certain way*, a fascist thinker, but he *first and foremost* the thinker of the subversion of fascism. The Nietzsche-thought is a complex political process with two "contradictory" poles (without mediation): the subordinate relation of a secondary fascistic pole (Mastery) to a principal revolutionary pole (Rebellion). Nietzsche *became* fascist to better *defeat* fascism, he assumed the worst forms of Mastery to become the Rebel.[89]
>
> *Thesis 3.*
>
> We are all fascist readers of Nietzsche, we are all revolutionary readers of Nietzsche. Our unity is a contradictory relation (a hierarchy without mediation), just as Nietzsche's unity is a contradictory and "auto-critical" unity. Nietzsche puts the Master and the Rebel in a relation of duplicity rather than of duality. He liquidates the opposition of monism (the philosophy of the Master *or* the Rebel) and dualism (the mediated contradiction of Master *and* Rebel).[90]

The terms themselves do not constitute a focal point for Laruelle – the task does not entail defining and identifying what would constitute Mastery, Rebellion, Fascism and Revolution:

> Let us forget the terms, let us try to move within the quadripartite as a relation-of-relations, let us stretch the political subject to the four corners of the chiasmus. It is precisely the categories of Fascism, of Mastery, of Rebellion, that will change the political sense in function of this complex machine: the fascistic pole makes sense of an unlimited, planetary use, of negation, and the production of effects of technical, organizational powers and of mastery. The revolutionary or rebel, [makes sense] of a certain use of affirmation and of the production of effects of *active* resistance to all dominant powers.[91]

The implication here is that addressing the political question in Nietzsche *does not* entail a grounding for Nietzsche's thought in dialectical and dialogical operations of linguistic subjectivity, textuality or discursivity; neither does it entail a measuring (i.e. an interpretation) of the validity of Nietzsche's writings in terms of pre-ordained ideological positions (e.g. determining whether Nietzsche is either fascist or anti-fascist, political or anti-political, an esoteric or an exoteric thinker):

> Let us not look for the "meaning" of the Nietzsche-thinking within a theoretical system, a doctrinal theme, or a scene of writing—let us look for the functioning of a process within a production in the last instance of specifically political affects. Changes in productive effects imply a change in means.[92]

The operating system of a 'Nietzsche-Machine,' according to a Laruellean reading, is not structured along lines of a binary (either/or) logic, but along the lines of a (double-crossing/dual-processing) syntactical machine that produces and reproduces

ambiguity at various scales of signification (subjective, textual or discursive). 'It's not about dividing or about deciding, like the Marxist, between massively political class-positions even when these latter are recognized as entangled and never pure—rather, it's about putting into motion a process of displacement the engine of which is no longer negativity.'[93]

It is the operative functionality of the force of duplicity (rather than duality, as Laruelle argues) – its *transductive* power – that makes Nietzsche a truly materialist political thinker for Laruelle, and one who redefines and thus reinvents the very *sense* of politics—not thematically, discursively, hermeneutically or lexicologically (e.g. by a certain psychoanalytic usage of the signifier or by class struggle), but *physiologically*, through the will to power's activity of resisting or subordinating mastery which is an implicitly political process that always produces political agents with fascistic or critical functions.[94]

> Nietzsche abandons criteria external to politics and, defining this latter by a network of pure contradictory relations without negativity and co-extensive to the social body, ceases to define it by a network of instances and substrates put into relation (of contradiction) . . . [H]e gives, with the ERS/WP [the Eternal Return of the Same/Will to power] device, the possibility of a plastic politics, of *an internal political determination* of relations of power, neither too broad and transcendent, nor too narrow and restrictive, upon which the practical empirical fields are deduced, specified and qualified.[95]

To this end, I would suggest that Laruelle, especially when read through the lens of Simondonian transductive systems, provides a distinct approach to Nietzsche's significance for political thinking (which I have herein attempted to connect explicitly to my articulation of Nietzsche's overhuman physiology) which goes beyond the extant historicist, hermeneutic and discursive interpretations that seek to resolve, synthesize or idealize contradictory tendencies in his thinking.

Notes

1 'The problem that remains is how to think transhumanly the future, a mode of thinking of the future that will inevitably appear as "inhuman" when it comes into contact, and conflict, with all earthly seriousness to date.' Ansell-Pearson (1997), p. 7.
2 Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §681.
3 From the ancient Greek, auto- "self" + khthon "land, earth, soil".
4 Laruelle 1977, p. 11. All translations from this book are my own.
5 Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 'Why I Write Such Good Books', §1.
6 Laruelle 1977, p. 15.
7 Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, essay II, §12.
8 Laruelle 1977, p. 16.
9 Lampert (1986, p. 258) argues that the *Übermensch* was an ideal that Nietzsche did not intend to seriously promote. Conway (1989, p. 212) suggests that the concept of *Übermensch* is not intended to have a 'world-historical' expression.
10 Laruelle 1977, p. 13.

11 Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* 'Zarathustra's Prologue', §4.
12 Ansell-Pearson 1997, p. 15.
13 See for example Kaufmann 1974; Keith Ansell-Pearson 1994; Müller-Lauter 1999; Haar 1996; Tuncel 2005.
14 Rehberg 2002, p. 41.
15 *WP* §686; also *GM* II, §12.
16 *WP* §715.
17 Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Reason in Philosophy', §5.
18 Nietzsche, 'On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense', p. 116.
19 *WP* §506.
20 *WP* §620.
21 *WP* §625.
22 *WP* §634.
23 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §15.
24 *BGE* §36.
25 *BGE* §12.
26 *WP* §630.
27 *WP* §631.
28 *WP*§ 633.
29 *WP* §500.
30 *WP* §643.
31 *WP* §632.
32 Cox 1999, p. 71.
33 See for example, *BGE* §2, §3, §24, §34; *TI* 'Reason' §1 and §4; *WP* §47, §552, §812. Also see *Human All Too Human*, §1 and §2.
34 Nietzsche, *Gay Science,* §109.
35 *HAH*, 'The Wanderer and His Shadow', §67.
36 *HAH* §1.
37 *BGE* §3.
38 *BGE* §24.
39 See Ansell-Pearson 1997, p. 98.
40 *WP* §492.
41 *WP* §490.
42 *WP* §489.
43 See for example *BGE* §3.
44 See for example *BGE* §6.
45 *WP* §684.
46 '[M]ultiple physiological becomings replace ontologies based on assumptions of unity or identity as the methodological starting point. Methodologically, physiology is taken to "overcome" the unitary phenomena of consciousness', Rehberg (2002), p. 41. 'With the guiding thread of the body an immense *multiplicity* shows itself; it is methodologically permitted to use the more easily studied, *richer* phenomenon as a guiding thread for the understanding of the poorer [the apparent unity of the "I"]', Nietzsche, *WP* §518, translation Rehberg, p. 41.
47 *WP* §641.
48 Laruelle 1977, p. 29.
49 Ibid.
50 Laruelle 1977, pp. 11–12.
51 *TSZ* I, 'On Reading and Writing'.

52 See *GM* II, §3, §6, §12, §16, §17.
53 'The strange family resemblance of all Indian, Greek, and German philosophizing is explained easily enough. Where there is affinity of languages, it cannot fail, owing to the common philosophy of grammar—I mean, owing to the unconscious domination and guidance by similar grammatical functions—that everything is prepared at the outset for a similar development and sequence of philosophical systems; just as the way seems barred against certain other possibilities of world-interpretation', *BGE* §20.
54 In the following passage, Nietzsche characterizes this 'telegraphic' tendency: 'The former means for obtaining homogeneous, enduring characters for long generations: unalienable landed property, honoring the old (origin of the belief in gods and heroes as ancestors). Now the breaking up of landed property belongs to the opposite tendency: newspapers (in place of daily prayers), railway, telegraph. Centralization of a tremendous number of different interests in a single soul, which for that reason must be very strong and protean.' *WP* §67.
55 Cohen 2005, p. 189.
56 Kittler 1999, p. 188.
57 Plato, *Phaedrus*.
58 Ibid.
59 The original title being *Einleitung in das Studium der platonischen Dialoge* and published in French as *Introduction à la lecture des dialogues de Platon*, translated from the German by Olivier Berrichon-Sedeyn (1991).
60 Nietzsche 1991, pp. 9–10 (all translations from Berrichon-Sedeyn's French translation are my own).
61 Nietzsche 1991, p. 12.
62 *GM* I, §11.
63 *GM* II, §1.
64 GM II, §3.
65 '[T]he "development" of a thing, a practice, or an organ has nothing to do with its *progressus [progress]* towards a single goal . . . but rather the sequence of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of overpowering which take place on that thing, together with the resistance which arises against that overpowering each time, the changes of form which have been attempted for the purpose of defence and reaction, as well as the results of successful counter-measures. Form is fluid; the "meaning", however, is even more so. . . . Even within each individual organism things are no different: with every essential growth in the totality, the "meaning" of the individual organ also shifts.' *GM* II §12.
66 *GM* II, §16.
67 Beardsworth 1994, p. 15.
68 Ibid., p. 52.
69 Derrida 1974, pp. 19–20.
70 Kittler 1999, p. 198.
71 Ibid., p. 188.
72 Ibid., p. 210.
73 The original French word is capitalized.
74 Laruelle 1977, p. 31.
75 Simondon 2005, p. 32. All English translations from the French original are my own.
76 Simondon 2011, pp. 407–24.
77 Ibid., p. 259.

78 *WP* §866.
79 *WP* 684
80 Deleuze 1983, p. 75.
81 Ibid., p. 76.
82 Deleuze conceptualizes the *Übermensch* not in the terms of an ideal type with a more or less fixed set of dispositions, but as a 'method of dramatisation' and transpiring within the theatre of the living itself, a genesis (or 'dynamics of the egg' and constituting 'an environment of individuation'. In this choreographic schema, the human is not identified as the 'individual' but as 'embryo', the larval environment of trans-individuation that Deleuze likens to the 'Dionysian depth rumbling beneath' Leibniz's 'apparently Apollonian philosophy'. See Deleuze 1983, pp. 78–9; 2004, pp. 94–116.
83 Deleuze, 'Nomadic Thought' (2004), p. 253.
84 Deleuze 2004, p. 254.
85 Deleuze 2004, p. 259.
86 Laruelle 1977, p. 10.
87 See Laruelle's term 'pensée-Nietzsche', which could also be translated as 'Nietzsche-thought'. See for example thesis 1 in Laruelle (1977), p. 9.
88 For a Nietzschean interpretation of Kafka's *Penal Colony,* see Nandita Biswas Mellamphy and Dan Mellamphy (2005).
89 Laruelle 1977, p. 9.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid., pp. 10–11.
92 Ibid., p. 22.
93 Ibid., p. 28.
94 Ibid., p. 23.
95 Ibid., pp. 24–5.

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10

Nietzsche's Political Therapy

Michael Ure

1 Nietzsche as philosophical therapist

We need to begin by asking whether Nietzsche does in fact conceive of himself as a therapist. As a philosopher does Nietzsche aim to cure illnesses? This question has come to the fore in Nietzsche studies with the burgeoning interest in his indebtedness to the Hellenistic schools (Hutter 2006; Ure 2008, 2009, 2013a, 2013b; Ansell-Pearson 2010; Rutherford 2011; Armstrong 2013). In this section I argue that the answer to this question is a *qualified* 'yes.' This answer might appear obvious to anyone familiar with Nietzsche's work. One of his key meta-philosophical assumptions, which he clearly borrows from the classical and Hellenistic schools, is that philosophy has the potential to cure human maladies, and that to be worthy of the name philosophers ought to be doctors to the soul. Arguably more than any other modern philosopher Nietzsche sought to revive the ancient model of therapeutic philosophy while acknowledging and struggling with what this might amount to under modern conditions. As early as the mid-1870s Nietzsche identified his own 'untimeliness' with the idea that 'science' only has value as long as it enhances life. Following the classical model he anchored the value of 'science,' including philosophy under this head, in its capacity to enable 'life' to flourish. In criticizing 'official' modern philosophy Nietzsche makes clear his allegiance to the classical notion that philosophy is first and foremost a way of life. Nietzsche sweepingly indicts 'official' philosophy because it is not a way of life. Modern philosophers know how to reason, he suggests, but they do not conceive their philosophy as a practice that transforms their lives:

> No one dares to fulfil the philosophical law in himself, no one lives philosophically with that simple loyalty that constrained a man of antiquity to bear himself as Stoic wherever he was, whatever he did, once he had affirmed his loyalty to the Stoa. All modern philosophising is political and official, limited by governments, churches and academies, customs and the cowardice of men to the appearance of scholarship; it sighs "if only" and knows "there once was" and does nothing else. (UM 129)

Nietzsche clearly does not want to join those 'official' scholars who lament that philosophy once took shape as a way of life yet lack the courage to challenge convention.

Nietzsche's sweeping indictment is premised on his own ambition of reclaiming this lost model of philosophy.

Yet some recent work denies that Nietzsche is first and foremost a philosophical therapist. Jessica Berry, for example, challenges the notion that we should conceive of him as a philosophical therapist, even if he identifies with this model. It is mistaken, she claims, to characterize Nietzsche's philosophy as 'fundamentally *therapeutic*' (Berry 2010, p. 134). Berry's interpretation of Nietzsche, I argue, is unsustainable. However, examining the doubts she raises about Nietzsche's therapeutic credentials will serve to illuminate his shifting account of the nature and limits of philosophical therapy. Nietzsche's therapy, I suggest, varies as he changes and revises his basic philosophical framework and conceptual lexicon. Let us consider first the grounds for doubting that Nietzsche conceives himself or can rightly lay claim to the title of philosophical therapist.

Berry argues first that as a matter of *principle* Nietzsche is 'in no real position to *recommend* a reliable route to health' and second that as matter of *fact* 'he does not offer recommendations to others; he assiduously avoids doing so' (Berry 2010, p. 136). On the first head she argues that even if Nietzsche 'possessed the ambition to develop a therapeutic program . . . his critique of moralists and "physicians of the soul" and his suspicion of the very universality of their claims' would make it impossible for him to recommend a therapeutic treatment (Berry 2010, p. 136). Nietzsche's criticisms of moralists' and soul doctors' claim to know a universal ideal of flourishing and reliable means of attaining it, so her argument runs, should preclude him from tendering therapeutic recommendations.

The first claim amounts to the suggestion that Nietzsche believes there is no basis for the ancient model of philosophy because there is no genuine knowledge or expertise about the soul's health and sickness. How could Nietzsche develop his own philosophical therapy if he argues there is no expertise when it comes to such matters? Yet though Nietzsche clearly does have serious doubts about those who have presented themselves as physicians of the soul, he does not for this reason jettison the therapeutic model of philosophy. *In fact he aims to replace past failed physicians with new, successful physicians*. Nietzsche highlights his commitment to reclaiming philosophical therapy from quack doctors in the very title of the section in which he criticizes the latter's false therapeutic expertise: '*Where are the new physicians of the soul*?' (D 52). Nietzsche argues that those soul-doctors who once claimed therapeutic expertise were in fact ignorant of the true causes of and pathways to health or flourishing. He does not target the idea of the philosophical therapist *per se*, only its earlier incarnations. He criticizes the old 'quack' doctors in the name of new physicians of the soul with a true grasp of therapeutic principles and practices. 'As yet' he claims 'we lack above all the physicians for whom that which has hitherto been called practical morality will have to have been transformed into an aspect of their art and science of healing' (D 202). After claiming that past physicians of the soul have afflicted humankind with worse sicknesses than those they sought to cure, and they have done so through the very remedies they prescribed, Nietzsche poses the following question:

> It is said of Schopenhauer . . . that after they had been neglected for so long he again took seriously the sufferings of mankind: where is he who, after they have

> been neglected so long, will again *take seriously the antidotes to these sufferings* and put in the pillory the unheard-of quack-doctoring with which, under the most glorious names, mankind has hitherto been accustomed to treat the sicknesses of its soul? (D 52)

In *Daybreak* Nietzsche clearly criticizes the past physicians of the soul and their bogus therapies in the name of defining new physicians of the soul who take seriously the antidotes to human suffering. In a later section entitled '*Where are the needy in spirit*?' Nietzsche identifies himself as a poor doctor of the spirit who enjoys 'giving away [his] spiritual house and possessions, like a father confessor (*Beichtvater*) who sits in his corner anxious for *one in need* to come and tell of the distress of his mind, so that he may again fill his hands and his heart and *make light* his troubled soul (*beunruhigte Seele*)' (D 449).

Through this self-description Nietzsche implicitly identifies continuities and discontinuities between his own model of the philosophical doctor and alternative Hellenistic and Christian models.[1] Nietzsche compares his doctor to the Christian father confessor who wants to ease others' distress. Both, as he sees it, are spiritual directors of the soul. Yet he also distinguishes his notion of the spiritual director from its Christian model in ways that bring him close to the Hellenistic notion of the philosophical therapist (see also GS 289). Nietzsche's doctor does not believe his patients are distressed because of their fallen, sinful natures and he does not therefore see them as in need of absolution and cure by way of repentance and acceptance of God's grace. For this reason Nietzsche's father confessor does not seek from his patients confessions of 'inner' desires or 'bodily' drives, nor of course does he interpret their condition in terms of the Christian narrative of redemption from fallen nature (D 86). Nietzsche's therapists do not require sufferers to speak the truth about their desires, one that they alone can know, as the Christian father confessor does. To borrow Foucault's terminology, in the Christian model of confession the subject of enunciation must be the referent of the utterance. In Christian spirituality, as he explains, the guided subject must be present within the true discourse as the object of his own true discourse.

By contrast, Greco-Roman spiritual physicians do not elicit from their patients such individualized psychological confessions; they do not require that their patients to tell the unique 'truth' of their desires. Rather, the philosophical therapist takes as the object of treatment the patient's false or confused *beliefs* about things, especially about the value of things. The Greco-Roman philosophical therapist identifies the source of patients' distress in their beliefs and judgements, not in the malevolence or sinfulness of their natural desires. Taking a similar view, Nietzsche emphasizes that he conceives patients' distress as deriving from *intellectual* errors. Nietzsche's poor doctor of the soul 'aids those whose head is *confused by opinions*,' not by 'wicked' or 'sinful' personal desires (D 449). Nietzsche's therapy frees individuals from the distress caused by *confused opinions*, not from wicked desires. These are confusions of the head, not the 'heart,' so to speak. Nietzsche locates the source of human distress in false opinions or judgements, not in their evil nature, and their cure lies in correcting their judgements and not in renouncing their nature or desires. 'It is not *things*' as Nietzsche puts it in quintessentially Stoic terms 'but opinions about *things that have absolutely no existence* which have so deranged mankind!' (D 563).[2]

Nietzsche glosses here Epictetus famous Stoic maxim in Handbook 5: 'Men are disturbed, not by things, but by the principles and notions which they form concerning things' (Epictetus 5). Elsewhere Nietzsche applauds Epictetus' 'wisdom' as 'the whispering of the solitary to himself in the crowded marketplace' (AOM. 386). 'Death' Epictetus averred in this section '. . . is not terrible, else it would have appeared so to Socrates. But the terror consists in our notion of death that it is terrible. When therefore we are hindered, or disturbed, or grieved, let us never attribute it to others, but to ourselves; that is, to our own principles. An uninstructed person will lay the fault of his own misfortune upon others. Someone just starting instruction will lay the fault on himself. Some who is perfectly instructed will place blame neither on others nor on himself' (Epictetus 5). The sage, then, will not blame others or himself for his distress, but will correct the false principles or judgements that cause his emotional turmoil. The sage eliminates his distress by correcting his judgements so that they express the truth; he will judge that death, for example, is not terrible. For this reason the Stoic sage has no need to blame himself or others because he is not distressed by events. For the Stoic sage things are exactly as he wishes them to be – whatever happens. 'Do not ask things to happen as you wish,' as Epictetus put it a few sections later, 'but wish them to happen as they do happen and your life will go smoothly' (Epictetus 8).

We can see then how in the middle period Nietzsche aligns his therapeutic model with the Greco-Roman model. Nietzsche clearly *does* possess the ambition to develop a therapeutic programme. Indeed he identifies the model of the physician and spiritual director as central to his notion of the philosopher's vocation. The case that we should not conceive Nietzsche as a philosophical therapist must then rely on showing that despite his *explicit* intentions of reinventing this model, his philosophical perspective rules out or undermines his therapeutic aspirations. The claim is that even though Nietzsche clearly has therapeutic ambitions, his critique of universal morality is incompatible with his dream of reinventing the model of the philosophical physician.

However, Nietzsche does not take the view that there is any necessary conflict between his critique of universal morality and his philosophical therapy. Nietzsche assumes that his moral anti-universalism is compatible with his therapeutic ambitions. We need to examine how Nietzsche understands the relationship between his moral critique and his philosophical therapy. Let us consider first the reasons for Nietzsche's rejection of universal moral laws before turning to its implications for his therapeutic ambitions.

In *Daybreak* Nietzsche opposes the idea of a *universally* binding moral law for at least two reasons. First, as an anti-metaphysical naturalist Nietzsche assumes that we should only accept a universal moral law if it can be shown to have 'natural' foundations. In other words, he argues that we can legitimately prescribe a course of action as *right* – as something that everyone should or ought to do – only if we can identify a universal goal or *telos* intrinsic to our species. Yet following the general Darwinian anti-teleological principle he argues that we cannot find in nature any final species' goals or ends. On the Darwinian view, evolution is a purposeless, mechanical process that 'selects' from the species' random variations those that contingently happen to foster its self-preservation. Second, Nietzsche argues that prescribing universal moral imperatives conflicts with his view that every individual has 'the right to act arbitrarily

(*Willkürlicher*) and foolishly according to the light, bright or dim, of [their] own reason' (D 107). In *Daybreak* one of Nietzsche's claims is that individuals and groups should be free to impose on themselves laws that they judge to be in their own interests or conducive to their own flourishing. Nietzsche implies that the *legitimacy* of moral claims depends on individuals endorsing it on the basis of their own reason.

What implications does Nietzsche draw from his Darwinian/evolutionary insight into nature and his Enlightenment commitment to individual self-legislation for the project of reinventing philosophical therapy? Nietzsche's evolutionary perspective rejects Christian and Kantian idea of universal, timeless moral imperatives. 'For there is no longer any "ought", as he explains ". . . for morality insofar as it was an 'ought,' has been annihilated by our way of thinking as has religion"' (HH 34). Yet Nietzsche does not thereby rule out the possibility or legitimacy of therapeutic recommendations offered as *hypothetical* or *conditional* imperatives of the form: if you wish to flourish pursue 'thus and thus course of action' or act according to 'thus and thus judgement.' In other words, Nietzsche argues that philosophers can offer *recommendations* based not on metaphysical notions of the species' intrinsic purposes, but on their evaluation of what the species and individuals require to flourish in their given context. 'To *recommend* (*anempfehlen*) a goal to mankind is something quite different' as he explains 'the goal is then thought of as something which *lies in our own discretion*; supposing the recommendation appealed to mankind, it could in pursuit of it also *impose* upon itself a moral law, likewise at its own discretion' (D 108).

Nietzsche contrasts recommendations (*empfehlen*) and prescriptions (*Vorschriften*): the philosophical therapist can offer the former since these are conditional imperatives that allow their recipients to decide for themselves rather than categorical imperatives that by definition deny that the application of rules is a matter of choice or discretion. Nietzsche suggests that philosophical physicians can develop therapeutic *recommendations* as experientially testable propositions. That is to say, he claims that philosophical physicians' recommendations should be the result of and subject to a type of *experimental* testing. Once again Nietzsche's draws directly on the Hellenistic model of ethics in developing this notion of ethical experimentation. 'So far as *praxis* is concerned' he observes 'I view the various moral schools as experimental laboratories in which a considerable number of recipes for the art of living have been thoroughly practised and lived to the hilt. The results of all their experiments belong to us, as our legitimate property' (KSA 9, 15 (59)). In order to discover whether the various recipes for the art of living are conducive to health or sickness, Nietzsche suggests, we must put them into practice and observe whether they have a regular set of effects on our health. Nietzsche's therapist draws heavily on therapeutic knowledge derived from 'experience' rather than mere 'knowledge.' The Nietzschean physician, as he puts it, lives 'with a head free of fever, equipped with a handful of knowledge and a bagful of experience' (D 449). Nietzsche's therapist, in short, replaces metaphysically grounded moral laws with empirically tested health recommendations.

Nietzsche then does not believe that his anti-teleological evolutionary principle or his Enlightenment principle of individual autonomy, necessarily rules out the identification of successful therapies. From his Darwinian and liberal principles Nietzsche infers that philosophical therapists can legitimately *recommend* goals

to mankind or individuals, but they ought not to *command* them to obey allegedly universal laws. In the middle works he ties the validity of these recommendations to experimental testing and maintains that individuals have the right to freely apply these recommendations according to the bright, light and dim of their own reason.

2 Smith's ethics of sociability, Nietzsche's ethical perfectionism

Nietzsche puts this theoretical position into practice. Far from assiduously avoiding offering recommendations to others, as Berry claims, he in fact does just this: he offers others therapeutic recommendations that he suggests they test by way of experimentation. In *Daybreak*, for example, Nietzsche claims that the Greeks properly grasped the harmfulness of pity, and therefore counted it as a 'morbid recurring affect the perilousness of which can be removed by periodical deliberate discharge' (D 134).[3] The Greek tragedians, in Nietzsche's view, were effective cultural physicians. After reprising this Aristotelian notion of tragedy as a catharsis of pity and fear, Nietzsche continues: 'He who for a period of time made the experiment (*versuchsweise*) of intentionally pursuing occasions for pity in his everyday life and set before his soul all the misery available to him in his surroundings would inevitably grow sick and melancholic. He, however, whose desire it is to serve mankind as a physician *in any sense whatever* will have to be very much on his guard against that sensation – it will paralyse him at every decisive moment and apply a ligature to his knowledge and his subtle helpful hand' (D 134). Here Nietzsche ties his therapeutic recommendation to experimentally derived knowledge: we discover the effects of pity by putting it to the test and we measure its value by its ill-effects on our flourishing. Against the Kantian notion of making pure reason the grounds of synthetic *a priori* moral laws, unconditionally binding on all rational beings, Nietzsche develops *a posteriori* therapeutic recommendations – recommendations drawn from experience of what makes it possible for individuals to flourish. Nietzsche believes that such experiments can confirm at least some therapeutic principles of general application: namely, freeing ourselves of our own and others' emotional distress (fear, grief and anger) makes for a smoothly flowing, unencumbered life, whereas giving credence to our own and others' emotions 'destroys' our health (D 137). Nietzsche claims that by exercising compassion we dangerously over-extend our emotional capacities; we overdraw our psychological credit, so to speak. Nietzsche justifies this claim by suggesting that we can test it practically or experimentally. Nietzsche commits himself to an ethical *eudaimonism* based on 'experimentally' generated knowledge.

Nietzsche then goes on to explicitly *recommend* the Stoic therapy and discipline of passions of fear, grief and anger. He does so by pinpointing a conventional Stoic exercise of seeing oneself from the point of view of a detached observer: 'To view our own experiences with the eyes with which we are accustomed to view them they are the experiences of others – this is very comforting and a medicine to be recommended' (D 137).[4] Here Nietzsche clearly alludes to Epictetus' *Handbook*. According to Epictetus, we should be affected by our own 'misfortunes' – for example the loss of our own child – in exactly the same way as we would if we were

observing another's loss. Our impartial, detached view of others' misfortune gives us an objective or rational measure of the value of such events that we should apply to the events of our own lives (Epictetus 26).

Nietzsche reprises the Stoic exercise of seeing oneself from the standpoint of the 'impartial spectator,' to borrow Adam Smith's phrase (Smith 2002). In *Daybreak* Nietzsche recommends this exercise of seeing ourselves from an impartial, third party standpoint primarily as a remedy for our emotional distress – *fear* of money-loss, *grief* over a death or *anger* at a slight – rather than like Smith as a mechanism of social harmonization. If I wish to free myself of such distress, he recommends, then I should see myself from the impartial spectator's standpoint. Since, so Smith and Nietzsche assume, the impartial spectator has far less concern for my predicament that I do, if I assume his vantage point on my predicament I will significantly lower the pitch and intensity of my distressing emotions.

The comparison between Nietzsche and Smith's neo-Stoic discipline of desire is a fruitful one. Smith, as I suggested, made this Stoic exercise central to his theory of political harmony. This exercise, Smith claims, tunes individual moral sentiments so that they 'have such a correspondence with one another, as is sufficient for the harmony of society. Though they will never be unisons, they may be concords, and this is all that is warranted or required' (Smith 2002, p. 27). Smith then identifies neo-Stoicism as a *political* therapy rather than simply an *individual* therapy: the mechanism of the impartial spectator not only enables individuals to moderate their emotions, in doing so it contributes to social harmonization (see Muller 1995; Forman-Barzilai 2011; Nussbaum forthcoming). By seeing my own circumstances from the standpoint of an impartial spectator, he argues, I can tune my emotions to the lower pitch that is acceptable to my fellows. Smith's impartial spectator is the sociological version of the Stoic's cosmological view from above. Just as the Stoics held that seeing oneself from the cosmic perspective enabled one to harmonize his will with the whole, Smith held that seeing oneself from the impartial spectator's standpoint enables one to harmonize his sentiments with those of the social whole. Smith's sociological view from above ensures 'propriety' of our sentiments: that is, if we adopt the impartial spectator's standpoint on our own sentiments we will only express these sentiments to the degree that others will consider proper in the given circumstances. It enables us to 'reduce the violence of [our] passions to that pitch of moderation, in which the impartial spectator can entirely enter into them' (Smith 2002, p. 31). Smith argues that his neo-Stoic political therapy is necessary for the sake of social harmony – that is, so that citizens have a basic set of *shared* sentimental responses to all the turns of fortune's wheel. Smith believes this sentimental concord is the basis of civic peace.

According to Smith, we do not have to adopt the Stoics' 'sublime contemplation' and view ourselves from the cosmological perspective to attain tranquillity; it is sufficient for us to see ourselves through the eyes of strangers (Smith 2002, p. 345). Indeed, Smith worries that if we ascend to the Stoic's sublime cosmological point of view we risk becoming 'altogether indifferent and unconcerned in the success or miscarriage of everything Nature has prescribed as the proper business and occupation of our lives' (Smith 2002, p. 345). As we shall see, it is just this Stoic rigoristic disdain for the ordinary that Nietzsche exploits for his own neo-Stoic therapy. Against this rigoristic,

cosmic Stoicism, Smith argues that by assuming the impartial spectators' view and becoming strangers to ourselves we can achieve the degree of tranquillity requisite to social harmony.

Smith's conception of the harmonization of the passions involves an asymmetry thesis (Nussbaum 2008, p. 156). On the one hand, as we have seen, Smith suggests that when it comes to our own misfortunes and injuries, we should cultivate what he calls the *noble* virtues; that is to say, like true Stoics we should spurn our own grief and resentment as expressions of weakness and misjudgement. Yet, on the one hand, Smith suggests as spectators we need to cultivate what he calls *amiable* virtues; that is to say, we should learn to re-echo all the sentiments of those with whom we converse, who grieve for their calamities, who resent their injuries, and who rejoice at their good fortune. As Smith puts it we need to have a 'tender sympathy' for all the sentiments of others. We need to be good friends to others, yet strangers to ourselves. '(H)ence it is' as he explains this asymmetry, 'that to feel much for others and little for ourselves, that to restrain our selfish, and to indulge our benevolent affections, constitutes the perfection of human nature; and can alone produce among mankind that harmony of sentiments and passions in which consists their [i.e. mankind's] whole grace and propriety' (Smith 2002, p. 30).

In sharp contrast, Nietzsche defends a *consistent* Stoic philosophical therapy and repudiates Smith's asymmetry thesis. As we have seen, following the Stoics Nietzsche maintains that it is rational and therapeutic to view our own 'misfortunes' as if they were the experiences of others. On the other hand, he argues, to follow advice such as Smith's 'and imbibe the experiences of others *as if they were ours* – as is the demand of a philosophy of pity – this would destroy us, and in a very short time: but just try the experiment of doing it, and fantasise no longer!' (D 137). Nietzsche argues that for the sake of our own flourishing we should not only view our own emotions 'impartially,' as Smith encourages us to, but we should also apply this same impartiality to *others*' emotions. If it is objectively correct to apply to my own case the Stoic judgement that emotions are irrational – judgements that attribute value to things that are valueless – then it is also correct to apply it to others. Grief over a death is irrational regardless of who suffers it.

Let us then sum up this comparison of Smith and Nietzsche's neo-Stoic therapy. Smith, as we have seen, argues that social harmony requires each citizen will to assume a peculiarly asymmetrical perspective: they must take a cold Stoic view of their own passions and a tender-hearted, 'sympathetic' view of their fellows' passions. Smith argues that this inconsistent neo-Stoic therapy is necessary to the harmony of society. By contrast, Nietzsche seeks to develop an alternative neo-Stoic therapy for the sake of individual happiness or ethical perfectionism. If we are to realize individual happiness, he argues, we must apply the Stoic therapy consistently. Unlike Smith, then, Nietzsche argues that we must rise above not only our own, but also *our neighbours*' suffering rather than sympathetically entering into and re-echoing his/her sentiments. We must be not only out beyond ourselves, but also '(o)ut beyond our neighbours too,' as he puts it (D 146). If we can each rise above our own *and* others' distress then we will make 'the burden of our own as light as possible.' We move much more easily, he maintains, without emotional burdens. At the same time as Nietzsche develops his own

neo-Stoic ethical eudaimonism he repudiates political therapies like Smith's that aim to deploy Stoic therapies as mechanisms that aim at collective sentimental attunement. He condemns them on the grounds that they sacrifice the individual for the sake of the whole. Nietzsche claims that the major eighteenth and nineteenth century moral undercurrent of compassion generates political therapies that aim at 'nothing less than a fundamental remoulding, indeed weakening and abolition of the *individual* . . . one hopes to manage more cheaply, more safely, more equitably, more uniformly if there exists only larger bodies and their members' (D 132).

3 From ethical perfection to bio-political transformation

Ultimately, however, Nietzsche identifies his own neo-Stoic therapy not simply as a mechanism or exercise necessary to individual happiness and freedom, but as a *political* therapy necessary to the enhancement of the species' power. As we have seen, Nietzsche initially draws on Hellenistic therapies, especially Stoicism, as an integral aspect of his reinvention of ancient ethical perfectionism. However, in early 1880s what we might call a bio-political agenda begins to take shape in Nietzsche's work and gradually transforms his philosophical therapy. As we have seen, in *Human, All Too Human* and *Daybreak* Nietzsche draws on ancient Hellenistic philosophical therapies as legitimate alternatives to dominant contemporary moralities of duty and compassion. Initially, like his Hellenistic predecessors, Nietzsche identifies philosophical therapies as a practice that makes it possible for *every* individual to achieve happiness or flourishing by calming their emotional turmoil. In sharp contrast, Nietzsche's later bio-political agenda aims only at healing those rare higher individuals who have the capacity to elevate the species.[5] Indeed, once Nietzsche rejects the belief that philosophical therapy can help every individual to achieve flourishing and his Enlightenment commitment to individual moral autonomy he is left with a quasi-Darwinian view that it is legitimate or 'natural' for the few to use and exploit the many as scaffolding to reach their own heights. Nietzsche shifts from reinventing the Hellenistic philosophies as therapies for human-all-too-human emotions to using them as therapies to facilitate the species' evolutionary transformation. In the remainder of this chapter I examine Nietzsche's move from a philosophical therapy that aims at individual *eudaimonia* to one that aims at the species' transformation.

Already in *Daybreak* we see how the clouds of what we might call his bio-political agenda starts to cast shadows over his philosophical therapy and its commitment to the Enlightenment ideal of individual autonomy. We can see this by examining how Nietzsche's political motivation underpins his neo-Stoic therapy. Ultimately Nietzsche's bio-political ambitions explain his insistence that we must apply the Stoic therapy of the passions with iron consistency and rise above our own *and* others' suffering.

In opposition to his age's morality of compassion and sympathy, Nietzsche argues for his own peculiar neo-Stoic 'higher and freer viewpoint' (D 146). Nietzsche's neo-Stoic view from above looks *beyond* the immediate baleful consequences to others (including 'doubt, grief and even worse things') and under certain circumstances legitimates pursuing more distant goals '*even*,' as he is at pains to emphasize, '*at the*

cost of the suffering of others' (D 146). Nietzsche deploys his neo-Stoic therapy and its exercises as a mechanism that will enable free spirits to contribute to strengthening and raising higher the species' 'feeling of power' (D 146). If the species is to elevate itself, he asserts, it must sacrifice some of its members. Here we see how and why Nietzsche as a cultural physician deploys a neo-Stoic political therapy: he conceives fellow-feeling as an obstacle to the free spirit's capacity to sacrifice others for the sake of the species' flourishing. It is here that we can specify the *political* significance of his neo-Stoic therapy. Nietzsche conceives his neo-Stoic therapy not only as a means by which individuals might acquire the 'art of the Olympians' and enjoy rather than lament the misfortunes of mankind (D 144; Ure 2013a). He also conceives it as an exercise that will enable free spirits to '*transcend [their] own pity*' so that they can sacrifice others on the altar of the species' enhancement (D 146). Pity stands in the way of the free-spirit's political goal of enhancing of the species' power; the neo-Stoic therapy of the passions is one of the key mechanisms for overcoming this obstacle. For this reason Nietzsche argues free spirits must reject any inconsistent application of Stoic discipline. If, as he argues, free spirits are right to take a lofty attitude towards their own suffering and not feel grief or resentment when they are the victims of misfortune or injustice, then they are also right to adopt the same attitude towards others. 'May we not' as he puts it rhetorically 'treat our neighbour as we treat ourselves?' (D 146).

Nietzsche exhorts free spirits to transcend their pity and learn the Olympian art of delighting in others' sufferings so they *are able to* sacrifice others to their higher bio-political goal. If they allow pity to guide their choices they must forbid themselves inflicting suffering on others. He draws on Stoic philosophy and its exercises precisely because they enable free spirits to aim to extirpate their fellow-feeling. Where Smith identifies sympathy as necessary condition of social harmony, Nietzsche identifies it as one of the chief *obstacles* to the species' full flourishing: it prevents free spirits from sacrificing others' in the name of a higher goal.

We can also see how Nietzsche's nascent bio-political agenda runs at cross-purposes to his Enlightenment ideal of moral autonomy. As we saw earlier, in *Daybreak* Nietzsche railed against the metaphysical notion of unconditional moral duty, according each individual 'the right to act arbitrarily and foolishly according to the light, bright or dim, of [their] own reason' (D 107). Yet as his nascent bio-political project takes shape Nietzsche gradually jettisons this Enlightenment commitment and argues that free spirits have legitimate grounds for sacrificing individuals on the altar of a higher collective goal. 'Supposing' Nietzsche asks rhetorically 'we acted in the sense of self-sacrifice, what would forbid us to sacrifice our neighbour as well?' (D 146). He argues that if free-spirits are willing to sacrifice themselves for a higher species' goal then there is no reason to forbid them sacrificing others as well. Nietzsche ignores the obvious riposte to this specious argument: viz., what forbids free spirits from sacrificing others for the sake of a general or collective goal is others' right to decide for themselves, whether and to what ends they are willing to sacrifice themselves. That one person is prepared to sacrifice himself for a collective goal does not entitle him to make this same decision on another's behalf. Perhaps sensing the weakness of his argument Nietzsche concedes that it might be best if 'we' persuade our neighbour 'to feel himself to be a sacrifice' and to submit himself to 'the task for which we employ him' (D 146).

Yet, if this task of persuasion fails, as Nietzsche makes clear, free spirits are entitled to *sacrifice* their neighbours for the sake of a collective or general ends – that is to cause them suffering for the species' greater good whether they agree to it or not. Thanks to their Stoic discipline, Nietzsche's free spirits will feel no pity for those they sacrifice. Their protests will fall on deaf ears (D 144; GS 338). Nietzsche's free spirits, we might say, are free in the sense that they do not subject their actions to the Enlightenment ideal of political respect for others' autonomy or the moral constraint of concern for their suffering.

In principle Nietzsche's project of species' enhancement prioritizes species' enhancement over individual liberty and in practice, he believes, it will necessarily require sacrificing some individuals for the sake of a higher species' goal. In *Daybreak* Nietzsche gives free spirits license to sacrifice others largely for the sake of pursuing *knowledge*. Nietzsche's suggestion is that if free spirits are to pursue knowledge to the fullest possible extent they must be prepared to cause harm in the sense of depriving others of the pieties and traditions that orient and console them. Nietzsche legitimates sacrificing others in the name of knowledge. In this case, Nietzsche's free spirits cause others' harm by depriving them of beliefs that console them or by rejecting shared opinions that bind individuals and communities. Free-spirits' pursuit of knowledge causes sorrow for others: the loss of consoling beliefs and shared sentiments. Nietzsche conceives this as a tragic, yet necessary outcome of the pursuit of science (D 562). Nietzsche enjoins free spirits to overcome their pity for those they harm in this way so that they can realize the ideal of knowledge. '(W)e would all' he declares 'prefer the destruction of mankind to the regression from knowledge' (D 429; D 45).

In the later works, however, Nietzsche legitimates sacrificing others in a much more dangerous, politically significant sense. Nietzsche moves from a radical Enlightenment commitment to knowledge *at any cost* to a bio-politics of species' enhancement. Here Nietzsche argues that it is a necessary condition of the species' advancement that the many are *exploited* for the benefit of the biologically blessed few. At its height, Nietzsche's bio-political programme justifies instrumentalizing the lives of many for the exclusive purpose of enhancing the lives of the few. Nietzsche's radical Enlightenment politics holds that knowledge is incompatible with the comforting illusions required by the many. Nietzsche's bio-political programme maintains that the species' enhancement is incompatible with the political autonomy of the many. For this reason as Nietzsche's bio-political project – or 'the enhancement of the type "man"' – takes front and centre stage in his later works he explicitly jettisons the Enlightenment regard for individual autonomy and equal rights and hardens his political opposition to compassion (BGE 257). However, one thing remains constant as Nietzsche makes this shift: in both cases he believes a neo-Stoic therapy is necessary to eliminate any compassion that might stand in the way of the respective political programmes.

Let us briefly consider Nietzsche's shift to this bio-political programme and its impact on his philosophical therapy. In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche explicitly defends the view that the species' enhancement hinges on an order of rank that allows the higher types to exploit the lower. 'Every enhancement of the type "man"' as he puts it 'has so far been the work of aristocratic society – and it will be so again and again – a society that believes in the long ladder of an order of rank and differences in value

between man and man, and that needs slavery in some sense or other. Without that *pathos of distance* which grows out of the ingrained difference between strata – when the ruling caste constantly looks afar and looks down upon subjects and instruments and just as constantly practices obedience and command, keeping down and keeping at a distance – that other, more mysterious pathos could not have grown wider either – the craving for an ever widening of distances within the soul itself, the development of ever higher, rarer, more remote, further stretching, more comprehensive states – in brief, simply the enhancement of the type "man". . .' (BGE 257).

Nietzsche maintains that the current ruling caste is in need of a political therapy in order to maintain their belief that they have the right to pursue this bio-political project of species' enhancement. The species' flourishing hinges on the ruling castes' belief that their flourishing justifies enslaving lesser types. Nietzsche's late therapy aims at restoring higher types' good conscience about sacrificing the lesser. 'The essential characteristic of a good and healthy aristocracy' he maintains 'is that it experiences itself not as a function (whether of the monarchy or the commonwealth) but as their *meaning* and justification – that it therefore accepts with a good conscience the sacrifice of untold human beings, who, for its sake, must be reduced and lowered to incomplete human beings, to slaves, to instruments. Their fundamental faith simply has to be that society must not exist for society's sake but only as the foundation and scaffolding on which a choice type of being is able to raise itself to its higher task and to a higher state of being – comparable to those sun-seeking vines of Java – they are called Sipo Matador – that so long and so often enclasp an oak tree with their tendrils until eventually, high above it but supported by it, they can unfold their crowns in the open light and display their happiness' (BGE 258).

Here Nietzsche glosses Henry Walter Bates' analysis of a particular plant species – the *Sipo Matador* or Murdering Creeper (Bates [1863] 1941). Significantly in his analysis of the Murdering Creeper Bates explicitly employed a Darwinian account of evolution in terms of struggle for existence regulated by natural selection. Bates identifies nature with a 'ruthless' struggle for existence between individuals and species in competition for limited resources. 'In these tropical forests each plant and tree seems to be striving to outvie its fellow, struggling upwards towards light and air — branch, and leaf, and stem — regardless of its neighbours. Parasitic plants are seen fastening with firm grip on others, making use of them with reckless indifference as instruments for their own advancement. Live and let live is clearly not the maxim taught in these wildernesses. There is one kind of parasitic tree, very common near Para, which exhibits this feature in a very prominent manner. It is called the Sipo Matador, or the Murderer Liana' (Bates 1863, p. 127).

Bates observes the creeper's success depends on exploiting other species because 'its stem would be unable to bear the weight of the upper growth; it is obliged, therefore, to support itself on a tree of another species' (Bates 1863, p. 127). However, as Bates remarks, this is typical of parasitic trees and plants. Why did Bates pick out the Sipo Matador as especially worthy of note and why did Nietzsche identify this *particular* creeper as analogous to the proper functioning of an aristocracy? What makes the Sipo Matador appear as 'peculiar' and 'disagreeable,' as Bates explains, is the particularly extreme way it exploits other tree species (Bates 1863, p. 127). Ultimately this parasite

murders its 'host.' For this reason Bates describes the Sipo Matador's host as a victim. Bates calls it the 'murdering creeper' because as it grows larger and flourishes, 'rearing its crown of foliage to the sky,' it kills its victim by stopping the flow of its sap (Bates 1863, p. 127). In the peculiar case of Sipo Matador, every move towards the 'fulfilment' of its life depends on its victim moving closer to death. It flourishes by murdering its host/victim. It lives by killing another. However, since the murdering Sipo cannot bear its own weight the death of its victim also spells its imminent demise: 'The strange spectacle then remains of the selfish parasite clasping in its arms the lifeless and decaying body of its victim, which had been a help to its own growth. Its ends have been served—it has flowered and fruited, reproduced and disseminated its kind; and now, when the dead trunk moulders away, its own end approaches; its support is gone, and itself also falls' (Bates 1863, p. 127).

Importantly, Bates identifies the Sipo Matador as the perfect illustration of the Darwinian struggle for existence. 'The Murderer Sipo' he claims 'merely exhibits, in a more conspicuous manner than usual, the struggle which necessarily exists amongst vegetable forms in these crowded forests. . . . All species entail in their successful struggles the injury or destruction of many of their neighbours or supporters, but the process is not in others so speaking to the eye as it is in the case of the Matador. . . . The competition amongst organised beings has been prominently brought forth in Darwin's "*Origin of Species*"; it is a fact which must be always kept in view in studying these subjects' (Bates 1863, pp. 127–8).

Nietzsche's account of aristocracy's conditions of existence replicates Bates' Darwinian analysis of parasitic plants: in order to flourish the highest human types must, like the murdering creeper, sacrifice others for their own advancement. Nietzsche then identifies aristocracy as analogous to this murderous parasite. On this view, aristocracies elevate themselves not simply by utilizing lower strata for their own ends, but by extinguishing their host/victim in the process of achieving their own full flourishing. It is for this reason that he emphasizes that aristocracies 'sacrifice,' 'lower' and 'reduce' those it enslaves to its service (BGE 258). Nietzsche's Darwinian framing of the relationship between higher and lower strata gives the lie to the idea that he believes these strata can co-exist with one another (see Hatab 2008). Indeed, as his Sipo Matador analogy suggests, Nietzsche believes the full flourishing of the higher may ultimately require the annihilation of the lower strata.

Yet Nietzsche claims that aristocracies can fail through 'corruption' – their loss of the fundamental faith that their own elevation is the meaning or purpose of society, which justifies the sacrifice of 'untold beings.' Nietzsche identifies this faith as built on 'the foundation of affects, which is called "life"' (BGE 258). Whereas in non-human nature, the untrammelled struggle for existence goes on apace, and individuals and species are immune to such corruption, in human society, Nietzsche identifies the possibility of the 'corruption' of 'the foundation of affects': the highest types come to conceive themselves as mere functionaries of society rather than its ultimate goal (BGE 258). *Nietzsche aims to establish a political therapy that treats this corruption of higher forms of life.* In his late works, then, Nietzsche's therapy focuses on healing higher types of this corruption so that they can pursue their own flourishing in the same manner as the Sipo Matador.

Nietzsche political therapy then only aims to cure rare, strong types of the species who are 'emasculated' by what calls slave morality. It principally aims to prevent the strong from endorsing the 'sinister' idea that the suffering of the weak is avoidable and undeserved and that they should minister to the sick and take responsibility for preventing their suffering. It aims to prevent them from contracting from the weak their diseases. Nietzsche embodies this political therapy in the *Genealogy of Morals*. It aims to cure the rare healthy types of the contagion of compassion and equality. Undoubtedly Nietzsche uses non-cognitive resources to trigger in 'higher' types disgust with 'lower' types. Nietzsche peppers the *Genealogy* with a hyperbolic rhetoric that seeks to inspire in its readers nausea (*Ekel*) at the sight and sound of 'lesser,' suffering types (Tevenar, forthcoming). Nausea at the weak, he implies, can catalyse in higher types the desire to contest the evaluative judgement that lesser types warrant their compassion.

Nietzsche complements this non-cognitive rhetorical suasion with a therapy that challenges the cognitive foundations of compassion. Nietzsche suggests that the weak transmit their disease to the strong by cognitive means: so-called 'slavish' moral beliefs and evaluations. In *Genealogy* Nietzsche cashes out his claim that morality is a strategy that species use to elude their enemies or to prey on others (D 26). Nietzsche conceives slave morality as a predatory practice: it enables the so-called weak to exploit the strong for their own protection. Nietzsche's political therapy aims to free higher types from the snares and corruptions of this predatory morality.

In the *Genealogy* Nietzsche identifies this predatory morality with a number of propositions and evaluations: for example, the concept of freedom that underpins the notion of moral responsibility; the concept of equality that underpins the notion of equal rights; and the concept of 'happiness' that underpins the judgement that suffering is evil. Taken together these three concepts are the cognitive conditions that make it possible for the strong to condemn themselves for harming the weak and to hold themselves responsible for preventing this harm. Nietzsche's genealogy aims to counteract the corruption of the strong by showing them how this contemporary 'morality' has its genesis in the needs of the weak for conditions of existence that systematically undermine their own conditions of existence. As a naturalist Nietzsche wants to demonstrate to them first the 'moralities' are conditions of existence (GS 7), and second that contemporary 'slave' morality is the condition of existence that sustain our species' sickest types at the expense of the healthiest. If, therefore, the strong and healthy want a morality that supports their conditions of existence they must jettison slave morality. As a political therapy Nietzsche's genealogy aims to eliminate their endorsement of concepts central to slave morality that obstruct their flourishing – responsibility, equality and 'happiness' – so that they can formulate and live according to a morality that *is* conducive to their own flourishing. His philosophical therapy for the rare, higher types proceeds by a genealogical re-evaluation of slave morality and a series of exercises that aim to heighten their sense of the 'pathos of distance' between themselves and *hoi polloi*.

In this context, Nietzsche encourages higher types to use 'physics' or the ancient exercise of the view from above to achieve this equanimity in the face of nature's cruelty

towards the weaker. Nietzsche assumes that in order to incorporate this genealogical knowledge of the conditions of existence they require therapeutic exercises. In this regard Nietzsche takes a leaf out of the Stoic philosophy: he exhorts higher, ascending types to contemplate the grand economy of the whole and learn to laugh at (rather than lament) the grand and violent struggle for life and power (Ure 2013a, 2013b). However, unlike Stoics who use the view from above to see how every part belongs to a divine or rationally harmonious whole, Nietzsche deploys evolutionary knowledge to see how the enhancement of the whole requires the sacrifice or elimination of some of its parts. From this biological view from above they can see that sacrificing the many is a necessary condition of species' flourishing. The bio-political goal of Nietzsche's therapy is to enable so-called higher types to overcome the emotional corruption that prevents them from pursuing their own flourishing at the expense of lesser types. We can describe this as a neo-Stoic therapy insofar as like the ancient therapy it still aims to enable individuals (or at least higher individuals) to affirm necessity. However, Nietzsche's neo-Stoic therapy transforms the notion of necessity: he no longer conceives events as necessary parts of a divine or rational whole, as the Stoics did, but as necessary parts of ongoing biological *agon* between strong and weak members of the species. Nietzsche's neo-Stoic therapy aims to enable higher type to affirm the necessity of this biological *agon* and in doing so to ensure their optimal conditions of existence. The overarching goal of this therapy, therefore, is to establish the conditions necessary for the flourishing of the species' highest types. The key to Nietzsche's therapy lies in enabling these higher types to overcome the 'sinister' disease of compassion that motivates them to try to limit or eliminate *agon* for the sake of protecting the weak (GM P 5).[6]

Nietzsche's bio-political programme then *radically* transforms his view of the scope, aim and content of his philosophical therapy. First, rather than developing a philosophical therapy for all, he draws on the evolutionary idea that some variations are 'fitter' (stronger, nobler, ascending lines) than others to argue that therapy *should* only be for these fitter individuals who have the biological potential to facilitate the species' enhancement. If the political goal is the species' flourishing then therapy ought only to apply to those who contribute to this end. Since Nietzsche accords value to individuals terms of their contribution to the species' advancement, and this capacity, so he assumes, is unevenly distributed, he believes it is reasonable to also accord rights and claims unevenly. Since from the evolutionary perspective many individuals are likely to be *unfavourable* variations that detract from or limit the species' capacities their political rights should be strictly limited so they either serve or do not encroach on those blessed by good fortune. From this perspective, Nietzsche argues it is just for the few rare lucky hits to exploit the many for the sake of fully realizing their natural potential. Nietzsche's bio-politics casts aside the Enlightenment conception of individuals as citizens with the inalienable political rights or rights to self-determination and replaces it with a conception of individuals as members of a species whose value resides in their contribution to the species as a whole (Esposito 2008). In this context Nietzsche assumes that it is legitimate to measure individual's worth in terms of their contribution to the species' health and

flourishing (rather than in terms of their own individual flourishing) and that against this measure some individuals are worth far less than others.[7] '[The healthy's] right to exist, the priority of the bell with the clear ring over the discordant and cracked one' he asserts 'is clearly a thousand times greater: they alone are the *guarantors* of the future' (GM III: 14). The aim of Nietzsche's philosophical therapy shifts from seeking to help all individuals achieve maximal human flourishing to seeking to help the few lucky hits achieve maximal flourishing, even at the expense of diminishing, exploiting or sacrificing the weak.

Second, Nietzsche's philosophical therapy no longer seeks to enable all individuals to maintain equanimity in the face of misfortune, but to free the rare lucky hits from one of the main impediments to their flourishing: the emotional distress caused by their false 'moral' judgements, which commit them to feeling with and ministering to the sick and weak. From the middle to the late works Nietzsche shifts from a philosophical therapy concerned with healing all individuals and enabling them to love their fate to a political therapy concerned with ensuring that rare individuals can remain undisturbed by the harmful effects of their actions on the weak and sick. Nietzsche's Darwinian inspired view from above is the therapeutic exercise meant to cure their disease of compassion.

4 Conclusion

We have seen how Smith and Nietzsche utilize Stoic therapies for very different political ends. Smith deploys Stoic therapies for the purposes of social harmony and co-ordination. In his so-called middle works Nietzsche, by contrast, initially draws on Hellenistic therapies as an integral aspect of his reinvention of ancient ethical perfectionism. He identifies Stoic therapies as cures for the emotional distress that prevents individuals from responding with equanimity to all the turns of fortune's wheel. However, as we have seen, in the 1880s Nietzsche *radically* transforms the scope and purpose of his philosophical therapy as he integrates evolutionary theories into his moral analysis and political theory. In his late works, Nietzsche folds his neo-Stoic therapy into a 'bio-political' programme or what some have called a negative or totalitarian bio-politics (Esposito 2008; Lemm 2008). Here he deploys a neo-Stoic political therapy to cure higher types of the moral corruption that prevents them from fully exercising their aristocratic 'rights' and in doing so enhancing the species' capacities. Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* embodies this political therapy.

However, Nietzsche was mistaken to think that evolutionary naturalism is necessarily tied to or compatible with aristocratic radicalism. Indeed, following Adam Smith's inspiration, evolutionary biologists from Darwin to De Waal have demonstrated that political community is contingent on the evolution of sympathy (De Waal 2009, p. 15; Ure 2013b). One of the lessons we might learn from this study of competing political therapies is that if we are to develop an *affirmative* bio-politics we need to investigate the political and moral significance of precisely those capacities and sentiments that Smith applauded and Nietzsche despised: empathy, sympathy and compassion.

Notes

1 On the differences between the Greco-Roman and Christian models of 'psychagogy' or the transmission of a truth whose function is to transform the mode of being of the subject to whom it is addressed see Foucault (2005, pp. 408–9).
2 Here I concentrate on Nietzsche's uses and abuses of the *Stoic* model of philosophical therapy. It is important to acknowledge, however, that in the middle works he takes an eclectic stance towards Hellenistic therapies. '(W)e will not hesitate to adopt a Stoic recipe' as he puts 'just because we have profited in the past from Epicurean recipes' (KSA 9, 15(59)).
3 Nietzsche uses the idea of discharge (*Entladungen*) or catharsis in a narrow sense. By this he means *purging* 'affects' rather than *clarifying* emotions of pity and fear.
4 Brobjer (2003) demonstrates that in 1880/1881 Nietzsche carefully read, annotated and drew on Epictetus' *Handbook* as his primary source on Stoic philosophy.
5 I use the term quasi-Darwinian here to indicate that in some places Nietzsche draws on conventional Darwinian evolutionary arguments in an attempt to bolster his aristocratic radicalism whereas in other places he does this by developing his own evolutionary arguments based on the metaphysical notion of the will to power. Here I focus on Nietzsche's efforts to use Darwinian theory to support his aristocratic radicalism.
6 Nietzsche acknowledges that under exceptional conditions higher types might limit *agon* between the strong and weak for the purpose of creating a larger unit of strength, but not for the purpose of protecting the weak and suffering. From the most 'advanced biological standpoint' as he puts it, the law should be conceived as a weapon in a fight between parties, not as a means of achieving peace (GM II: 11).
7 In GS 1 Nietzsche complains that moral preachers believe that 'an individual is always an individual, something first, last and tremendous; for him there are no species, sums or zeroes'. For Nietzsche, by contrast, there are species, sums and zeroes: that is, in the biological *agon* some individuals have numerical value (favourable variations), while others are zeroes (unfavourable variations).

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11

Nietzsche's Great Politics of the Event[1]

Vanessa Lemm

Before fate strikes us, we should lead it like a child and – show it the whip: but once it has struck us, then we should seek to love it

Friedrich Nietzsche, KSA 10: 5[1]194 10.208

1 Introduction: Small and great politics of the event

In the reception of Nietzsche's work, his conception of the great human being is typically associated with an aristocratic politics of domination, where the majority of people sacrifice themselves for the sake of the production and flourishing of a few great men. On this view, the great human being features as the highest aim of an aristocratic politics of culture. In this chapter, I intend to question this interpretation and propose to investigate Nietzsche's vision of the great human being from the perspective of his conception of the event. Nietzsche's conception of the event reveals that the greatness of an event is not solely dependent on the outstanding achievements of an individual human being as in an elitist politics of culture. On the contrary, what makes a deed great is its reception by a people. Only those deeds which are received and carried forth by a people or a culture, and hence by a broad democratic basis, are deeds worthy of the name 'event.' Furthermore, greatness as Nietzsche conceives it de-centres the modern idea of human agency for events occur through something that goes beyond the human and it is this 'beyond' that allows an event to take on the features of eternity. Rather than ascribing this 'beyond' to a source of transcendence outside or above life, Nietzsche ascribes it to the immanent power of life as a whole. On this view, an event occurs when an individual deed reflects the whole becoming of life, or, in other words, when a deed is a 'reflection and brief abstract of the whole world' (SE 7).

An overview of the term *Ereignis* (event) shows that throughout Nietzsche's work the great human being is inseparably tied to the dimension of the event. In Nietzsche's published works as well as in the *Nachlass*, one can distinguish between several different uses of the term *Ereignis*. In his early work, Nietzsche refers to events mainly in the context of his analysis of music, when for example he describes 'truly Dionysian music' as an 'intuitive event' ('*anschauliches Ereigniss*,' BT 17; KSA 1.109) or, when he discusses, at times with a critical undertone, Wagnerian music as an event,

the '*Bayreuther Ereigniss*' (MD 1; KSA 1.893 and RWB 1; KSA 1.431). Furthermore, Nietzsche recurs to the term *Ereignis* in the context of his analysis of historiography and in relation to the historical event (HL 1 and HL 6) as well as in reference to historical turning points such as the German Reformation (SE 6), romanticism ('romantic pessimism, the last great event in the fate (*Schicksal*) of our culture') (GS 370, 3.618), the Renaissance ('a tremendous event,' 'an event without meaning, a great *in vain*,' A 61, 6.250), and, more importantly, the Greeks, who for him constitute the first event of culture (*Kulturereigniss*) in the history of humanity (TI 'Skirmishes' 47; see also KSA 8: 5[135], 8.86). The occurrence of these historical events is significant for Nietzsche because they gave rise to great human beings.

This use of the term event in relation to the emergence of human greatness is also reflected in Nietzsche's description of his encounter with Schopenhauer: he claims to have experienced Schopenhauer's writings as an event (*Ereigniss*) (SE 2; KSA 1.341). He also holds that what inspired Goethe to rethink the problem of the human being in *Faust* were neither the political events of the Wars of Liberation nor the French Revolution, but 'Napoleon' (BGE 244) qua great human being and event. Nietzsche praises Schopenhauer, Goethe, Hegel and Heine as European events (TI 'Skirmishes' 21 6.125; on Goethe see also TI 'Skirmishes' 49 6.151), in contrast to, e.g. Schumann, merely a German event (BGE 245; KSA 5.187). Finally, Nietzsche describes himself and his own philosophical insights, discoveries and books as events: in the *Gay Science* Nietzsche recalls the 'death of God' as a 'tremendous (*ungeheuerliches*) event' (GS 125 and 343); in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, he claims the rise of 'bad conscience' to be the 'greatest event in the history of the sick soul' (GM III: 20; KSA 5.387) and in *Ecce Homo* he refers back to his *Thus spoke Zarathustra* as an event (EH: 'Destiny' 8 6.373) as well as to *Morgenröthe* and his discovery of the essence of Christian morality (EH: 'Books' 10 6.313). The coincidence of thought and event in the figure of the philosopher culminates with his claim to be the dynamite that brings forth the beginning of a new epoch of great politics (EH: 'Destiny' 1). In a letter to Brandes from December 1888 he writes: 'We have just entered into great politics, even into very great politics. . . . I am preparing an event which, in all likelihood, will break history into two halves, to the point that one will need a new calendar, with 1888 as Year One.' Given that Nietzsche's understanding of the great human being is intimately tied up with his conception of the event, as evidence by the textual occurrence of the terms, I suggest that in order to understand Nietzsche's idea of greatness one must begin from an analysis of the event.

An analysis of Nietzsche's conception of the event shows that he understands the great human being politically, provided that one also further distinguish between a small and a great politics of the event. Nietzsche's conception of the event is political insofar as it denotes the task of cultivating great human beings. Here the question is what kind of political and social organization is required to further the cultivation of great human beings, and through them to produce events. On my account, one can distinguish between two different politics of the event in Nietzsche. On the one hand, there is what could be called a small politics ('*kleine Politik*') understood as a politics of the state or of moral and religious institutions which seek to actively intervene in the historical course of time in view of producing conditions which

favour the production of human greatness. On the other hand, we can distinguish in Nietzsche what could be called a great politics ('*große Politik*') of the event which is not inscribed into the programme of a particular political or moral institution. Rather it is a 'politics' beyond politics and morality whose aim is not to change the course of time but rather to affirm the eternity of the moment. At the centre of this great 'politics' stands Nietzsche's conception of *amor fati*: to love and embrace the great human being as a reflection of the eternal value and worth of the whole becoming of life (human and other).

This distinction between small politics and great politics as presented above also lies at the heart of Alain Badiou's reading of Nietzsche as an event in philosophy. According to Badiou, Nietzsche distinguishes between politics and what he calls 'archi-politics.' The latter 'intends to revolutionize the whole of humanity at a more radical level than that of the calculations of politics' (Badiou 2001, p. 4). Badiou correctly argues that small and great politics reflect a different relation between philosophy and politics. For him archi-politics does not 'designate the traditional philosophical task of finding a foundation for politics,' rather 'the philosophical act is itself an archi-political act' meaning that the figure of the philosopher (or the great human being) in Nietzsche becomes inseparable from the occurrence of an event that impacts all dimensions of human life (social, moral and political).

But small and great politics do not only reflect a different relation between philosophy and politics; they are also based on two different conceptions of time and on two different conceptions of human agency. At the heart of small politics stands the belief that the rise of great human beings is inherently a historical, and thus, contingent matter; hence the task of transforming contingency into necessity, of turning the occurrence of great human beings into an inevitable event. We are here dealing with an active politics of liberation which seeks to change the course of history through the provocation of an event which gives it a new direction and a new aim. At the centre of this politics stands the belief in the freedom of the human agent and in her capacity to make history, that is, her capacity to turn contingency into an event (necessity). It should be noted that under this paradigm the idea of freedom prevails over necessity, since necessity is the outcome of human action, it is itself contingent and hence subject to future change within a conception of human action as historical through and through.

The problem with small politics is that the events it produces lack greatness and fail to have a true impact on their time. Nietzsche typically describes small politics as a noisy affair that simulates an effect where in fact 'very little had happened' as in *Thus spoke Zarathustra*'s 'On Great Events.' Also with respect to the question of freedom, Nietzsche rejects the view that a purely political event, such as for example the French Revolution, can resolve an existential problem of this kind (SE 4). In brief, small politics produces events that are not of eternal value and significance.

Throughout his writing career, Nietzsche seems to have been torn between the idea of eternity and the idea of history. While he confirms over and over again that life is entirely historical, he nevertheless does not want to give up on the idea of eternity. But how can we think eternity in immanent terms? Great politics and its conception of the event may provide an answer to the question of how an event inscribed in the

history of the human species (immanence) can become eternal or take on the features of eternity.

In contrast to small politics, great politics is a passive-receptive politics situated beyond the historical course of time. From its perspective, the great human being qua event is a reflection of the whole becoming of life, and thus lies beyond the measure of any individual or collective human action. Here, the challenge is not that of turning contingency into necessity but rather of loving and embracing the necessity of the whole. On this account, the human being is necessary through and through, and only this knowledge of necessity can ultimately be liberating. *Amor fati* is liberating because it reinstalls the innocence of becoming, the fact that so called human action is no different from the growth of a plant or of a tree and hence inherently necessary and innocent in its becoming. Rather than striving towards a better future, great politics strives towards the affirmation of every moment and every being as part and parcel of the whole becoming of life in its eternity.

The perspective of the whole (which is what 'great politics' denotes) reveals that the idea of historical change is merely an illusion to which small politics must adhere because it is structured by the belief that human action can change the course of time. Instead, great politics reflects the knowledge that nothing ever truly changes and that all is eternally the same. According to Nietzsche, the vision of the whole is a liberating and elevating vision for it shows that as a part of the whole every being takes on eternal value and worth, or, in other words, that what seems to be historically contingent has in fact the imprint of eternity.

Finally, there is another reason why small politics fails to attain greatness and have an (eternal) impact on its time, namely, it lacks a democratic basis. Its vision of the great human being qua event is too aristocratic. Investigating Nietzsche's conception of the great human being from the perspective of the event reveals that the latter is not based on an aristocratic politics of domination, for, on the contrary, Nietzsche considers the deeds of the great human being to be entirely dependent on their reception (by a people or a time). Accordingly, it is noteworthy that Nietzsche's great politics of the event, rather than being merely elitist – as what one might expect at first sight given its being structured around the idea of great human being – also contains a democratic element.

Nietzsche introduces his discussion of *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* with some reflections on the nature of the event. For an event to attain greatness, two things have to come together: greatness of spirit (*Sinn*) in those who accomplish it and greatness of spirit (*Sinn*) in those who experience it. Whenever one acts, one must always have in view this correspondence between 'deed and receptivity (*Sich-Entsprechen von That und Empfänglichkeit*)'; and whoever gives must see to it that they find recipients adequate to the meaning of their gifts (RWB 1; KSA 1.431).[2] If an individual deed fails to attain greatness this is because the individual must have been in error as to its necessity at precisely that time: 'he failed to take correct aim and chance (*Zufall*) became master over him, whereas to be great and to possess a clear grasp of necessity have always belonged strictly together' (RWB 1; KSA 1.431, trans. R. J. Hollingdale). For Nietzsche, the historical agent qua great human being must 'possess a clear grasp of necessity,' that is, she must be able to determine the right moment for her action in order for her

deed to produce an event. But, moreover, and more importantly, these deeds need to be received, that is, embraced and affirmed by a people. Here, necessity is not the result of human action as in the conception of small politics. Rather necessity is the reflection of a whole where an individual deed encounters the affirmation of a people. Whereas the deed of the great human being reflects an aristocratic aspect of small politics, the reception of the deed by a people reflects the democratic basis of great politics: without the latter no deed can take on greatness and the true value of eternity. In what follows, I will trace the different features of small and great politics of the event in Nietzsche in three recurrent figures in his philosophy: the historical agent, the genius and the philosopher. I seek to show that true greatness requires 'great politics' in contrast to small politics which at best helps prepare its happening.

2 The historical agent: Eternalizing the historical becoming of life

In the 'Second Untimely Consideration,' Nietzsche sheds light on the occurrence of great events from two different perspectives: the perspective of the historical and the perspective of the suprahistorical.[3] These two perspectives echo in many ways the distinction between small and great politics of the event I have introduced above. These two perspectives can be exemplified with the help of a note from the *Nachlass*, from the same period of time (Summer–Fall 1873):

> In principle everyone is satisfied when the day is over. To take every day so seriously that the next day one is already setting historical investigations under way is laughable. Because this would deprive of effect the main teaching that each day gives, namely, "life has to be atoned for [*abzuleiden*]" "life is penance [*Busse*]". The main point with regard to the overall evaluation [*Gesammtschätzung*] of life is that no event can teach anything essentially new and someone who lived a few thousand years ago can be as wise as someone who is instructed by the history of these two thousand years. For the human being who *atones* for existence, history means nothing: he finds everywhere the same problem that is shown by each day. But history does mean something for the *active one*, for the *unwise*, who still has everything to hope for, who is not resigned, who fights on – he needs history as an exemplar of what one can achieve, of how one can be revered, but above all as a *temple of glory*. History has an exemplary and strengthening effect. (KSA 7: 29[39] 7.641)

The above citation nicely illustrates an early formulation of the two conceptions of time found in Nietzsche: on the one hand, there is the idea of the historical comparable to the perspective of small politics, where history pertains to the man of action who conceives human life as historical through and through and as coming with the task of continuously producing new, future life on the basis of past life. On this account, the course of time is in the hands of the historical agent who is incessantly called upon to give her time a new historical direction.[4] On the other hand, the passage above refers to

the perspective of wisdom comparable to that of great politics according to which time is eternal and hence every moment of life contains in itself the past, present and future of life. On this account, every day and every moment is experienced as a reflection of the whole becoming of the totality of life. Nietzsche refers to this point of view as a suprahistorical (*überhistorisch*), perhaps metaphysical, perspective because it denies the historicity of life and with it the possibility of the becoming of the new. Historical becoming appears to be superfluous in the light of the eternal return of each and every moment of life (HL 2).

Although Nietzsche rejects the suprahistorical perspective as life denying, this does not lead him to simply embrace the historical perspective on life. On the contrary, he claims that when asked whether they would like to relive the past 10 or 20 years, both the historical and the suprahistorical man would answer No.[5] The suprahistorical man would answer No for he sees no salvation in the process and for him the world is finished and reaches its finality at each and every moment (HL 1; KSA 1.255). By contrast, the historical man would answer No for he believes that the meaning of existence will come progressively to light in the course of its historical development: he believes that the next 20 years will be better than the last 20 years (HL 1; KSA 1.255).

Against both the historical and the suprahistorical positions, Nietzsche claims the following view: he shares with the suprahistorical position its insight into the origin of every event, namely, the blindness and injustice in the soul of him who acts. From this vantage point of radical immanence, the historical event, and with it history as such, rests on what he refers to as an 'unhistorical atmosphere':

> It is the condition in which one is the least capable of being just [*ungerechteste Zustand von der Welt*]; narrow-minded, ungrateful towards the past, blind to danger, deaf to warnings, one is a little vortex of life in a dead sea of darkness and oblivion: and yet this condition – unhistorical, anti-historical through and through – is the womb not only of every unjust but just deed too; and no painter will paint his picture, no general achieve his victory, no people attains its freedom without having first desired and striven for it in an unhistorical atmosphere that as that described. (HL 1; KSA 1.253–4)

The perspective of the suprahistorical allows one to see that the great deed arises from this atmosphere of the unhistorical where the actor succumbs to a violent passion and unmeasured love (*Überschwung der Liebe*) for her deed. It is a state of complete oblivion and frantic disorientation where all values lose their meaning and where 'memory revolves unwearyingly in a circle and yet is too weak and too weary to take a leap out of this circle' (HL 1; KSA 1.253–4). The historical agent is like the animal which is caught in the moment as in a circle of time. However, this perspective of the suprahistorical as representative of eternity is also a perspective of radical immanence which in many ways prepares Nietzsche's future vision of the eternal return of the same.

Despite their agreement on the unhistorical ground of all historical action, Nietzsche holds against the suprahistorical perspective its denial of life as becoming. In accordance with the historical perspective, the task of the historical agent is to break out of the circle of time in view of a new beginning. The human being becomes human

by employing the past for the purposes of life, and re-introducing into history that which has been done and is gone ('*aus dem Geschehenen wieder Geschichte zu machen*') (HL 1; KSA 1.253).

To sum it up, in the 'Second Untimely Consideration,' Nietzsche recurs to two different elements in his conception of the event: the power to affirm the eternity of the moment (suprahistorical) and the power to transform past into future life (historical). Both culminate in his vision of great historical events as constituting a chain of higher human beings who produce an eternal effect by advancing the ennobling elevation of the whole of humanity:

> That the great moments in the struggle of the human individual [*Kampfe der Einzelnen*] constitute a chain, that this chain unites humankind across the millenia [*Höhenzug der Menschheit durch Jahrtausende*] like a range of human mountain peaks, that the summit of such a long-ago moment shall be for me still living, bright and great – that is the fundamental idea of the faith in humanity which finds expression in the demand for a *monumental* history. (HL 2; KSA 1.259)

For Nietzsche, the great human being instantiates the totality of becoming, or, as he writes in a note from the late *Nachlass*, through the great human being we see how far humanity as a whole has advanced so far (WP 881).

But, the question remains how do these great events come about, or, how can they be produced? In the 'Second Untimely Consideration,' Nietzsche holds that the monumental, that is, the great historical event reflected in the eternal value of the struggle of the individual human being for the greatness of humanity, is made possible by a series of favourable conditions. The great human being qua event requires a 'certain soil and a certain climate' to grow and when they are estranged from their 'mother soil' they degenerate into 'weeds' (HL 2; KSA 264–5). It requires a genuine need (*Bedürfnis*) and desire (*reine Neigung*) for the production of greatness on the part of the individual and those who recognize greatness but cannot produce it are such degenerated plants (*Unkraut*). The fact that Nietzsche repeatedly recurs to metaphors of growing plants, climate and soil as images for the education and cultivation of great human beings has been pointed out by several interpreters and need not be further emphasized here.[6] However, I would like to question whether we are in fact dealing with a metaphor, or whether the analogy between the education of the great individual and the cultivation of plants and soil is meant as a literal comparison. In this case, the education of the individual would require knowledge of necessity, that is, of the actual constellation of things that give rise to great human beings. Possessing a clear grasp of necessity, as one of the elements implicated in the occurrence of an event, would then amount to more than just determining the right moment for the accomplishment of one's deed, requiring instead knowledge of the conditions under which great individuals can both grow and be received. In *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche refers to this series of conditions under the name of freedom. In order to gain a better understanding of the relation between freedom and necessity underlying the production of great individuals qua events in Nietzsche's early work, I suggest taking a closer look at his conception of the genius and the philosopher in this text.

3 The genius and the philosopher in *Schopenhauer as Educator*: Turning freedom (Becoming) into necessity (Being)

In *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche treats the question of the production of great human beings qua events through the question of the education and cultivation of the individual's singularity. On this account, as I have argued elsewhere, the figure of the genius reflects both the individual's higher potential for continuous self-overcoming through the realization of her singularity and the human species' higher potential for elevation as a whole through the production of great human beings (Lemm 2007). In both cases, freedom figures as a necessary condition for the realization of genius. At the beginning of the text, Nietzsche introduces the task of education in terms of liberation: 'your educators can only be your liberators' (SE 1; KSA 1.341). Liberation does not imply imposing a form on life but rather freeing the individual from all those forms, here represented by public opinion, religion, morality, the national state, etc., which obstruct the becoming of individual genius, the growth of its unique and singular form. Further on, we learn that the production of philosophical genius, as for example in the case of Schopenhauer and of the Greeks, calls for freedom, that 'wonderful and perilous element,' which is here understood as 'free manliness of character, early knowledge of mankind, no scholarly education, no narrow patriotism, no necessity for bread-winning, no ties with the state' (SE 8; KSA 1.411). For the sake of freedom as the true growing ground of the great human being, Nietzsche even calls for an active 'struggle for culture,' that is, 'a struggle on behalf of culture and hostility towards those influences, habits, laws and institutions in which he fails to recognize this goal: which is the production of genius' (SE 6; KSA 1.386).

Whether with respect to the individual or the philosophical genius, freedom in both cases is conceived of as a task: 'a heavy debt which can be discharged only by means of great deeds' (SE 8; KSA 1.412). Nietzsche rejects the modern idea of freedom as freedom of desire: for him, on the contrary, freedom always goes hand in hand with a duty. In the case of the individual, freedom means the responsibility to create and live according to its own laws and standards (SE 1); and, in the case of the philosopher, freedom means the responsibility of imitating and perfecting nature. Whereas the former presupposes self-knowledge, the latter requires knowledge of (the laws of) nature (SE 1). Interestingly, already in the early Nietzsche the possibility of self-creation and self-legislation is inseparable from (self)-knowledge, just as in the *Gay Science* 335 'Hoch die Physik' where Nietzsche claims that those who want to become self-creators and self-legislators need knowledge of 'all that is lawful and necessary in the world' (GS 335).[7]

Just like small politics, neither education as liberation nor the struggle for culture can guarantee that the philosophical or artistic genius will actually have an impact on its time and produce an eternal effect, that is, take on the form of an event. They may provide the conditions for the becoming of genius and make their time more receptive to the emergence of genius, but it is not within the power of small politics to actually make an event occur. Nietzsche regrets that '[i]t often seems as though an artist and

especially a philosopher only chances to exist in his age, as a hermit or a wanderer who has lost his way and been left behind. Just think of the true greatness of Schopenhauer– and then how absurdly small his effect has been' (SE 7; KSA 406). For genius to actually become an event of eternal significance and worth, the recipients of genius, be it an individual, a people or a culture, must fully embrace and affirm the meaning of genius. Here, genius is understood as the embodiment of a destiny deeply inscribed in the life of an individual, a people or a culture. From the perspective of destiny, genius is not contingent and becomes under favourable circumstances, it can neither be produced nor fought for, for it is necessary and always already given.

This idea of genius as a necessity is also introduced at the beginning of *Schopenhauer as Educator*, when Nietzsche presents each individual's genius, that is, singularity, as something that happens to the individual, as a unique and irreducible trait distinguishing each and every individual. Singularity or genius are in this sense reflections of necessity, a destiny to which the individual must succumb: 'In his heart every man knows quite well that, being unique, he will be in the world only once and that no imaginable chance will for a second time gather together into a unity so strangely variegated an assortment as he is' (SE 1; KSA 1337). Nietzsche conceives of the relation between the great human being (genius) and its time (culture or people) in a similar fashion. Here, it is the great human being which instantiates the destiny (*Schicksal*) of a culture or people (NL 11 26[75]; KSA 11.168). This idea culminates in Nietzsche's declaration of himself as the destiny of philosophy and humanity.[8]

In the case of the individual, assuming genius as an expression of destiny and necessity means affirming and loving one's self as *what one is* (singular/genius). The individual needs to look at herself from the perspective of the artists 'who dare to show us *the human being as it is*, uniquely itself to every last movement of his muscles, more, that in being thus strictly consistent in uniqueness he is beautiful, and worth regarding, and in no way tedious' (SE 1; KSA 1.338, my emphasis). Against the contingencies of time, Nietzsche calls the individual to 'be yourself' and recognize in herself something allotted from all eternity (SE 1). Here, the education of the self takes on a different meaning in line with the idea of great politics – no longer concerned with the active 'removal of weeds, rubble and vermin that want to attack the tender buds of the plant' – but rather with introspection into 'the true, original meaning and basic stuff of your nature' as 'something completely incapable of being educated or formed' something 'difficult of access, bound and paralyzed' (SE 1; KSA 1.341). Whereas a small politics of education is a politics of negation which practices the critique of and struggle against 'what is' in the name of 'what shall be,' a great politics of education is a politics of *amor fati*: a politics of affirmation and love of what is always already given.[9]

In this second politics of the event, the task for the individual is to 'know its self' rather than to 'become its self.' It is a politics of being rather than one of becoming, where the event is pushed forward by the necessity of the past rather than pulled towards the future by what shall become. It is a politics that instantiates the knowledge of the past, in contrast to a politics which projects the vision of its future becoming. It is noteworthy that in his later work, Nietzsche refers to this idea of knowledge of the past as 'inheritance (*Erbe*)': the knowledge that one embodies (TI 'Skirmishes' 47 and also 44). The idea of 'inheritance' should not be misunderstood as an element of

a racial or racist politics, rather, 'inheritance' points to the affirmation of what one is (great politics) in contrast to the aspiration towards what one is yet to become (small politics).

In the case of the philosopher, Nietzsche puts forth a similar point of view. Genius in the philosopher exemplifies the latter's pure and loving eyes upon things. Genius 'cannot immerse himself too deeply in them' in contraposition to a philosophy which appears as knowledge of the history of philosophy and which is for a philosopher who affirms and embraces genius, the 'most repugnant and inappropriate occupation,' 'grubbing around in countless strange and perverse opinions' (SE 8; KSA 1.416). The philosopher's desire to immerse herself in being reflects her love for the eternal and suprahistorical exemplified by the experience of the irreducible singularity of each and every moment she lives:

> He who lets concepts, opinions, past events, books, step between himself and things – he, that is to say, who is in the broadest sense born for history – will never have an immediate perception of things [*zum ersten Mal sehen*] and will never be an immediately perceived thing himself [*ein solches erstmalig gesehenes Ding*]; but both these conditions belong together in the philosopher, because most of the instruction he receives he has to acquire out of himself [*aus sich nehmen*] and because he serves himself as a reflection and brief abstract of the whole world [*Abbild und Abbreviatur der ganzen Welt*]. (SE 7; KSA 1.410)

From the perspective of the philosopher to whom each and every singular being is a reflection of the whole becoming of life, being (eternity) and becoming (history), the individual and the whole, the philosopher and her time (culture) are inseparable from each other. From the perspective of the whole, philosophy is not a chance occurrence but an inevitable necessity.

The philosopher as a reflection of the whole, that is, of necessity, first occurred with the Greeks, where the whole meaning of the life of Greek culture and the Greek people was reflected in the life of their highest exemplars. Nietzsche argues that an iron necessity tied the Greek philosophers to their time. For him, only the Greeks truly justify philosophy insofar as they alone were able to answer the question of the value of life. Their answer arose from a true culture, a culture overflowing with life and perfection and it is this fullness that Nietzsche sees in the example of life offered by the philosophers in the tragic age of the Greeks who in themselves reflect a strict necessity between thought and character (PTAG 1; KSA 1.807). In modernity, such true culture and fullness of life is lacking and hence the philosopher is condemned to wander among his contemporaries like an 'unpredictable and hence frightening comet' (PTAG 1; KSA 1.809). Nietzsche believes that one day Schopenhauer (or, rather, he himself) will prove again that the philosopher embodies necessity by instantiating the whole becoming of life. For Nietzsche, Schopenhauer has demonstrated through his deeds that 'love of truth is something fearsome and mighty [*Furchtbares und Gewaltiges*]' (SE 8; KSA 1.427). He has proven with his own example of life that philosophy can become necessary again and will be so 'more and more as day succeeds day' (SE 8). However, for this to happen, for philosophy to take on again the features of a true event, what is needed is not only an active politics of education which produces the

conditions for the emergence of genius, but moreover a passive-receptive politics of culture which embraces and affirms the philosopher 'as a reflection and brief abstract of the whole world' (SE 7). Nietzsche believes that such a great politics of culture may become possible again one day through a redeeming return of and to the Greeks, of and to nature and fullness of life. However, the possibility of such a redeeming return presupposes above all love of necessity.

4 The great human being in Nietzsche's late work (BGE and TI): Loving necessity

Although it seems undeniable that Nietzsche's concern for genius and the great human being is in many ways representative of his early work, I argue that there exists a strong continuity between his early and late work, in particular *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Twilights of the Idols*. For reasons of space, I restrict my discussion of the figure of the great human being to a selection of aphorisms in the above mentioned books in view of distinguishing the different elements of what I have referred to as the two politics of the event: a politics of becoming concerned with the provision of favourable circumstances for the rise of great human beings; and a politics of being concerned with the knowledge and affirmation of necessity.

In both *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Twilights of the Idols,* Nietzsche puts forth the idea that an aristocratic commonwealth (*Gemeinwesen*), such as for example the Greek *polis* or the city-states during the Italian Renaissance, offer the true growing ground for human greatness (BGE 262 and TI 'Skirmishes' 33). What stands in the foreground in the constitution of the aristocratic commonwealth is a struggle against unfavourable circumstances. In BGE 262, Nietzsche argues that such a struggle against unfavourable circumstances requires the implementation of a strict and unconditional discipline (*Zucht*). For only the latter is capable of producing a human type, that is, a form of life able to prevail over and against the contingencies of time. Aristocratic morality produces hardness, uniformity and simplicity of form and as such secures the duration and domination of its form of life against that of others. Aristocratic morality has the power to transform contingency into necessity and thereby to provide the conditions necessary for the rise of great human beings.[10]

In "My Concept of Freedom" (TI 'Skirmishes' 38), we find a similar idea. Nietzsche advances the hypothesis that freedom is measured 'by the resistance which has to be overcome, by the effort it costs to stay *aloft*' (TI 'Skirmishes' 38) and that this resistance and the freedom that follows from it, is greatest in those who apply 'the maximum of authority and discipline' 'against themselves' (TI 'Skirmishes' 38). This is why liberal institutions fail in their attempt to produce a free type of human being for they do away with the struggle against unfavourable circumstances by institutionalizing freedom as an entitlement rather than as what can always only be fought for. The struggle against contingency or against resistances is so important for Nietzsche and cannot be done away with, for only those who truly stand in need of such a struggle, whether an individual or a species, are also those who are capable of carrying it through: '*First* principle: one must need (*nöthig*) strength, otherwise one will never have it'

(TI 'Skirmishes' 38) and 'the species must need (*nöthig*) itself as a species' (BGE 262), otherwise it cannot prevail and make itself durable. This idea reminds one of the figure of the historical agent discussed at the beginning of this chapter whose emergence requires a genuine need (*Bedürfnis*) and desire (*reine Neigung*) for the production of greatness and otherwise would bring with it all the dangers Nietzsche associates with the monumental.

In BGE 262, the need of the species-preserving type is disrupted by the instantaneous, seemingly hazardous, irruption of the great human being qua event. The latter returns aristocratic society back to a state of danger and fragility: what has been patiently built over a long period of time is now subject to destruction and seems in vain. From the new perspective of the outstanding individual, the values of the former aristocratic discipline no longer seem necessary and if they persisted it would only be as an archaizing taste (BGE 262). The old discipline has lost its meaning; its rule has been overcome. Accordingly, what seemed to be necessary from the perspective of aristocratic morality now turns out to be merely contingent on the conditions of existence of a particular type of human being: the 'Julius Caesar type' as in 'My Concept of Freedom' (TI 'Skirmishes' 38), or, a 'species of severe, warlike, prudently taciturn human being, closed mouthed and closely linked' as in BGE 262.[11] Neither of these two types is capable of producing an event, they merely prepare it. They do not instantiate the eternal value of the totality of life beyond human measure, but always only reflect one of its historical, human all too human, manifestations. Let us recall that according to Nietzsche, the politics of the state (or any other moral or religious institution) is incapable of producing genius (KSA 13: 19[11], 13.546–7). In the words of Zarathustra, only where the state ends begins the human being: 'there begins the song of necessity, the unique and inimitable tune' (Z 'Idol' KSA 4.61).

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the cultivation of a social or warrior type of human being is completely in vain. On the contrary, the becoming of the event is only possible on the basis of this long process of disciplining and breeding.[12] The latter builds up a 'tremendous tension' (BGE 262) without which the singular individual qua event would not be possible: for '[i]f the tension in the mass has grown too great the merest accidental stimulus suffices to call the "genius", the "deed", the great destiny, into the world' (TI 'Skirmishes' 44). Against that which has been built over a long period of time, the durable, stable and uniform type, the singular individual qua event stands out as an inevitable necessity, a destiny (*Schicksal*) that happens to humanity. From the standpoint of Nietzsche's conception of genius, the great human being is a necessity and the epoch in which they appear is accidental (TI 'Skirmishes' 44).

Furthermore, it is worth noting that in contrast to the type of human being built on moral discipline, what is active in the becoming of the event exceeds morality. The event does not take the form of individual action as for example in the fight for freedom mentioned above, or, as in a conception of action based on 'freedom of will,' an idea rejected by Nietzsche. Rather, what is active in the rise of great human beings qua events is something that goes beyond the human being's individual will, something that is inevitable and occurs by necessity. Although in BGE 262, Nietzsche describes the outbreak of cultural highpoints in terms of exploding egoisms in competition with each other, it is important to note that while he emphasizes the new visibility of the singular individual ('*Einzelne*'), he sets the term 'individual' in parenthesis, when he

speaks of the 'dangerous and uncanny point' that has been reached 'where the greater, more manifold, more comprehensive life lives beyond the old morality' (BGE 262).[13] This suggests that what gives rise to greatness is something that exceeds and goes beyond the individual's will.[14] The explosion of genius in 'My Conception of Genius' as an overflowing of power best illustrates this fatalistic idea of greatness: 'He flows out, he overflows, he uses himself up, he does not spare himself – with inevitability, fatefully, involuntarily, as a river's bursting its banks is involuntary' (TI 'Skirmishes' 44). Greatness does not stem from the individual but rather from the power of the whole manifesting itself through and despite the individual. Greatness reveals the eternal power of the whole becoming of life by means of the individual genius who is merely its contingent and ephemeral bearer. Translated into political terms, one could say that the people are the true agent of greatness (whole) where their power and creativity finds in genius only its contingent and ephemeral messenger (see also BGE 126).

This notion of greatness articulates the perspective of the whole according to which everyone is necessary, a piece of fate: '[O]ne belongs to the whole, one *is* the whole – there exists nothing which could judge, measure, compare, condemn our being, for that would be to judge, measure, compare and condemn the whole . . . *But nothing exists apart from the whole!*' (TI 'Errors' 8). For Nietzsche, the perspective of the whole is liberating for it inscribes each and every individual as well as each and every moment in the whole of life and becoming. From this perspective everything is eternal. Furthermore, the perspective of the whole is always also the perspective of plurality best illustrated by Goethe, who took the greatest variety of irreducible life forces 'upon himself, above himself, within himself,' aspiring towards totality, towards creating himself (TI 'Skirmishes' 44). Goethe proves the 'necessity of the most hazardous (*Notwendigkeit des Zufälligsten*)' (KSA 10: 20[3]; KSA 10.588).

Interestingly, Nietzsche, just as in his description of the great human being in HL mentioned above, recurs to images of nature – the plant and its soil, the river and its banks – to describe the emergence of genius qua event.[15] Nietzsche holds that everything is necessary, that the human being is necessary through and through: 'The human being is down to his last fibre necessity and is inherently [*ganz und gar*], unfree "– if one understands by freedom the foolish claim that one can change one's essential makeup arbitrarily as one changes clothes . . ."'(PTAG 7; KSA 1.830). Furthermore, he conceives of this necessity as destiny and claims that any true culture must begin with knowledge of necessity and that this is 'decisive for the fortune (*Loos*) of nations (*Volk*) and humankind' (TI 'Skirmishes' 47). The insight that culture begins with knowledge of necessity is exemplified by the Greeks who knew that beauty is not an accident but begins with the cultivation of the body (*Leib*): 'This is why the Greeks remain the *supreme cultural event* of history – they knew, they *did* what needed to be done; Christianity, which despised the body, has up till now been humankind's greatest misfortune' (TI 'Skirmishes' 47).

When Nietzsche compares the emergence of the great deeds of the genius to the natural movements of plants or rivers, or when he claims that culture begins with knowledge of the body, he does not mean to collapse the natural or biological (nature) onto the necessary (destiny). In a note of the *Nachlass* from the end of 1876 to the summer of 1877, Nietzsche writes: 'In the stage of higher spiritual liberation one should replace everything that is contingent-natural [*Zufällig-Natürliche*] in relation

to life with something that is chosen-necessary [*Gewähltes-Nöthiges*]' (KSA 8: 23[69], 8.426). Under certain circumstance, this also means, for example, replacing one's own father or child by another one. Accordingly, Nietzsche not only rejects moral and religious conceptions of necessity based on discipline (BGE 262) or on 'free will,' as we have seen above, but also scientific or naturalistic conceptions of necessity based on facts, absolute laws (KSA 12: 9[91], 12.383; see also GS 335), or, on the erroneous ideas of causality, teleology and determinism (KSA 10: 8[19]). Against these 'great errors,' Nietzsche upholds knowledge of necessity as the ultimate source of liberation. Knowledge of necessity frees up the human being's creative potential by undoing their anthropocentric, human all too human, projections on (human) life and nature. Knowledge of necessity liberates the human being from both the scientific as well as the moral and religious conceptions of nature and necessity that have been imposed on the human species throughout the process of its so-called civilization.

Nietzsche hopes that through this new knowledge of necessity the human being will again adopt a perspective of radical immanence which allows them to love and embrace life and nature as fullness and affirm it as a source of freedom and creativity. From this new perspective, freedom and necessity are not opposites that exclude each other but rather necessity turns out to be freedom itself (Z 'Of New and Old Tablets' 2). Necessity as the highest form of freedom reaches completion in the figure of the artist, for they know very well 'that precisely when they no longer do anything "voluntarily" but do everything of necessity, their feeling of freedom, subtlety, full power, of creative placing, disposing, and forming reaches its peak – in short, that necessity and "freedom of the will" then become one in them' (BGE 213; see also RWB 9 and 11).

From the perspective of the knowledge of necessity, freedom is no longer conceived of as something one has or conquers over time but rather something that occurs always only momentarily, or at the turning point of history (as in BGE 262). Knowledge of necessity then reveals freedom as the 'calamitous (*verhängnisvoll*) simultaneity (*Zugleich*) of spring and fall,' as something that perishes the moment it emerges, something that can neither be provided for nor secured over time, but needs to be affirmed and embraced in the moment (BGE 262). It is thanks to the affirmation and love of the moment in its relation to the whole of becoming that freedom can be experienced as an event of eternal value and significance. For Nietzsche, it is again Goethe who best represents this idea of freedom as *amor fati*:

> A spirit thus emancipated [*freigewordener*] stands in the midst of the universe with a joyful and trusting fatalism, in the *faith* that only what is separate and individual [*Einzelne*] may be rejected [*verwerflich*], that in the whole [*Ganzen*] everything is redeemed and affirmed – *he no longer denies*. . . But such a faith is the highest of all possible faiths: I have baptized it with the name *Dionysos*. (TI "Skirmishes" 49; see also KSA 13: 16[32], 13.492 and TI 'Errors' 8; KSA 6.96)

5 Conclusion

In conclusion I wish to briefly recapitulate why Nietzsche's great politics of the event qua cultivation of the great human being does not mean an elitist politics of

domination. The reason is that when the production of greatness is made dependent on small politics, that is, on an idea of culture carried forth by the state or other moral or religious institutions, this politics takes on the form of a politics of domination which fails to reflect a whole where individual greatness (aristocratic) meets the receptive affirmation of a people or a culture (democratic).[16] Instead, wholeness is brought forth by a different idea of culture, one that is associated with great politics where politics is archipolitical as Badiou points out, a politics beyond politics. What distinguishes this great politics is that on its account events are not political but philosophical in character. This explains why the philosopher plays such an important role in Nietzsche's conception of great politics as the spiritualization of (small) politics. Badiou refers to this interrelation between event and philosophy under the name of 'anti-philosophy' meaning that philosophy qua event can neither be foundational in a political or moral sense nor can it be bear the burden of proof or demonstration. Philosophy becomes entirely absorbed by the act of philosophy qua event and hence meaning is produced in a singular way under the name of the individual philosopher or great human being. According to Badiou, philosophy thus understood means the inevitable collapse of philosophy into madness. Anti-philosophy cannot ultimately withstand the return of small politics and of philosophy as the systematic pursuit of truth. In this view, the role of anti-philosophy is to warn philosophy against becoming a religion, against identifying truth with meaning. Likewise the construction of the truth of the anti-philosophical meaning requires 'the unavoidable necessity of politics,' 'a politics . . . that is content with being faithful to a few new possibilities' (Badiou 2001, p. 9). Badiou does not believe that the anti-philosophical event can encounter as such the affirmation of a people or a culture but rather this connection between the event and a people or a culture is precisely the work of small politics and systematic philosophy. Thereby Badiou discounts the connection between democracy and eternity, or, in other words, the relation that great politics establishes between the whole of life and becoming and the whole of a culture and a people.

Notes

1 An earlier and shorter version of this chapter has been published in Spanish as 'La política del acontecimiento en Nietzsche' in *Política y acontecimiento*, Miguel Vatter and Miguel Ruiz Stull (eds), Santiago: Fondo de cultura económica 2011, pp. 169–92. The article has since undergone major revisions. I thank Herman W. Siemens, Keith Ansell-Pearson and Miguel Vatter for their comments. Versions of this chapter were presented at the Macquarie University and Deakin University Philosophy Seminars as well as at the Congreso Nacional de la Asociación Chilena de Filosofía (Concepción 2011). I thank the audiences for their comments and suggestions.

2 On the relation between gift-giving and time in the *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, see also Shapiro 1991, pp. 13–52 and Lemm 2009, ch. 4.

3 On the historical and suprahistorical perspective in Nietzsche, see also Gerhard 1988, pp. 133–62.

4 This conception of time is in many ways comparable to what Deleuze refers to as the age of heroes (Deleuze 1994, pp. 91ff).
5 It is interesting to note that already for the young Nietzsche the affirmation of the eternal return, here in form of the question of whether one would be willing to relive the last 10 or 20 years, functions as a test for the selection of a higher point of view on life.
6 For two examples see Wotling (1995, especially pp. 273–96) and Blondel (1991).
7 On the relation between law and creativity, see Berkowitz 2005 and 2006, pp. 155–69.
8 For an exegesis of the first aphorism of the last chapter of *Ecce Homo* (EH: 'Destiny' 1), see Stegmaier 2008, pp. 62–113.
9 On the problem of how the unconditional and total affirmation of life (Yes-saying) identified with the concept of *amor fati* can be thought together with the negative practice of total critique (No-Saying) in a coherent way, see Siemens 2009, pp. 182–206. Siemens distinguishes between No-saying which is narrated by Nietzsche from the perspective of the antagonist or warrior and exhibits an intentional state of negation driven by the impulse to transform the status quo or prevail, and Yes-saying which is narrated from a standpoint that abstracts from this or any subject position within struggle and reflects a standpoint between subjects. He argues that the relational standpoint of affirmation does not stand in contradiction to the subject-position of the antagonist, but rather that the former is a necessary condition of the latter. On this account, taking on the stance of critique in Nietzsche presupposes the affirmation of reality as conflict and opposition. I agree with Siemens on the distinction between the subject position and the relational position insofar as they reflect in many ways what I have been referring to as the perspective of the individual and of the whole, of becoming and of being, of the historical and the suprahistorical, of freedom and of necessity, etc. However, I do not agree with his suggestion, that *all* the passages that like the passage on 'great politics', describing the task of *Umwertung* as a transformative philosophical project are narrated by Nietzsche from the standpoint of the subject of *Umwertung*, and his self-understanding, as a free and intentional agent (Siemens 2009, p. 203).
10 For an another example, see also Nietzsche's account on the emergence of the sovereign individual based on moral discipline which transforms the human being into something necessary, regular, uniform etc. (GM II: 1–3).
11 Accordingly, 'necessary' in the context of the breeding and disciplining of a particular type of being, simply means 'true for us [Wahrheit für uns]', das 'that which allows us to exist [*Dasein-uns-Ermöglichende*]' based on experience, *something* deeply inbred and so old that 'a new way of thought [*Umdenken*]' has become impossible (KSA 9: 11[286] 9.550). On the different meanings of necessity in Nietzsche, especially in relation to laws of nature, see also Siemens 2010.
12 For a discussion of the economical bases of the event (culture), see Lemm 2009 (ch. 3) and Sedgwick 2007.
13 For the same reason, I believe, 'genius' and 'deed' are also set in quotation marks in TI 'Skirmishes' 44 cited above.
14 On Nietzsche's conception of activity in TI, especially in opposition to the concepts of active-reactive in GM, see Brusotti 2010.
15 See also Nietzsche's depiction of the philosopher and his ideas as a growing tree bound up by necessity (GM 'Preface' 2).
16 On both the aristocratic and the democratic elements in Nietzsche's politics of culture, see Lemm 2007 and 2011.

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12

Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Advent of 'Great Politics'

Daniel Conway

> *We shall have wars like there have never been, but* not *between nations,* not *between classes: everything will be tossed about into the air. . .*[1]
>
> Friedrich Nietzsche, (draft) letter to Georg Brandes in December of 1888

My aim in this chapter is to elucidate the relationship between Nietzsche's avowed immoralism and his alleged contribution to the inauguration of the era of 'great politics.' As he indicates in *Ecce Homo*, or so I propose to show, he is an immoralist not simply in the sense that he denies the validity and efficacy of Christian morality, but also in the sense that he does so in the name of morality itself. As an immoralist, that is, Nietzsche asserts himself as a particular kind of moralist – in particular, one who may turn the authority and power of morality against itself. Owing to the unique conditions of his historical situation, moreover, this 'first immoralist' presents himself as belonging, potentially, to the *last* generation of moralists. Under his direction, the historically dominant regime of morality will have no choice but to pronounce itself immoral and, therefore, ripe for destruction and collapse. Indeed, Nietzsche's goal as an immoralist is to deliver and enact the final, self-consuming decree of morality – its decree against itself.

This characterization of Nietzsche's immoralism positions us in turn to understand why he claims to have contributed to the inauguration of the era of 'great politics.' As morality suffers shipwreck, the business of politics will become 'great' in the sense that its practitioners may and will proceed unfettered by traditional constraints. Especially when compared to nineteenth-century European politics, 'great politics' is likely to be global, trans-national, geopolitical, and, perhaps, apocalyptic.[2] As Nietzsche correctly foresaw, the warfare of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has been and remains broadly ideological in nature, with the future of the earth hanging in the balance.[3] He claimed to welcome this outcome, despite its collateral disruptions,[4] especially inasmuch as humanity might avail itself thereby of the opportunity to undertake a 'revaluation of all values.' In this sense, then, we may think of the era of 'great politics' as delivering humankind to that fateful 'day of decision,' whereupon the continued existence of a wounded, wayward species finally might be determined.

In pronouncing morality itself to be immoral, finally, Nietzsche does not mean to exempt himself from this indictment.[5] The most recent stage in the development of morality has positioned him (*qua* immoralist) to understand – and to affirm – that *all* practitioners of morality, including him, are implicated in an enterprise that is unsustainable, irreparably nihilistic, and nearing exhaustion in any event. The simple aim of his opposition – namely, to disclose the full truth of 'Christian morality' – is thus meant to exploit the unique conditions of his historical situation, such that his simple act of truth telling might trigger a collapse of world-historical significance.

1 The era of 'great politics'

> Only since I came on the scene has there been *great politics* on earth. (EH: 'Destiny' 1)

Thus wrote Nietzsche in 1888, in the first section of the final chapter of his *Ecce Homo*, a book in which he offers to explain, among other things, *why he is a destiny* [*Schicksal*]. He proceeds here under the compulsion of urgency, owing both to his professed need to introduce himself to his likely readers and to the general failure thus far of his readers to ask him, much less to understand, what he is up to. At this juncture, of course, he alone appreciates the tactical role that this book is meant to play in cultivating a sympathetic readership for his *next* book, which was supposed to have been *The Antichrist(ian)*.[6] Whether real or contrived, however, the urgency that drives him in *Ecce Homo* contributes to the drama he wishes to build in this, the final instalment in his campaign to influence his best readers' reception of his 'good books.'

Remarkably, however, Nietzsche has very little to say in *Ecce Homo* about his role in the dawning of the era of 'great politics.' Upon recommending himself as an improbably sturdy vessel of truth, he proceeds to explain that

> [W]hen the truth squares up to the lie of millennia, we will have upheavals, a spasm of earthquakes, a removal of mountain and valley such as have never been dreamed of. (EH: 'destiny' 1)

Having aroused our curiosity with this seemingly incongruous biblical flourish, he issues a more concrete and timely warning:

> The notion of politics will then completely dissolve into a spiritual war [*Geisterkrieg*], and all configurations of power from the old society will be exploded—they are all based on a lie: there will be wars such as there have never yet been on earth. (EH: 'destiny' 1)[7]

Apparently, that is, the 'terrifying' truth that he harbours will expose the grand lie on which these unnamed 'configurations of power' trade for their continued authority and viability. But how are we to understand the stipulated relationship between his practice of truth telling and the detonations that are to follow?

Nietzsche's correspondence from the period offers additional context and clarification. In a letter to Paul Deussen on 26 November 1888, he proclaims himself a

dealer of lightning strikes, while boasting of 'the power to alter the *calculation of time*.'[8] Later that year, in a draft letter to Georg Brandes, he reveals the extent of his designs on world domination:

> Since [*The Antichrist*] is a *deathblow to Christianity*, it is in the cards that the single international power that possesses an instinctive interest in the nullification of Christianity is the *Jews*. . . . Consequently, we must secure for ourselves all the decisive power of this race in Europe and America—moreover, such a movement requires enormous capital. . . . All in all, the officer corps will share our instinct that it is in the highest degree *ignoble, cowardly, impure,* to be a Christian; one invariably carries away this judgment from my "Antichrist.". . . Concerning the Kaiser, I know the art of handling such brown idiots: that makes an officer who has turned out well lose his moderation.[9]

Granted, this is only a draft of a letter, which was neither posted nor received. It was furthermore intended for Brandes, whom Nietzsche was generally keen to impress. Still, the sentiments conveyed in this draft are noteworthy, both for the details they reveal and for their consistency with his less hysterical characterizations of his envisioned contributions to the era of 'great politics.'[10]

Here as elsewhere, for example, he describes *The Antichrist(ian)* as delivering a 'deathblow' to Christianity, whose collapse will create the geopolitical power vacuum that he proposes to exploit. Here, moreover, he reveals his understanding of how, and on whom, *The Antichrist(ian)* is supposed to produce its intended effect. Those readers who share in the 'aristocratic' sensibilities that (supposedly) join Nietzsche and Brandes will understand that Christianity is now unworthy of their continued allegiance. The best among his contemporaries, including the military officers,[11] will recoil instinctively from Christianity and seek the alternative guidance that he and his fellow immoralists will be quick to offer them. Similarly, he expects the Jews among his readers to be intrigued by, and perhaps grateful for, the opportunity to make their home in the post-Christian, philo-Semitic Europe he envisions on their behalf.[12] Here, finally, we learn that his preferred imagery for this supposed contribution to the era of 'great politics,' typically involving the disposition of artillery, dynamite and other concussive materiel, is actually meant to characterize a relatively quiet explosion of light and truth.[13] The noise and heat of actual detonations, he believed, would come later.

Even if these clues were to pan out, however, Nietzsche's reference to his contribution to the era of 'great politics' would remain obscure. How is it possible, we might wonder, that the twilight epoch of late modernity, emaciated by pandemic decay and crippled by a pervasive 'weakness of will' (BGE 212), could launch the era of 'great politics'? Are we meant to understand that Nietzsche commands a secret reserve of volitional resources, such that he is exempt from the terms of his otherwise comprehensive critique of late modern European culture?[14]

While the rhetoric of *Ecce Homo* bears witness to the superlative standing that Nietzsche arrogates to himself vis-à-vis his enervated contemporaries, the autobiographical narrative of the book records a more modest reckoning of his supposed accomplishments. Like Odysseus, we learn, Nietzsche is 'clever' in the sense

of displaying pluck in the face of a daunting procession of obstacles and reversals. Not so much a hero as a survivor, the subject of *Ecce Homo* receives precious little credit for his active role in becoming what he is.[15] Although he draws our attention to his 'choice' [*Wahl*] of those 'little' things' – for example, recreation, nutrition, place, climate, etc. – that have contributed to his seemingly modest triumphs of self-overcoming (EH: 'Clever' 10),[16] he also concedes that he arrived at this 'choice' only via trial and (nearly fatal) error, under the pressure exerted against him by the material and physiological conditions of his precarious existence. While demonstrably superior to the vast majority of his late modern contemporaries – on this point, he simply will not budge – he is careful not to claim for himself redemptive powers that would be incongruent with the general conditions of the late modern epoch. He is, as he admits, a *décadent*, even as he 'opposes' the decadence that afflicts him (EH: 'Wise' 2). As such, any contribution he might claim to make to the dawning of the era of 'great politics' must be understood as a product of the decadent culture he represents and the decadent condition he embodies.

That *he* would be in a position to inaugurate the era of 'great politics' is an irony that was not entirely lost on Nietzsche. Indeed, his wish to re-introduce himself in his Foreword to *Ecce Homo* arises in part from his understanding that even his best and most loyal readers will find this claim difficult to comprehend. In particular, he realizes, it behoves him to explain why the seemingly simple act of telling the truth about Christianity should have the far-reaching and devastating consequences that he brazenly claims for it. After all, he is not the first critic of Christianity to question its authority, efficacy and legitimacy. What makes his reckoning of Christianity different from those delivered by predecessor critics, including such influential figures as Voltaire, Spinoza and Luther?

The answer, in short, has to do with the *timing* of his particular disclosure. Owing to the unique historical conditions that obtain in the aftermath of the 'death of God,' all he needs do is tell the truth about Christian morality – a task he believes he has accomplished in writing *The Antichrist(ian)* – and the rest will follow in due course. Christianity will cancel itself, morality will perish, the ascetic ideal will decline, and the late modern epoch in European culture will lurch towards a fitting conclusion. A very particular strain of narcissism thus informs the task he sets for himself in *Ecce Homo:* Although he is not a hero in any traditional sense, he is in the right place at the right time. A single word from him, a timely disclosure, and the whole rotting edifice of late modern European culture will come crashing down.

While the timing of the disclosure is optimal, so is the unlikely hero to whom the disclosure has been entrusted, the man whom we are urged in *Ecce Homo* to behold as such. To this unusual man we now turn.

2 Nietzsche's immoralism

Immediately following his introduction of the theme of 'great politics,' Nietzsche volunteers a 'formula for a destiny like that, *which becomes man*' (EH: 'Destiny' 2).[17] Immodestly fitting himself to this 'formula,' he announces,

> I know the pleasure in *destroying* to an extent commensurate with my *power* to destroy—in both I obey my Dionysian nature, which is incapable of separating no-doing from yes-saying. I am the first *immoralist*: hence I am the *destroyer* par excellence.— (EH: 'Destiny' 2)

No monster of excess or wanton breaker of laws and tablets, Nietzsche presents himself here as an eminently 'obedient' creature. He is a destroyer, to be sure, and nothing less than morality itself has drawn his wrath. Unlike all previous destroyers, however, he engages in 'no-doing' *only* in accordance with his 'yes-saying.' Like the birds and beasts of prey whose cruel artistry he idealizes, he now destroys only in concert with the rhythms and cadence of Life itself.[18] As we shall see, in fact, this 'first *immoralist*' is uniquely prepared to destroy *all* regimes of moral authority, including his own, and to discredit *all* moralists, including himself, in the process. He is the '*destroyer* par excellence,' that is, because he does not spare himself in the performance of his service to Life.

In his writings prior to 1888, Nietzsche tended to employ the terms *immoralist* and *immoralism* to identify the practice, whether his own or another's, of using morality to secure specific political objectives, which were meant to contribute in turn to the cultural elevation of the people or nation in question.[19] As such, this practice has been understood to confirm the achievement, by him or some other law-giver, of a critical distance from the application and authority of the morality in question.[20] It is this critical distance, he believed, that allows the canny law-giver to employ patently *immoral* means, for example, the *pia fraus*, to establish or deploy morality in the service of noble political ends (TI 7: 5). In declaring himself an *immoralist*, that is, he meant to pledge his allegiance to the political realism espoused and practised by Thucydides, Plato, Manu, Machiavelli, and others.[21]

In his writings from 1888, however, Nietzsche endeavoured to adapt the terms *immoralist* and *immoralism* to the unique historical situation that made possible his envisioned contribution to the dawning of the era of 'great politics.'[22] While renewing his allegiance to the tradition and practice of political realism,[23] that is, he also meant to acknowledge, and vowed to exploit, his placement within the specific moral tradition he sought to challenge. As he notes, for example, he is the first immoralist who need not resort to *lies* to advance his larger aims (WP 749). This means, among other things, that he need not divide his office and energies in catering simultaneously to multiple audiences. Capitalizing on the unique opportunity afforded to him in the aftermath of the 'death of God,' he is free to deploy the truth with impunity as he single-handedly confronts the 'lies of millennia' (EH: 'Destiny' 1).

As an immoralist, Nietzsche now understands that he may presume to speak with the full authority of Christian morality. He may do so, moreover, not simply as a ruse or stratagem, but as an expression of the moral legacy this is rightfully his – and, more importantly, strategically advantageous – to pursue. In short, the writings from 1888 reflect his understanding that *he* may lay legitimate claim to the mantle and authority of morality, even as he attempts to steer it towards exhaustion and collapse. As an immoralist, that is, he both opposes morality *and* trades upon the limited validity of its residual authority. While predecessor immoralists have vowed to use morality,

Nietzsche vows to use it up, expending its authority once and for all.[24] In short, as we shall see, he believes that in *him*, morality has inadvertently produced its *other*, in excess of its intended aims and acknowledged norms.

3 The self-overcoming of morality

Having introduced himself as the '*first* immoralist' (EH: 'destiny' 2), Nietzsche proceeds to explain how he came to earn this *nom de guerre*. In response to a question that no one yet has bothered to ask him, he offers the following:

> The self-overcoming [*Selbstüberwindung*] of morality, out of truthfulness, the self-overcoming [*Selbstüberwindung*] of the moralist into his opposite [*Gegensatz*]— into *me*—that is what the name of Zarathustra means in my mouth. (EH: 'Destiny' 3)

We will return in due course to consider the 'meaning' of the 'name of Zarathustra.' For now, let us attend to the twin processes of self-overcoming reported in this passage.

On the one hand, this passage describes a process of self-overcoming that is familiar to us from the conclusion of GM. As Nietzsche explains there, morality will 'perish' when its representatives finally question the truthfulness of its own operation as an emanation of the will to truth (GM III: 27). On the other hand, this passage also describes a related process of self-overcoming that may strike Nietzsche's readers as potentially unfamiliar and perhaps surprising: He identifies *himself* as the 'opposite' of the moralist, that is, as the product of the 'self-overcoming of the moralist.' In him, apparently, morality has produced its other, which is why *Ecce Homo* adopts the celebratory tone of a (re)birth announcement.

He thus presents his seemingly insignificant labours of personal self-overcoming as integral to the self-overcoming of morality. Indeed, we are now in a position to understand why he is so concerned in *Ecce Homo* to draw our attention to the 'little' things that contributed to his realization of his destiny (EH: 'Clever' 10).[25] That he has managed to re-orient himself to 'the basic concerns of life itself' confirms that he already has begun the process of 'relearning' what is important and what is not (EH: 'clever' 10). Fortunately for us, that is, the narrative of his seemingly unremarkable life in fact essays a 'formula' for the 'revaluation of all values' that he soon will direct us to undertake (EH: 'clever' 10). Having already completed this 'act of supreme self-examination' in his own right, he is confident that he is now qualified to conduct his best readers towards a similar moment of self-reckoning and a similar achievement of self-overcoming (EH: 'Destiny' 1).

How is such a transformation possible? Aside from any doubts that we may harbour about Nietzsche himself, we may wonder more generally how such a claim could be advanced, much less defended. In order to appreciate the nature of the achievement he claims for himself, let us review his understanding of his relationship to the enterprise of morality, which, in his writings from 1888, he tends to reduce to its most recent

(and odious) incarnations. Why he comes to favour this hostile, reductive approach to morality, as opposed to the more balanced approach that characterizes his earlier writings, will become clearer as we proceed.

For the most part, Nietzsche observes, morality has had the effect of weakening, diminishing and domesticating human beings, remaking them in the sordid, self-loathing image of those wretched moralists in whom the authority of morality typically resides (TI 5:6). For the most part, moreover, the measures that moralists have employed to achieve this end have wrought the intended effects of dividing human beings against themselves, suborning suspicion of the instincts and contempt for the body, and enforcing compulsory uniformity and homogeneity. In a precious few cases, however, the moralists also have succeeded, albeit unwittingly, in producing their *other* – known to us now as the *immoralist* – who, having survived the levelling assault of morality, turns his power and authority *against* the moralists. Inadvertently coaxed into being by the overly stringent application of the moralists' prescriptions, the immoralist thus represents the *self-overcoming* (i.e. the natural outgrowth and development) of morality into its other.

As is often the case with Nietzsche's 'just-so' accounts of contingent historical development,[26] strictures designed to enforce uniformity and homogeneity eventually produce multiform exceptions – I prefer the term *excessions* – to the norms they legislate. So it was, for example, that the rampaging beasts of prey unknowingly created in their hapless victims the fertile conditions of the 'bad conscience' (GM II: 17). So it was, indeed, that the ancient creditor-debtor relationship, rigged from the outset to favour creditors and abuse debtors, eventually yielded credible promise-keepers (GM II: 5). So it was, moreover, that the sterile, normalizing apparatus of the 'morality of mores' actually produced the ripe fruit of the 'sovereign individual' (GM II: 2). And, finally, so it was that the ascetic priest unwittingly nurtured the development of the new 'philosopher,' who, we are promised, will depose the priest in due course (GM III: 10).

The crucial point here, I take it, is that these examples of excession all partake of the logic of self-overcoming [*Selbstüberwindung*], for which Nietzsche favours a model of filial (or familial) antagonism. It is by dint of their enactment of this antagonism, moreover, that the aforementioned excessions secure for themselves the fully individuated status they naturally seek to establish. In this light, in fact, the immoralist appears as a newly emergent species of moralist, different in degree but not in kind from those moralists who contributed, inadvertently, to his emergence. As the *other* of the moralist, the immoralist is neither estranged from the authority of morality nor unfamiliar with its general aims and methods. We should not be surprised, in fact, if the immoralist were to exhibit a strong family resemblance to those moralists whom he seeks to supplant.

The persistence of this family resemblance is on display, and self-consciously so, throughout Nietzsche's writings from 1888. In *Ecce Homo*, as we have seen, he does not attempt to prosecute his case against Christianity by simply expressing an alternative preference, which he is either unable or unwilling to defend. Nor does he promote an anarchic free-for-all in which rival ideals of human flourishing amorally contend for preponderance in a lawless cosmos. Rather, he builds and presses a distinctly *moral*

case against a historically specific cadre of regnant moralists. When, for example, he condemns the 'good' man's practice of *lying*, especially inasmuch as it offends 'the *truth*' and beggars 'the *future*' (EH: 'destiny' 4), he clearly means to object to this practice on recognizably *moral* grounds. Despite his avowed familiarity with various forms of non- or extra-moral objections to morality, that is, he consistently expresses his 'denial' [*Verneinung*] of morality in the form of a moral objection (EH: 'Destiny' 4). While it is true that he uniquely appeals to a newly ascendant standard of truthfulness, which reflects the recently negotiated *rapprochement* between morality and science, this appeal nevertheless essays a moral objection.

That the author of *The Antichrist(ian)* feels entitled to the soapbox of the moralist is evident on virtually every page of this pugnacious book, even (or especially) as he rails against morality itself. Here too Nietzsche delivers an unmistakably moral critique of Christian morality, objecting in particular, as he did in the final chapter of *Ecce Homo*, to the systemic mendaciousness of Christianity.[27] From its fabricated account of the life and death of Jesus to its denigration of the natural world, Christianity has consolidated its secular authority by weaving a formidable network of lies. These lies are presented as objectionable, we might note, neither on aesthetic nor theological grounds, but on moral grounds.[28] They are affronts to the truth, which Nietzsche readily acknowledges as the reigning, albeit last, moral ideal (and, in fact, as the successor to the recently deceased God of Christianity). It is on the strength of this ideal, in fact, that he feels justified in amplifying the angry, strident tone of this book. No longer obliged to attack Christianity obliquely, tentatively, surreptitiously, or from afar, he takes full advantage of his position at the forefront of a historically specific shape of morality that values truthfulness above all else.

Finally, he concludes *The Antichrist(ian)* with a summary condemnation that is difficult to interpret as anything but moral in tone, ferocity and authority:

> I call Christianity the one great curse, the one great innermost corruption, the one great instinct of revenge, for which no means is poisonous, stealthy, subterranean, *small* enough—I call it the one immortal blemish of humankind. (A 62)

This condemnation is noteworthy, of course, for its tactical reprise of the evaluation offered by Christianity of the natural world it confronted and found wanting. Responding in kind, Nietzsche pronounces a curse upon the curse that Christianity originally deigned to cast upon the shabby world of becoming.

This condemnation is warranted, moreover, only in the event that the lies disseminated by Christianity are regarded as objectionable. In itself, to be sure, the practice of lying merits no automatic rebuke, and certainly not by Nietzsche, who often praises lying as ingredient to the prerogative of the law-giver and the genius of the artist. While it may be tempting to assume that he means to appeal here to an extra-moral basis for his condemnation, no such appeal (and no such basis) is evident in *The Antichrist(ian)*. The crime perpetrated by Christianity, like the condemnation Nietzsche proffers, is presented as moral in nature. And this is as it should be, for the moral authority available to Nietzsche is alone sufficient to motivate the intensity of criticism that he wishes to muster. In this light, in fact, his recourse in the writings of 1888 to the authority of morality appears as neither a mistake requiring correction,

nor a relapse in need of forgiveness, nor a tell-tale symptom of incipient madness. He concludes his case against morality by acceding to the strongest critical standpoint available to him – namely, as the self-appointed arbiter of morality in its loftiest, most recently articulated, and *final* historical form.[29]

In sum: The world that emerges from the calamitous era of 'great politics' may find itself resting comfortably beyond the reach of morality. But the world that Nietzsche discloses to the readers of *Ecce Homo* awaits one final moral judgement, which he was pleased to deliver, in the form of a condemnation and curse, in *The Antichrist(ian)*. This latter book ends with the proposal to 'reckon time' from the '*last day*' of Christianity, which, he offered, tempting fate one time too many, might as well be '*today*' – meaning, presumably, 30 September 1888.[30]

4 'Christian truthfulness' vs. 'Christian morality'

Nietzsche's own moral authority is newly viable, he explains, as a result of the larger developments that have shaped the late modern epoch in European history. As a consequence of its mutually formative confrontation with modern science, Christianity has reconstituted itself in several discernible permutations. In a well-known passage, he explains that

> Christianity *as a dogma* was destroyed by its own morality; in the same way Christianity *as morality* must now perish too: we stand on the threshold of *this* event. After Christian truthfulness has drawn one inference after another, it must end by drawing its *most striking inference*, its inference *against* itself; this will happen, however, when it poses the question "*what is the meaning of all will to truth*"? (GM III: 27)

Of particular relevance to our present discussion is the current, ongoing stage in this development, wherein 'Christian truthfulness' has emerged to pose what Nietzsche takes to be a fatal challenge to 'Christian morality.'

What he has in mind here, apparently, is a bifurcation internal to Christianity itself, wherein truth-seeking, science-friendly Christians have stepped forward to question the authority, integrity and standing of the ruling cadre of truth-challenged, unscholarly Christian moralists. Appealing in particular to the newly ascendant standard of truthfulness, this former group declares the latter group to be immoral and, therefore, generally unfit to represent Christianity. At the same time, or so we are meant to understand, the former group asserts its own alternative claim to the mantle and authority of morality. As we shall see, in fact, it is this challenge that Nietzsche has in mind when, in *Twilight* and *Ecce Homo*, he envisions the epoch-concluding clash between *immoralists* (i.e. agents of 'Christian truthfulness') and *moralists* (i.e. proponents of 'Christian morality').[31]

For precisely this reason, in fact, the particulars of the charge levelled by the agents of 'Christian truthfulness' against the proponents of 'Christian morality' are worth noting. In *Ecce Homo* and *The Antichrist(ian),* as we have seen, Nietzsche is primarily concerned to expose Christianity as pathologically mendacious. At the conclusion of

GM, however, his analysis is more subtle and incisive: Like all expressions of the will to truth, Christian morality rests on an unacknowledged *faith* in the inestimable value of truth (GM III: 24).[32] Prior to the 'death of God,' this unacknowledged tenet of faith may have remained either unnoticed or unobjectionable. In the wake of the 'death of God,' however, Nietzsche is neither inclined nor constrained to exclude the will to truth from the scope of his interrogation. Applying the newly enshrined standard of Christian truthfulness, he finds Christian morality to be *untruthful* and, therefore, *immoral*. In telling the truth about the moralists, that is, Nietzsche (*qua* immoralist) intends to bring the full force and authority of morality to bear against them. In doing so, moreover, he also means to celebrate the eclipse of their heyday as the acknowledged arbiters of morality.

As presented thus far, of course, Nietzsche's critique of contemporary morality might be dismissed as rehearsing a very old story: An upstart moralist challenges a regnant cadre of moralists for the mantle and authority of morality. Declaring the regnant moralists to be *immoral*, this upstart calls for morality to transform itself in accordance with a new, supposedly higher standard of human flourishing. As we have seen, however, Nietzsche's particular contribution to the era of 'great politics' is meant to precipitate a decisive break from the past. How, then, does he propose to graft a new twist (and divergent conclusion) onto this very old story?

The struggle between the immoralists and the moralists is not simply a matter of providing morality with yet another new shape and direction as it wends its way through the modern period of European history. As we have seen, Nietzsche raises the stakes considerably by placing this struggle in the context of a much larger process of historical development, which, he warns, is approaching an inevitable, and tumultuous, conclusion. In the passage cited above, we recall, he observes that 'All great things bring about their own destruction through an act of self-cancellation [*Selbstaufhebung*]' (GM III: 27).[33] Presumably, the 'great thing' in question here is Christianity, which Nietzsche describes as nearing the completion of its development through three successive stages and three corresponding regimes of authority. As it approaches the conclusion of this third stage, Christianity is now poised to undertake the 'act of self-cancellation' that will ensure its demise, just as the 'law of life' has ordained.

This means, however, that the ascendant regime of 'Christian truthfulness' must perish along with (or soon after) the deposed regime of 'Christian morality.' As Nietzsche explains, 'Christian truthfulness . . . must end by drawing its *most striking inference*, its inference *against* itself' (GM III: 27). This it will do, he elaborates, 'when it poses the question: "*what is the meaning of all will to truth?*"' (GM III: 27), which is a question, as we shall see, whose answer *no* form of morality can survive. What Nietzsche apparently means here is that the regime of 'Christian truthfulness' will both triumph *and* end once its agents have managed to steer the will to truth into a fateful confrontation with itself.[34] Having authorized an interrogation of all extant forms and expressions of moral authority, the will to truth eventually must call itself to order, fixing its withering gaze on its own newly disclosed claim to moral authority. According to Nietzsche, the will to truth is in fact the 'kernel' of the ascetic ideal (GM III: 27), which he also reveals as the animating core of both modern science and the regime of Christian truthfulness (GM III: 25). As such, the will to truth expresses

itself as a recognizably moral authority, especially inasmuch as it presents the pursuit and possession of truth as justifying the suffering and meaninglessness of the human condition.[35]

Prior to the 'death of God,' apparently, the will to truth operated under the burden of the fairly restrictive constraints imposed upon the scope and sweep of its activities. So long as its interrogations remained carefully scripted, strictly circumscribed, and closely monitored, the will to truth was allowed to propel the advance of both Christianity and science. In the wake of the 'death of God,' however, the will to truth has exceeded the containment structures that previously had limited its reach and mobility. It now roams freely across the overlapping domains of Christian morality and modern science, demanding adherence to ever more stringent standards of truthfulness wherever it turns its gaze.[36]

Rather than attempt to recapture the fugitive will to truth, or limit the reach of its errant inquisitions, Nietzsche resolves instead to hijack the will to truth and direct its programme of interrogation. (In so doing, as we shall see, he both complements and completes the destructive mission entrusted to Zarathustra.) As a willing agent of 'Christian truthfulness,' he goads the will to truth to assume its purest and most powerful form.[37] He does so, moreover, by wrangling *his own* will to truth – for it now resides *only* in him and those kindred idealists whom he targets for inclusion in his 'we' (GM III: 24, 27) – into the service of his immoralism. As we have seen, he hopes thereby to steer the will to truth into an unprecedented confrontation with itself, that is, with its own shaky commitment to truthfulness. He is sufficiently impressed by the progress of 'Christian truthfulness,' in fact, that he anticipates the occasion of 'its *most striking inference*, its inference *against* itself' (GM III: 27). When it completes this final inference, he believes, *both* regimes – 'Christian morality' and 'Christian truthfulness' – will fall.

5 Nietzsche's self-overcoming

Nietzsche's role is revealed, finally, in the context of his attempt to explain what the 'name of Zarathustra' now means to him (EH: 'Destiny' 3).[38] That he authorized Zarathustra to put right the calamity wrought by the historical Zoroaster is well known. That he regarded the appearance of his *Zarathustra* as a decisive moment in the self-overcoming of morality is also well known. What we now learn, however, is that *he* was changed in the process of birthing his *Zarathustra*. By naming Zarathustra and recording his speeches, or so it turns out, Nietzsche unwittingly inserted himself into a process of self-overcoming that precipitated his transformation into the 'opposite' [*Gegensatz*] of the moralist, that is, the immoralist.

As we have seen, Nietzsche's anticipation of the endgame sequence of Christianity places an unusual emphasis on the uniquely destructive properties of *truthfulness* as a moral ideal.[39] These properties have only recently come to light, and they remain largely unknown outside the intimate circle that Nietzsche describes around himself and his unknown mates. In this respect, in fact, he claims to follow none other than Zarathustra, who alone 'posits truthfulness [*Wahrhaftigkeit*] as the highest virtue'

(EH: 'Destiny' 4). His claim here, apparently, is that the practice of truthfulness has only recently been liberated from the constraints associated with the dogmas, superstitions, customs and taboos that have been variously observed by scholars and priests alike. Although both modern science and Christianity have claimed to place a premium on the value of truth, neither has suffered itself to be called to defend the depth and reach of its own commitment to truthfulness. In particular, as we have seen, neither has endeavoured hitherto to determine the genuine value of truth. Prior to the 'death of God,' that is, the quest for truth had been conducted with relative caution and restraint, thereby restricting the development of the practice of truthfulness and the cultivation of the virtue of truth telling.

In the aftermath of the 'death of God,' however, the quest for truth has received new life and a renewed charter. As science and religion have exchanged their ages-old antagonism for a merger of sorts, truthfulness has been promoted to the rank and status of a cardinal virtue. According to Nietzsche, the demand for truth now may be pressed to a degree previously unthinkable, and in precincts formerly declared off limits. As the ascendant regime of 'Christian truthfulness' has gained currency and authority, in fact, it has positioned its most intrepid representatives to ask after the truthfulness of the will to truth (GM III: 27). Once this question is properly raised – at the right time, by the appropriate inquisitors, directed towards the relevant historical authorities, and so on – we may prepare ourselves to witness the end of the deposed regime of 'Christian morality,' of the (briefly) triumphant regime of 'Christian truthfulness,' of the 'great thing' known as Christianity, *and,* perhaps, of morality itself.

In GM, as we have seen, Nietzsche tends to characterize 'Christian truthfulness,' the 'will to truth' and so on, as if they were autonomous, trans-personal agencies, fully capable of acting on and with one another to accomplish the inevitable downfall of Christianity. In other words, he proceeds there as if individual human beings will (or need) play no significant agential role in the larger *Schauspiel* that he foresees for the next several centuries of European modernity (GM III: 27). To a certain extent, of course, this is precisely the impression he wishes to make at the conclusion of GM, for he is concerned there to chart the larger historical processes at work in the transformation of those 'great things,' for example, Christianity, that have infused European culture with its distinctive meaning and direction.[40]

In *Ecce Homo*, however, his aims are different. Having identified the larger historical forces responsible for the self-cancellation of Christianity, he now must account for the agency of those who will trigger the particular endgame sequence that he envisions for late modern European culture. In particular, he believes, *someone* must speak for Christian truthfulness when it finally gathers itself to inquire after the value of the will to truth. Similarly, *someone* must volunteer to host the process of intensive self-reflection that will prompt the will to truth to become 'conscious of itself as a *problem*' (GM III: 27). In the former case, or so it would appear, that someone is Nietzsche himself, especially inasmuch as he lives up to his destiny as the 'first immoralist.'[41] In the latter case, or so we might speculate, that someone, as yet unknown to us, will belong to the target audience of *Ecce Homo* and *The Antichrist(ian)*.

Here it becomes clear, in fact, that the seemingly impersonal historical process described at the conclusion of GM depends for its prescribed completion on the

intimately personal process that is associated with 'the self-overcoming of the moralist.' In *Ecce Homo*, that is, Nietzsche not only identifies an important role for human agency in the anticipated endgame sequence of Christianity, but also claims this role for himself. In becoming the 'opposite' (or other) of the moralist, he has positioned himself to deliver the final inference on the part of the regime of 'Christian truthfulness,' which, as we have seen, is 'its inference *against* itself' (GM III: 27). Once he has succeeded in this venture, the larger, impersonal process of self-overcoming will proceed towards its own inevitable completion. Christian morality will fall, and the entire enterprise of morality will collapse in due course.

We are finally in a position, in fact, to articulate the following division of labour between Zarathustra and Nietzsche. While it may be the case that 'Zarathustra's doctrine, and his alone, posits truthfulness [*Wahrhaftigkeit*] as the highest virtue' (EH: 'Destiny' 3), Zarathustra is prevented by his historical-fictional status from actually *speaking* the truth that will seal the demise of morality. (In this respect, it is both sensible and appropriate that he defers his final *Untergang* until such a time as his 'children' arrive on the scene to receive his blessing (Z IV: 20).) This latter task thus falls to Nietzsche, who improbably survived the birth of his *Zarathustra* and now bears the marks of a (discarded) vessel of divine inspiration (EH: 'Books,' z 3–5). In both *Ecce Homo* and *The Antichrist(ian)*, in fact, he aims to expand the practice of Zarathustran truthfulness beyond its known limits, such that his truth telling will exceed (and eventually shatter) the very frame in which it is situated – namely, that of morality itself.

He will do so, as we have seen, by making productive, novel and outrageous use of his *probity* [*Redlichkeit*], which he identifies as the sole virtue remaining to those who count themselves among the immoralists (BGE 227).[42] Having pushed the Zarathustran practice of truthfulness to (and beyond) its very limits, he and his fellow immoralists are now poised to disclose those 'terrible' truths that heretofore have defied articulation and expression. This is why it is so important for Nietzsche to claim that *he* – and not Zarathustra – is the vessel in which 'the self-overcoming of the moralist' has been accomplished. Indeed, it is his 'lot' to speak the truth that will break history in two (EH: 'Destiny' 1). In him, that is, the *Wahrhaftigkeit* of Zarathustra must give way, in real time, to the *Redlichkeit* of the immoralist.[43]

6 The will to truth

If this were the full extent of Nietzsche's challenge to Christian morality, however, he would still be entangled in a very old – and very Christian – story of altruistic self-sacrifice. If he simply means to offer himself for the sins of his fellow moralists, thereby permitting morality to be reborn under the halo of a second innocence, his supposed challenge to Christian morality would hardly count as either radical or devastating.[44] Nor would it illuminate the decisive contrast – *Dionysus vs. The Crucified One* – with which he concludes *Ecce Homo*.

As it turns out, however, Nietzsche cannot tell the truth about Christianity without *also* exposing the truth about morality itself. As it also turns out, the truth about morality is every bit as lethal as the truth about Christianity. Just as the disclosed truth

of 'Christian morality' is supposed to seal the destruction of that 'great thing' known as *Christianity*, so too will it ensure the demise of that even greater thing known as *morality*.[45] It will do so, we are now in a position to understand, because truthfulness makes for an unstable, self-consuming moral ideal. Simply put, no historical shape or form of morality can accommodate this ideal in the pure form that Nietzsche goads it to assume. In order to see why this is so, let us return, briefly, to his extremely compressed account in GM of the endgame sequence in the *Selbstaufhebung* of Christianity.

When the will to truth finally confronts itself, Nietzsche believes, it will have no choice but to expose and denounce its unacknowledged reliance on a blind, unquestioned *faith* in the inestimable value of truth.[46] (In doing so, of course, the will to truth will expend its final quantum of moral authority, discrediting itself as it subverts the regimes of 'Christian morality' and 'Christian truthfulness.') As it turns to confront itself, moreover, the will to truth will concentrate its power and shed all remaining vestiges of its previous disguises, pretexts, husks and integuments. For the first time in thousands of years, that is, (some) human beings will be in a position to behold the will to truth as it really is, in its pure, naked, and most potent form.

In attaining this form, however, the will to truth also will reveal itself as a *will to nothingness* (GM III: 28). Heretofore masked, mantled and swaddled in myriad guises, its inconvenient truth hidden from the not-so-prying eyes of uncurious mortals, the will to truth now appears before Nietzsche as it has never before been seen: as the will never to will again. Seeded by the existential refrain – *Umsonst*! – that haunted the earliest civilized hominids, domesticated by the ancient priestly hatred of all things knightly and aristocratic, and expressed in periodic eruptions of 'death-seeking mass deliria' (GM III: 21), the will to nothingness emerges in the aftermath of the 'death of God' as a blindly anarchic destructive impulse. No longer encumbered by the cultural bulwarks that were devised to contain its wrathful expression, the will to nothingness threatens to level or disaggregate any and all expressions of order, beauty, form and nobility. This revelation in turn ensures the demise not simply of the regime of 'Christian morality,' which is the nominal and proximate target of Nietzsche's immoralism, but also of morality itself.

Rather than sponsor a genuine alternative to the 'suicidal nihilism' that tempted the earliest civilized hominids (GM III: 28), morality has perpetrated an elaborate, culturally-sponsored ruse, enrolling its adherents in a disguised programme of protracted auto-destruction. Rather than discredit or refute the wisdom of Silenus, that is, the will to truth has repackaged its pithy nihilism for popular, leisurely consumption. It has done so, Nietzsche explains, under the aegis of the ascetic ideal, which promises salvation to all those who submit themselves to a prescribed regimen of self-surveillance, self-evaluation and self-castigation. As we learn only in the final section of GM,[47] the ascetic ideal arose in response to the temptation of 'suicidal nihilism,' which had become increasingly attractive to the earliest civilized hominids as an effective treatment for the meaningless suffering they endured (GM III: 28).[48] As we are now in a position to understand, moreover, the rise of the ascetic ideal lent credence to the claims of morality to preside over projects of genuine self-improvement. That these projects have been improbably successful, endowing human beings with an untested complement of acquired capabilities, powers and virtues, is a source of the

cautious hope that Nietzsche tentatively invests in the future of humankind (or its emergent outgrowths) (GM III: 27).

Operating within the 'closed system' of the ascetic ideal (GM III: 23), morality has prescribed the laws, commandments, proscriptions and prohibitions that collectively have provided sufferers with a framework for their quest for salvation. Thus sheltered, these otherwise desperate sufferers have embarked upon arduous projects of self-improvement, which, they have believed, will redeem (or mitigate) their sinful animal origins. While pretending to renew their attachment to life, however, morality in fact has diverted their attachments to a simulacrum of life, wherein they derive a feeling of power from their efforts to damp down (and eventually extirpate) their most powerful affects. Under the guidance of morality, that is, the earliest civilized hominids learned how to exhaust their animal vitality – and, so, to end their lives – slowly, gently and meaningfully. As revealed by Nietzsche, the secret of the success of Western civilization thus lay in its subterranean nihilism, its refractory recoil from the *horror vacui* of the human will (GM III: 28).

We are now in a position to see why Nietzsche presents himself in *Ecce Homo* as opposed not only to Christian morality, but also to morality itself. As it turns out, the enterprise of morality has failed, by its own lights and standards, to promote the cause of human flourishing. It has failed, moreover, neither by accident, nor miscarriage, nor as a result of bad luck or faulty leadership. Nietzsche's full reckoning of morality reveals that it was never intended to launch humankind towards the realization of its highest aspirations. As an artifice of the ascetic priest (though of necessity misunderstood by him), morality was never meant to accomplish anything more ambitious than to nudge the sick and suffering away from the brink of suicidal nihilism. It did so, as Nietzsche explains, by distracting them from their existential suffering, focusing their attention instead on the 'deserved' suffering that arises from their unpaid debts and broken promises.

Although exotic, singular individuals have appeared on occasion, they have emerged only as indirect, unintended products of morality, in excess of its normalizing and stultifying prescriptions. As we have seen, Nietzsche (*qua* immoralist) is one such excession. As we now learn, he is also the last. Subsequent to his disclosure, or so he believes, there is no longer any point in attempting to rethink, repurpose, reboot or retool morality. (It does not follow, however, that nothing can be made of, or done with, the second nature that we have acquired as a result of our moral acculturation.[49]) As an enterprise meant to support our efforts to improve and perfect ourselves, morality is done, spent, *kaput*. All that remains to be done – ostensibly, as we have seen, by Nietzsche and his unknown mates – is to steer morality towards a conclusion that is maximally conducive to the founding of the new 'tragic age' that he dares to promise his readers (EH: bt 4).

7 Conclusion

Here it becomes clear, in fact, that Nietzsche means in *Ecce Homo* to restrict the focus of his challenge to what he elsewhere identifies as but one among many actual and

possible forms or families of morality.[50] Although he does not say so, he may mean to suggest here that the appearance of Christian morality in its most recently consolidated historical shape has allowed some critics – most notably, him – to discern and chart the larger decadent lineage to which it belongs. As the regime of 'Christian truthfulness' gains ascendancy, that is, it cannot help but empower its most intrepid agents to seek (and disclose) the heretofore hidden truth about the rogue species from which it has emerged.[51] He thus defines *morality* fairly strictly, as 'the idiosyncrasy [or idiopathy][52] *of décadents*, with the ulterior motive of revenging themselves *on life—and* succeeding' (EH: 'Destiny' 7). As we have seen, moreover, he is particularly concerned in *Ecce Homo* to situate the nominal target of his challenge, Christian morality, in a decadent lineage that he traces back to the founding labours of Zoroaster, whom he holds responsible for the 'translation of morality into the metaphysical, as strength, cause, and goal in itself' (EH: 'Destiny' 3).

Throughout his writings from 1888, in fact, Nietzsche presents himself as determined to halt the spread of an invasive species of morality that has proliferated at the expense of a formerly rich diversity of human types and kinds. Having overgrown, starved or crowded out most other species of morality, this particular species now lays exclusive, proprietary claim to the name and title of *morality*. It does so, of course, at its own expense, for it can no longer disguise its true identity from Nietzsche and his mates. Caught in the act, as it were, this invasive species is powerless to resist the direction and guidance that its most perfectly evolved specimens now propose to impart to its remaining development. Although he does not say so explicitly, Nietzsche proceeds as if morality became an apt target of scrutiny and meaningful challenge *only* in the fullness of its development, as marked by his emergence in excess of its norms and prescriptions. Having flushed morality from the nooks and shadows that sheltered its previous incarnations, Nietzsche and his mates now may compel it to assume its final – and, supposedly, self-consuming – historical form.

This means, I take it, that the subtraction (or eradication) of this invasive species should be sufficient to encourage the restoration of diverse expressions of ethical life.[53] Owing, apparently, to his most recent rebirth, Nietzsche realizes (and affirms) that Life neither needs nor desires nor favours an avenging swain.[54] In his case, in fact, Life requires nothing more than the services of a humble gardener (or vintner), who will eradicate the invasive species of morality. As a disciple of Dionysus, that is, Nietzsche is tasked only with the denial [*Verneinung*] and destruction [*Vernichtung*] of this rogue species of morality. The subsequent tasks of seeding and nurturing diverse, alternative expressions of ethical life, unrelated to the toxic lineage that Nietzsche targets for destruction, will fall to other agents, as yet unknown to us, of Life itself.[55] He thus gestures hopefully, if vaguely, to a future graced by the echoes and accents of premodern ethical life, whether that of the spectator-worthy nobility of ancient Greece or of the straight-shooting heroes of Persian antiquity.

As we have seen, finally, Nietzsche proposes to bring the full force of morality to bear against its generative source. In the aftermath of this momentous act of self-directed disclosure, moral authority will reside in no one. Once morality is finally exposed as a disguised expression of the will to nothingness, it will have exhausted itself as a viable engine of cultural advancement. Much like astrology, alchemy and phrenology before

it, morality will be relegated to a status of merely historical (or antiquarian) relevance. At such a point, or so we are promised, the survivors of morality will acknowledge that their 'old morality' was actually 'part of the *comedy*,' staged for the perverse amusement of the 'grand old eternal comic poet of our existence' (GM P7). If and when the survivors of morality arrive at this happy realization, they will have Nietzsche to thank for it. Their post-moral existence, should it come to pass, will have been made possible by the experimental, truth-telling labours that culminated in his emergence as the first immoralist.[56]

Notes

1 *Sämtliche Briefe* 8/1170, p. 500; translated by Whitlock in Montinari, p. 109.
2 Here and throughout this chapter, I follow the broad outline sketched by Jaspers, pp. 249–84. See also Strong, pp. 210–13; Bergmann, pp. 161–5; Detwiler, pp. 54–8; Ansell-Pearson, pp. 200–6; Dombowski, pp. 47–52; and Emden, pp. 299–308.
3 See Shapiro (2008), especially pp. 24–7; and Conway (2009), pp. 48–58.
4 An earlier discussion of the theme of 'great politics' hints, broadly and ominously, at the self-sacrificial fervour of the 'masses' and their subsequent manipulation at the hands of those 'great conquerors' who 'elevated' their language, if necessary, to mask the brute reality of their designs on power (D 189).
5 See also Leiter, pp. 279–81; Janaway, pp. 236–9; Owen (2007), pp. 128–9; and Loeb (2010), pp. 234–7.
6 See, for example, his letter to Heinrich Köselitz (aka Peter Gast) on 30 October 1888. *Sämtliche Briefe*, 8/1137, pp. 460–3.
7 Bergmann offers this passage as evidence that 'Nietzsche's antipolitics would conclude by drawing politics back irresistibly into his prophetic vision' (p. 164)
8 Letter to Paul Deussen on 26 November 1888; translated by Greg Whitlock in his translation of Montinari, p. 109.
9 Draft of letter to Georg Brandes in December 1888; translated by Greg Whitlock in his translation of Montinari, p. 109.
10 A notebook entry bears witness to similar delusions of geopolitical grandeur: 'The princes of Europe should consider carefully whether they can do without our support. We immoralists—we are today the only power that needs no allies in order to conquer: thus we are by far the strongest of the strong' (WP 749).
11 Nietzsche also refers to his anticipated influence over Prussian military officers in BGE 251.
12 I discuss Nietzsche's plans for the Jews in Conway (2009).
13 See Conway (1997), pp. 215–25.
14 This concern is productively explored by Strong, 287–93; Warren, pp. 6–8, 207–11; and Ansell-Pearson, pp. 221–4.
15 See Leiter, pp. 83–6.
16 See Domino, pp. 55–7.
17 Suggesting that his arrival 'on the scene' was foretold in his *Zarathustra*, he cites from the speech 'On Self-Overcoming': '*whoever wants to be a creator in good and evil . . . must first be an annihilator and shatter values. Thus does the highest evil belong to the highest good: but this latter is the creative*' (EH: 'Destiny' 1).
18 I am indebted here to Benson, pp. 175–87.

19 In one notebook entry, Nietzsche relates his immoralism to what he calls 'the grand *politics* of virtue', which he presents as the political task of legislating the table of virtues that will secure one's larger ends (WP 304). An important lesson for anyone who would learn 'how virtue is made to dominate' is that 'one automatically renounces becoming virtuous oneself' (WP 304).
20 It is on the basis of this critical distance that Nietzsche distinguishes between his 'immoralism' and the position or stance of the 'moralists'. Whereas the immoralist forbids himself the virtues that he legislates, the moralists see themselves, whether originally or over time, as willing exemplars of the virtues they legislate to others (WP 304). The suggestion here is that the moralists eventually fall captive to the virtues they legislate, thereby squandering both the freedom and the desire to deploy morality as a means to grander political ends.
21 See Emden, pp. 216–28.
22 For my understanding of Nietzsche's immoralism, I am indebted to conversations with Paul Loeb and to his unpublished essay on the topic.
23 He thus suggests that his immoralism affords him the freedom to fulfil what appears to be a straightforwardly *moral* obligation—namely, to 'inspire' if possible, but in any event not to 'corrupt' those 'innocents . . . whom life offers nothing other than their innocence' (GS 381).
24 See Staten, pp. 143–4; and Loeb (2010), pp. 238–40.
25 See Domino, pp. 58–60.
26 See Dennett, p. 461.
27 While this is by no means the sole objection he raises in *The Antichrist(ian)*, it is the objection that he makes most consistently throughout the book.
28 Similar claims about *The Antichrist(ian)* have been advanced by Shapiro, pp. 124–31; Berkowitz, pp. 100–2, 108–9; and Benson, pp. 160–3.
29 As Owen (2007) puts it, 'we are *compelled* by a reason deriving from the core of "morality" to engage in the project of re-evaluation to which Nietzsche enjoins us' (p. 129).
30 This is the date that appears above Nietzsche's name at the conclusion of his Preface to *Twilight of the Idols*, a date that he identifies as '*the day on which the First Book of the* Revaluation of All Values *was completed*' (TI P). In his (draft) letter to Georg Brandes in December 1888, Nietzsche refers to his preparations for 'an event that will very probably split history into two halves, such that we would have a new calculation of time from 1888 as the year 1' (Montinari, p. 109).
31 A similar interpretation is advanced by Owen (1995), pp. 89–93.
32 See also Ridley, pp. 97–9; Leiter, pp. 266–73; Owen, Janaway, pp. 231–5; and Hatab, pp. 153–61.
33 In translating *Selbstaufhebung* as 'self-cancelation', I follow the suggestion of Clark and Swensen, p. 117.
34 Here I follow Ridley, pp. 124–6. See also May, pp. 90–2;
35 Here I follow Ridley, pp. 100–4.
36 See also Hatab, pp. 166–8.
37 See also May, pp. 137–8.
38 The emphasis of this section is properly placed, I believe, on Nietzsche's announcement of his emergence as 'the first immoralist'. What no one has bothered yet to ask him, apparently, is what the 'name of Zarathustra' *now* means to him, that is, now that he commands the recently attained 'immoralist' perspective on display in EH. In other words, or so it seems to me, he wishes to convey the *new* insight that he has most recently gained into the meaning of his *Zarathustra*.

39 See also Ridley, pp. 124–6; May, pp. 177–80; Leiter, pp. 264–9; Owen, pp. 126–9; Janaway, pp. 229–39; and Hatab, pp. 166–71.
40 As Janaway observes, 'Nietzsche appears here as the instrument of a process that morality is inflicting upon itself' (p. 239).
41 See Ridley, pp. 124–6; Leiter, pp. 180–1; Loeb (2010), pp. 240–2; and Janaway, pp. 237–9.
42 Here I follow Owen (1995), pp. 79–82; and Owen (2007), pp. 135–7. See also Loeb (2010), pp. 208–13.
43 See Loeb (2010), pp. 234–40.
44 Along these lines, Schotten maintains that Nietzsche ultimately betrayed the revolutionary promise of his critical project, falling back instead into a familiar masculinist hope for Christian redemption (pp. 167–70).
45 Nietzsche concludes GM III: 27 by confirming that *morality* (and not simply Christian morality) 'will gradually *perish* now'.
46 For an instructive account of what this investigation might involve, see May, pp. 151–2, 163–4; Leiter, pp. 269–74; and Janaway, pp. 231–5.
47 He previews this conclusion in GM III: 1.
48 See Leiter, pp. 283–6.
49 The project of identifying productive uses of morality, focusing on the Nietzschean ideals of 'self-affirmation' and 'self-satisfaction', is taken up by Janaway, pp. 252–60.
50 For more general accounts of the conception of morality that Nietzsche seeks to challenge, see May, pp. 104–7; Leiter, pp. 78–80, 127–36; Owen (2007), pp. 129–30; and Hatab, pp. 233–42.
51 See also Owen (1995), pp. 93–7.
52 Large translation, p. 116.
53 Here I follow the suggestion advanced by May, pp. 179–80.
54 This is the lesson that Zarathustra was unable to learn. Insistent on receiving preferential treatment in exchange for his love, he jilted Life in favour of a more suitable consort, whom he called, leaving nothing to the imagination, *Eternity* (Z III: 16).
55 As Clark suggests (Clark and Swenson, pp. xvii–xxi), some version of Bernard Williams's influential distinction between 'ethics' and 'morality' – a distinction that always has struck me as Nietzschean in spirit – may be helpful in sorting out Nietzsche's challenge to morality. This is especially true, I would add, in the case of his writings from 1888.
56 Several sections of this chapter were presented at the 2012 MANCEPT workshop. My thanks to Barry Stocker and Manuel Knoll for organizing the workshop, and to all of the participants for their generous comments. I am also grateful to the students enrolled in the graduate seminar I offered in 2012 at Texas A&M University. Finally, I am pleased to thank Keith Ansell-Pearson for his incisive editorial interventions and for two decades of rich, rewarding friendship.

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13

Nietzsche, Badiou, and Grand Politics: An Antiphilosophical Reading

Bruno Bosteels

Es ist nicht genug, eine Lehre zu bringen: man muß auch noch die Menschen gewaltsam verändern, daß sie dieselbe annehmen!—Das begreift endlich Zarathustra.

Friedrich Nietzsche, Nachlaß 1882–84

1 Badiou with Klossowski?

In 1992–93 Alain Badiou dedicated his annual seminar at the École Normale Supérieure in rue d'Ulm to an in-depth analysis of Friedrich Nietzsche.[1] He tackled his subject in light of two basic questions concerning, on one hand, the status of philosophy, which in the hands of the thinker of the overman takes the form of what Badiou, following Jacques Lacan, will call antiphilosophy; and, on the other hand, the nature of politics, which in the case of Nietzsche's final works – especially the letters and notes of 1888 during the period of so-called madness in Turin – takes on the radical form of 'great' or 'grand' politics. Thus, in 'Why I am a destiny' in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche famously if also enigmatically had written: 'Starting with me, the earth will know *great politics*.'[2] And in the draft for a letter to George Brandes, from early December 1888, he continued along the same lines: 'We have just entered into great politics, even the very greatest. . . . I am preparing an event which in all likelihood will break history into two halves, even to the point that we will need a new calendar in which 1888 will be the Year 1.'[3]

The idea of studying Nietzsche's admittedly rather vague notion of *große Politik* in the context of its antiphilosophical implications for the millennial project of philosophy itself is certainly not new, nor is it entirely unheard of even in France.[4] Already in his 1969 *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, Pierre Klossowski briefly suggests the possibility of such an investigation by opening the first chapter of his book, 'The Combat against Culture,' with a posthumous fragment from Nietzsche's *Nachlaß* based on the Colli-Montinari edition, which Klossowski at the time was in the process of translating into French for Gallimard. The first part of this fragment,

which dates back to May–July 1885, asks directly about the possibility or impossibility of continuing to believe in the philosopher-type today, when whatever is great or of the highest rank perhaps cannot be known, much less judged or evaluated, without the philosopher's necessarily falling short of the task before him, either arriving too late at the scene or else becoming a mere dilettante rather than a great actor in the theatre of life:

> Is the 'philosopher' still possible today? Is the extent of what is known too great? Is it not unlikely that he will ever manage to embrace everything within his vision, all the less so the more scrupulous he is? Would it not happen *too late,* when his best time is past? Or at the very least, when he is damaged, degraded, degenerated, so that his value judgment no longer means anything? In the opposite case, he will become a *dilettante* with a thousand antennae, having lost the great pathos, his respect for himself – the good, subtle conscience. Enough – he no longer either directs or commands. If he wanted to, he would have to become a great actor, a kind of Cagliostro philosopher.[5]

To preserve the great pathos of an actor, still capable of directing and commanding life without falling for the histrionics of a Cagliostro philosopher such as a disappointed Nietzsche at this time sees in Wagner, would be an apt definition of the task of the new type of thinking that for this very reason can no longer be considered philosophical in the usual sense but might better be called antiphilosophical.

The connection to antiphilosophy is rendered explicit in the second part of the fragment from the *Nachlaß* that Klossowski reproduces at the start of his book. In this fragment Nietzsche himself in fact used the German term *unphilosophisch*, but Klossowski interestingly enough decided to translate this into French as 'antiphilosophical.' Long before Lacan would come to borrow the title of the eighteenth-century *antiphilosophes* for himself, Nietzsche thus seems to lay the groundwork for an openly antiphilosophical combat against the philosopher-type:

> What does a philosophical existence mean for us today? Isn't it almost a way of withdrawing? A kind of evasion? And for someone who lives that way, apart and in complete simplicity, is it likely that he has indicated the best path to follow for his own knowledge? Would he not have had to experiment with a hundred different ways of living to be authorized to speak of the value of life? In short, we think it is necessary to have lived in a totally 'antiphilosophical' manner, according to hitherto received notions, and certainly not as a shy man of virtue– in order to judge the great problems from lived experiences. The man with the greatest experiences, who condenses them into general conclusions: would he not have to be the most powerful man?– For a long time we have confused the Wise Man with the scientific man, and for an even longer time with the religiously exalted man.[6]

Here Nietzsche confirms that to judge or evaluate greatness requires a powerful type of antiphilosopher, at the farthest remove from all the moral, scientific and

religious types that for far too long have been confused with that of the philosopher. Only the artist-type comes close to the value of greatness that otherwise is contradicted by the traditional philosopher-type. 'The "great man" is great owing to the free play and scope of his desires and to the yet greater power that knows how to press these magnificent monsters into service,' Nietzsche wrote in a fragment of the *Nachlass* from autumn 1887, speaking of *große Mensch* and *noch größere Macht*; and increasingly, the concern of what he would call 'great' or 'grand' politics, *große Politik*, was indeed to *realize* such creative power and free play, and, what is more, to do so on the scale of humanity as a whole: 'To be capable of sacrificing innumerable beings in order to attain something with humanity. We must study the effective means by which a great man could be realized.'[7]

Although Klossowski does not pursue these themes in the same terms, it is no exaggeration to say that in the conjunction between the value of life, greatness, and the need to overturn all hitherto existing valuations and types of philosopher there lies the core of what Badiou will treat in terms of Nietzsche's antiphilosophy. It is therefore somewhat surprising to note that, just as Klossowski in his book does not bring up again the notion of the anti- or unphilosophical life, Badiou never mentions Klossowski's work in the course of his own reading of Nietzsche as an antiphilosopher. In fact, from among the extant interpretations in the vast bibliography of secondary literature on Nietzsche, Badiou in his seminar only deals in some detail with Martin Heidegger's two-volume *Nietzsche* and Gilles Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy* as well as more marginally with Michel Foucault and Sarah Kofman, whose study of *Ecce Homo,* in *Explosion I*, had just been published in France. This silence with regard to Klossowski's work, particularly his suggestion of a necessary link between antiphilosophy and grand politics is all the more surprising insofar as Badiou also shares two further interests with the author of *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*.

Like Klossowski, Badiou in terms of the selection of his corpus of Nietzsche texts not only focuses almost exclusively on the late writings leading up to the watershed year of 1888, especially via the posthumous fragments and letters that accompany the publication of *The Case of Wagner*, *The Anti-Christ*, *Ecce Homo* and *Nietzsche contra Wagner*. He also places at the centre of his investigation the final Nietzsche's overwhelming obsession with what we might call the efficacy of his own thought. In Klossowski's words: 'Thought itself must have the same *effectiveness* as what happens *outside of it* and *without it*. This type of thought, in the long run, must therefore *come to pass* as an *event*.'[8] The seeds for this obsession are already evident in the aforementioned notion that the philosopher-type, in order to be able still to direct and command, would need to have led a kind of unphilosophical life. But, more generally, the urgency with which the philosopher as antiphilosopher seeks to attain a position of creative power and command also implies an investigation into the very nature of philosophy itself, not as a doctrine or mere body of ideas but as a grand act, both in the theatrical sense and in a more sweepingly political sense of the expression. Thus, several of the familiar themes surrounding the notion of the act or the event that in more recent years we have come to associate with Badiou's particular oeuvre are already anticipated in *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*.

For example, in an 'Additional Note on Nietzsche's Semiotic,' following closely on the heels of an extraordinary reading of Nietzsche's madness in the final chapter 'Euphoria in Turin,' Klossowski writes:

> Insofar as thought turns out to be efficacious, it is not as an utterance of the intellect but as the *premeditation* of an action. In the latter case, what thought retains from the intellect is only the representation of a possible event – a (premeditated) action in a double sense. Since thought is the act of the intellect, this *act of premeditating* – which is no longer a *new* intellectual act but an act that *suspends* the intellect – seeks to produce (itself in) a *fact*. It can no longer even be referred to as a thought but as a fact that *happens* to thought, as an event that brings thought back to its own origin.[9]

This act of thinking that suspends the intellect and cannot be subsumed under the constraints of a system of concepts, for this very reason, also suspends the coherence of all hitherto existing philosophical systems. It would be an act of philosophizing that at the same time suspends all philosophy as doctrine. In this sense, the late Nietzsche during his period in Turin can be said to announce an antiphilosophical act that will transform humanity at a more profound level than the mere substitution of a new set of solutions to the same old series of philosophical problems. Only the power to enact such a radical transformation, introducing a new calendar with a before and an after into the history of humanity and of the world, would be deserving of the name politics. But, by the same token, this type of politics would more properly be named great or grand politics, in contrast to which all other forms of politics – no matter how violent or revolutionary – will turn out to have been minor, petty or inauthentic.

Whereas Klossowski discusses the obsession on Nietzsche's part with the power of his own work in terms of the relation between philosophy and paranoiac-delirious forms of combat and conspiracy, Badiou in this regard will see rather a rivalry at work in Nietzsche between philosophy and the historico-political revolution, modelled upon the French Revolution. But, beyond the obvious discrepancies in style and tenor, both of these responses to the late Nietzsche's maddening quest for the efficacy of his own act as a thinker gesture in the direction of grand politics, which both French thinkers moreover associate with the radical idea of 'breaking in two the history of humanity,' so often repeated in Nietzsche's final correspondence. 'The conspiracy had begun in *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* and would eventually be directed against the leaders of imperial Germany, which formed an obstacle to Nietzschean sovereignty. But as the idea of a conspiracy developed, his "actual" goal began to merge with the much greater project of "breaking the history of humanity in two",' Klossowski summarizes. And, about the kind of grand worries that inform the violent and euphoric state of Nietzsche's soul during the final period in Turin, he adds: 'Once disclosed, how would the content of a high tonality of the soul– namely, its depth of intensity– act upon human destiny apart from his own? Would it change the course of history? Had he not said, during this period, that its disclosure would break the history of humanity in two?'[10]

I mention Klossowski's precedent by way of introduction not out of any concern for the anxiety of influence, whether acknowledged or not, but rather so as to highlight the specificity of Badiou's approach. Since 1988 marks the year in which he published his own magnum opus *Being and Event*, to be accompanied one year later by a programmatic and if possible even more assertive *Manifesto for Philosophy*, Badiou certainly has good reasons for turning to Nietzsche's final letters and notes from exactly one century earlier. At the beginning of his 1992–93 seminar he places these reasons under three headings: a *topical* interrogation of the exact nature and status of Nietzsche's text; a *historical* interrogation of the sense in which the twentieth century might have been Nietzschean; and a *generic* interrogation centred upon the question of art in Nietzsche's texts, especially via theatre and the polemics with Wagner. More than anywhere else, it is under the first heading that Badiou in his seminar addresses the question of Nietzsche's grand politics and what it means if it is indeed the case that philosophy ought to turn into an antiphilosophy in order to break the history of humanity in two halves.

2 What is antiphilosophy?

The 1992–93 seminar on Nietzsche is only the first in a series of seminars devoted to key thinkers whom Badiou considers antiphilosophers. Thus, in 1993–94 he would follow up the discussion of Nietzsche with a seminar on Ludwig Wittgenstein, the results of which have since then been published and translated; and in 1994–95 he would do the same with a seminar on Lacanian antiphilosophy, still for the most part unpublished.[11] The book on Saint Paul, based as it is on the 1995–96 seminar, belongs to this sequence as well, insofar as Paul stands out as one of the clearest antiphilosophical voices in all of Antiquity: 'Paul is a major figure of antiphilosophy.'[12] This also explains why Badiou feels the urge to compare Paul throughout his book to the likes of Pascal, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein and Lacan.

While we certainly can find a few direct hints of the anti- or unphilosophical life in Nietzsche, as I suggested with the comparison to Klossowski, the guiding term of this investigation is clearly borrowed from Lacan. It was Lacan who, in the mid-1970s, had called himself an antiphilosopher after the example of the *antiphilosophes*, a self-applied label that historically refers to the mostly religious and conservative thinkers who resisted the arrival of rationalism, deism or materialism on the part of French Enlightenment thinkers, the so-called *philosophes*, such as Diderot, Voltaire or d'Holbach.[13] Now, just as we are faced with a paucity of references to 'grand politics' in Nietzsche's works, Lacan himself had only very few words to spare, and even then typically enigmatic or esoteric ones, to explain what he meant with his recourse to the term 'antiphilosophy' to define his own relation, or non-relation, to philosophy.[14] Given this sparseness, Badiou's purpose in returning to Lacan's suggestions for guidance in reading Nietzsche or Wittgenstein therefore also carries with it a task of formal explicitation and systematization. For a while, he even toyed with the idea of composing an entire book on the topic, but this project has not come to fruition, at least not yet.

Instead, we are left with a small number of references scattered throughout Badiou's *Manifesto for Philosophy*, *Conditions* and *Logics of Worlds* as well as more substantial essays drawn from the seminars on Nietzsche, Wittgenstein and Lacan as the three great modern antiphilosophers.

Badiou's understanding of antiphilosophy, in other words, is not limited to the otherwise already quite difficult reconstruction of Lacan's usage of the term. Instead, the category emerges as the name for a longstanding tradition of thinkers who, with regard to the dominant philosophical trends of their time, situate themselves in the strange topological position of an 'outside within,' or of an 'internal exteriority' – what Lacanians might prefer to designate with the term 'extimacy' – in an attitude that typically oscillates between distance and proximity, admiration and blame, seduction and scorn.

A minimal list of antiphilosophical thinkers for Badiou thus includes not only Saint Paul ('Basically, what gets him into difficulty in Athens is his antiphilosophy'[15]), Nietzsche ('Nietzsche assigns to philosophy the singular task of having to re-establish the question of truth in its work of rupture from meaning. Which is why I would call him a "prince" of contemporary antiphilosophy'[16]), the early Wittgenstein ('The further oeuvre—which is not really one, since Wittgenstein had the good taste not to publish or finish any of it—slides from antiphilosophy into sophistry'[17]), or Lacan ('I call a contemporary philosopher one who has the unfaltering courage to go through Lacan's antiphilosophy'[18]), but also Pascal ('Pascal, that other great figure of antiphilosophy, . . . he who explicitly opposes the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the God of the philosophers and scientists'[19]), if not already Heraclitus ('I would say from Heraclitus, who is as much the antiphilosopher to Parmenides as Pascal is to Descartes'[20]), Rousseau ('Rousseau communicates with our time (after Nietzsche, let's say) through his inflexible antiphilosophy'[21]), Kierkegaard ('The exemplary antiphilosopher that Pascal is for/against Descartes and that Rousseau is for/against Voltaire and Hume, Kierkegaard, as we know, is for/against Hegel'[22]), and perhaps Althusser ('Here we observe that the antiphilosophical act comes down to tracing a line of demarcation, as Althusser would have said in the wake of Lenin. And it is very well possible that Althusser's project, under the name of "materialist philosophy," came close to twentieth-century antiphilosophy'[23]). However, notwithstanding the impression that his lists sometimes may give, what Badiou's engagement with antiphilosophy is certainly not meant to be is a mere contribution to the history of philosophy. The point is not to draw up an alternative history of philosophy, as though it were a matter of seeking out the antiphilosopher that accompanies each and every one of the great philosophers as their shadowy double: Heraclitus to Parmenides, Saint Paul to the Athenians, Pascal to Descartes, Kierkegaard to Hegel, and so on. Rather, I would say that the usefulness of Badiou's engagement lies, on one hand, in the specific readings that the angle of antiphilosophy allows us to offer in the case of individual thinkers; and, on the other, in the efficacy of these insights when they are put to work beyond the frame of reference in which they are first developed. In many cases, this may even take us into areas of thought that we would not automatically associate with the question of where to draw the line of demarcation between philosophy and antiphilosophy.

3 Toward the antiphilosophical act

What are then some of the fundamental characteristics that would make antiphilosophy into a relatively coherent tradition in its own right? Based on his detailed readings of Nietzsche, Wittgenstein and Lacan, as well as the occasional references to Pascal, Kierkegaard or Rousseau, Badiou distinguishes a small number of basic features as the invariant core of any antiphilosophy. At least for the modern period, these invariant traits include the following:

1. the assumption that the question of being, or that of the world, is coextensive with the question of language;
2. the reduction of truth to being nothing more than a linguistic or rhetorical effect, the outcome of historically and culturally specific language games or tropes which therefore must be judged and, better yet, mocked in light of a critical-linguistic, discursive or genealogical analysis;
3. an appeal to what lies just beyond language, or rather at the upper limit of the sayable, as a domain of meaning, sense or knowledge, irreducible to any form of truth as defined in philosophy;
4. the search for a radical act in order to gain access to this domain, such as the religious leap of faith or the revolutionary breaking in two of the history of the world, whose sheer intensity would discredit in advance any systematic theoretical or conceptual elaboration;
5. the central role of the subject of enunciation in everything that is enunciated, by way of experimental forms of writing and transmission.

Of course, not all antiphilosophers share these features in their totality, or not to the same extent. Thus, whereas Nietzsche's affiliation with the sophists is quite open and explicit in his work, there are certainly many theses in Lacan's conception of truth and meaning bringing him closer to an antisophistic stance that every contemporary philosopher for Badiou would have to traverse. Even the early Wittgenstein does not deny the existence of propositional truths in the way sophists would, even if his ultimate aim is to move beyond mere propositional sense. And similar caveats no doubt would have to be introduced specific to each antiphilosopher, in terms of which traits are given primacy to the detriment of others.

The notion of the act is without a doubt the most important element in the formal characterization of any antiphilosophy, namely, the reliance on a radical gesture that alone has the force of dismantling, and occasionally overtaking, the philosophical category of truth. All antiphilosophers posit the possibility of some radical act such as Pascal's 'wager,' Kierkegaard's 'leap of faith,' Nietzsche's 'breaking in two of history,' or Lacan's own notion of the 'act,' as in the still unpublished book XV of Lacan's seminar from 1967 to 1968, precisely titled *The Psychoanalytical Act* and appropriately interrupted by the events of May'68: 'It is well-known that I introduced the psychoanalytical act, and I take it that it was not by accident that the upheaval of May should have prevented me from reaching its end.'[24] Unlike in Badiou's treatment of the 'event' with which it is sometimes hastily conflated, however, what matters in this 'act' is not its impersonal truth so much as its – cathartic or therapeutic – effect on the subject.

This decisive role of the speaking subject constitutes another feature that is typical of antiphilosophy. Indeed, the experience of traversing a radical act not only gives precedence to the personal form's effectiveness over and above the impersonal truth content, but it also seems as though this experience cannot be transmitted except in a near-autobiographical style that is inseparable from the subject of the enunciation. This is the experimental, writerly side of all antiphilosophers, present in Nietzsche's aphorisms, Kierkegaard's diaries, Lacan's seminars, and so on. Badiou explains:

> From Pascal's 'Memorial' to the inclusion, at the heart of Lacan's seminars, of his personal and institutional fate; from Rousseau's *Confessions* to 'Why I am a Destiny' by Nietzsche; from Kierkegaard and Regina's tribulations to Wittgenstein's battles with sexual and suicidal temptation, the antiphilosopher climbs in person onto the public stage to expose his thought. Why? Because as distinct from the regulated anonymity of science and in opposition to everything in philosophy that claims to speak in the name of the universal, the antiphilosophical act, which is without precedent or guarantee, has only itself and its effects to attest to its value.[25]

As a result, the antiphilosopher rarely publishes an organic work but typically wavers between the esoteric fragment and the delights of incompleteness, as is perhaps nowhere more palpable than in the case of the final Nietzsche: 'This format, in which the opportunity for action takes precedent over the preoccupation with making a name for oneself through publication ("poubellications", as Lacan used to say), evinces one of the antiphilosopher's characteristic traits: he writes neither system nor treatise, nor even really a book. He propounds a speech of rupture, and writing ensues when necessary.'[26] In order to produce such a speech of rupture, the antiphilosopher's declarations require the immediate presence of the speaking subject within his speech: 'The antiphilosopher thus necessarily speaks *in his proper name*, and he must show this "proper" as real proof of his saying. In effect, there is no validation and no compensation for his act except immanent to this act itself, since he denies that this act can ever be justified in the order of theory.'[27] Whence the always somewhat frenetic and highly theatrical if not histrionic race to precede and often undercut what is said with references to the incomparable existential power of its saying:

> The biographical impulse, the taste for confession, and even in the end a highly recognizable infatuation that commands the 'writerly' style of all antiphilosophers (if you go back to the list, there is not a single one who is not a master of language): these are the necessary consequences of the most intimate antiphilosophical certainty, the one that consists, against millennia of philosophy, in the duty to announce and practice an active salvific break in one's own name only.[28]

Insofar as the antiphilosopher's diatribes against philosophy are supported only by the contrast with the radicality of the declaration of the act as such, only the personal, even physical manifestation of the subject behind the declaration can give it credence

and, so to speak, *make it pass*. This circular gesture whereby the antiphilosopher drops in on the realization of what he otherwise is in the process of prophesizing, eventually will allow Badiou to offer what he claims is an intrinsic diagnosis of Nietzsche's madness, based purely in terms of the constraints of his own final project and summed up in the simultaneous announcement and enactment of grand politics as the act to break in two the history of humankind.

4 Breaking in two the history of the world

In effect, Badiou restricts his reading of Nietzschean 'grand politics' almost entirely to the formal idea of a radical breaking in two of history. Barely speaking of the role of democracy and its critique, the breeding and disciplining of a new type of human being, forms of sovereignty, or the racial overtones in which the order of rank is sometimes couched in spite of Nietzsche's open hatred of anti-Semites, Badiou sees the break primarily if not exclusively as a category of the act, which is Nietzsche's version of the event. 'I believe that for Nietzsche the act is not an overcoming. The act is an event. And this event is an absolute break, of which Nietzsche is the opaque proper name,' Badiou says in the talk in which he summarizes his 1992–93 seminar. He adds: 'It is to this correlation between an act with neither concept nor program and a proper name, one which is his only by chance, that we should tie the famous title from *Ecce Homo*, "Why I am a Destiny". I am a destiny because, by chance, the proper name "Nietzsche" comes in to link its opacity to a break without program or concept.'[29]

The antiphilosophical act may not only seem to have won out in advance in this rivalry with the philosopher, it can also present itself as more radical than any of the scientific, artistic or political events from which it appropriates the force of its radical impulse. In a sense, the resulting act pretends to be more radically scientific than all existing science, more deeply aesthetic than all available works of art, and more profoundly political than any really existing politics. For this reason, just as in the cases of Wittgenstein and Lacan, Badiou in subsequent seminars will come to qualify their respective understandings of the antiphilosophical act as 'archiaesthetic' and 'archiscientific,' in the case of Nietzsche's 'grand politics,' encapsulated in the breaking in two of the history of humanity, he speaks of it as an 'archipolitical' act. This does not mean that Nietzsche, Wittgenstein or Lacan would be the ultimate reference points if we wanted to capture the essence of our time in terms of politics, art or science. In fact, at least in the cases of Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, Badiou notes that for all their talk about politics and aesthetics, their knowledge about the actual events that occur in these domains is actually fairly limited, if not purely anecdotal. This is why an important conceptual distinction must be introduced between the nature of the act, on the one hand, and the subject-matter, the materials or the bias from the point of which the act presents itself, on the other.

A large part of Badiou's investigation into the nature of antiphilosophy centres precisely on the tension between these two aspects, the act and the subject-matter, between which there is strange relation of disconnection and traversal. For the three

major antiphilosophers that Badiou studies in his seminar between 1992 and 1995, this distinction can be elaborated as follows:

1. in Nietzsche's case the *subject-matter* is art and aesthetics (above all, Wagner) but the *act* is archipolitical;
2. in Wittgenstein's case the *subject-matter* is logic and mathematics (above all, Frege and Russell) but the *act* is archiaesthetic;
3. in Lacan's case the *subject-matter* is the stuff of love and desire (above all, after Freud) but the *act* is archiscientific.

What matters in this reading will concern not only the antiphilosopher but also the philosopher, since it will be in dialogue with the way the latter is portrayed as part of Nietzsche's antiphilosophical diatribe, for example, that philosophy can and must redefine its own operations in relation to the truth of an event. In fact, the crucial point lies precisely in understanding this difference between act and event. The same historical or empirical 'happenings' may be involved in both cases, such as an actual revolutionary uprising or a unique artistic performance, but antiphilosophy's treatment of such happenings as 'acts' follows a series of operations and protocols that are not to be confused with their treatment as 'events' that function as the conditions of truth for philosophy according to Badiou.

Here the comparison with Wittgenstein may prove helpful. For Badiou, the act sought after in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* certainly has much to do with art, especially music as the epitome of non-propositional sense since at least Schopenhauer. But antiphilosophy also adds a radical and more originary dimension to its view of art, by absorbing art's energy back into its own discourse and appropriating it for its unique purposes alone. This added dimension explains the archiaesthetic nature of the act in the case of Wittgenstein:

> The antiphilosophical act consists in letting what there is show itself, insofar as 'what there is' is precisely that which no true proposition can say. If Wittgenstein's antiphilosophical act can legitimately be declared archiaesthetic, it is because this 'letting-be' has the non-propositional form of pure showing, of *clarity*, and because such clarity befalls the unsayable only in the thoughtless form of an oeuvre (music certainly being the paradigm for such donation for Wittgenstein). I say *archi*aesthetic because it is not a question of substituting art for philosophy either. It is a question of bringing into the scientific and propositional activity the principle of a kind of clarity whose (mystical) element is beyond this activity and the real paradigm of which is art. It is thus a question of firmly establishing the laws of the sayable (of the thinkable), in order for the unsayable (the unthinkable, which is ultimately given only in the form of art) to be *situated* as the 'upper limit' of the sayable itself.[30]

Similarly, in Nietzsche's case, the idea of 'grand politics' as the act of breaking in two the history of the world certainly is inspired by the historico-political revolution. But, again, philosophy (as antiphilosophy) appropriates the revolutionary event for its own purposes, before relying on the explosive radicalism of the archipolitical act that is

thus formed as leverage to reject all actually existing politics, including revolutionary politics, as being petty and inauthentic in comparison.

> The philosophical act is, I would say, *archipolitical*, in that it proposes itself to revolutionize all of humanity on a more radical level than that of the calculations of politics. From this let us retain that archipolitics does not designate the traditional philosophical purpose of finding a ground for politics. The logic, once again, is a logic of rivalry, and not one of founding oversight. It is the philosophical act itself that is archipolitical, in the sense that its historical explosion will show, retroactively, that the political revolution properly speaking has not been truthful, or has not been authentic.[31]

For Badiou, the key to understanding Nietzsche's relation to politics thus consists in a relation of rivalry and mimicry at once with regard to the historico-political revolution: 'The philosophical act is in fact represented by Nietzsche as an *amplified mimetics of the revolutionary event*. And this amplified mimetics of the revolutionary event by no means retains its dialectical sublation or overcoming but only its incalculable rupture.'[32] This means that the archipolitical act is both a quest for a more radical level of change, a turn to the root or commanding principle of political change, and a supra- or super-political overturning of all politics as usual.

The mimetic rivalry is especially transparent with regard to what in Badiou's eyes constitutes the model of the historico-political revolution for Nietzsche, namely, the French Revolution. This is palpable in the new calendar, starting with 1888 as Year One, in the bringing out of heavy artillery and dynamite, and even in the use of a kind of revolutionary terror as when Nietzsche writes in a letter to August Strindberg from late December 1888: 'I have ordered a convocation of the princes in Rome–I mean to have the young emperor shot';[33] when he writes in a last letter to Franz Overbeck, received on 7 January 1889: 'I am just having all anti-Semites shot. . .';[34] or, finally, in the famous letter to Jacob Burckhardt postmarked from Turin on 5 January 1889: 'Wilhelm Bismarck and all anti-Semites done away with.'[35]

For Badiou, the use of such explosive language nevertheless also betrays a profound ambivalence on the part of Nietzsche with regard to the politics of revolution. It is not the socializing content but only the form of the radical break that fascinates the thinker of grand politics. And, furthermore, it is the power of a break that must be transposed onto the (anti)philosophical act of thinking itself:

> Nietzsche adopts with regard to the revolutionary act a rapport of formal fascination and substantive repulsion. He proposes for himself to render formally equivalent the philosophical act as an act of thought and the apparent explosive power of the politico-historical revolution. In this sense, though it is difficult to perceive, I hold that there is a primordial suture to politics itself at work in the Nietzschean dispositif.[36]

Here we begin to perceive the thin line of demarcation that separates the philosopher from the antiphilosopher. By speaking of a suture in the case of Nietzsche, Badiou is not referring to the way in which modern philosophers have frequently abdicated their

powers and delegated them to the realms of science (positivism), politics (Marxism) or poetry (Heideggerianism). This other understanding is how Badiou defined 'suture' according to a scenario best explained in *Manifesto of Philosophy*: A suture happens, in other words, when 'philosophy *delegates* its functions to one or other of its conditions, handing over the whole of thought to *one* generic procedure. Philosophy is then carried out in the element of its own suppression to the great benefit of that procedure.'[37] In Badiou's reading of Nietzsche, by contrast, 'suture' seems to name the inverse movement, namely, the movement whereby philosophy as antiphilosophy absorbs the revolutionary energy of politics for its own exclusive purposes. Here, philosophy does not abdicate its own act in favour of grand politics so much as it appropriates the power of the revolutionary break – together with the formal resources of poetry to guarantee its prophetic transmission – for its own sake, with a paradoxical denigration of effective politics as its result. The logic is one of mimicry and rivalry much more so than one of abdication and self-effacement. The lesson is thus that in order to avoid falling in the traps of antiphilosophy, philosophy would have to develop a relation to its conditions that, thanks to a certain measure of restraint, circumvents the temptations of suture in this other sense as well.

Moreover, if, through antiphilosophy's suture onto politics, the explosive revolutionary event is reabsorbed back into Nietzsche's own discourse, a circular argument becomes inevitable. Nietzsche must both and at the same time declare that he *prepares* an event more radical than any effective politico-historical event and *guarantee* the authenticity of this break solely on the basis of this very declaration. Whence the difficulty of deciding whether Nietzsche, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, merely *prepares* the overman or whether he or Zarathustra is *already* the first overman himself:

> I think that this circle, which manifests itself here in a subjective exposure whose sincerity is almost that of a certain saintliness, is in truth the circle of all archipolitics. Since it does not count the event as its condition, but rather detains it or pretends to detain it in the act of thought itself, it cannot discriminate its effectiveness from its announcement. The entire persona of Zarathustra names this circle and gives the book its tone of strange undecidability on the question of whether Zarathustra is the figure of the act's efficacy or the figure of its prophecy pure and simple.[38]

This is why Nietzsche, even more so than any other antiphilosopher, must necessarily appear in person within his own speech. Badiou goes so far as to define Nietzsche's final madness in terms of this very circle, in which the enunciating subject so to speak falls into his own enunciations, whereas all philosophy would precisely be able to do without the question of 'Who speaks?' Incidentally, this resistance of the philosopher to accept the fifth and final feature of antiphilosophy explains why Badiou, contrary to a widespread consensus that ranges from cultural studies to identity politics, does not think that asking the question 'who?' or 'what type?' for every statement has anything to do with establishing the truth of this statement. In fact, quite the opposite is true, since such a question is more likely to suppress the possibility of the universal and anonymous sharing of truth:

> I would hold that the question 'who?,' whenever it insists or returns, suppresses the most originary gesture of philosophy, which, under the condition of

> mathematics, has precisely deployed the dialogical theme, that is to say, the theme of a statement that is possibly subtracted from the originariness of the question 'who?' Philosophy has been possible only by admitting the possibility of an anonymous statement, that is to say, a statement whose examination and circulation do not depend immediately on the question of who formulates it.[39]

Nietzsche's grand politics, as the dream of an archipolitical act, by way of contrast thus imposes upon us the task of clarifying the operations with which philosophy approaches the event. And yet, we will also see that antiphilosophy, aside from providing the philosopher with a series of respectable and perhaps indispensable interlocutors, presents a constant temptation within Badiou's own philosophy.

5 The antiphilosophical temptation: Philosophy as event

Badiou's philosophy does not always manage to stave off its own antiphilosophical tendencies. With this insight I am no longer referring only to the temptation against which Badiou himself, thanks to his dialogue with antiphilosophy, puts us on guard and which is nothing more than the religious temptation of assigning sense or meaning to the world: 'Anti-philosophy puts philosophy on guard. It shows it the ruses of sense and the dogmatic danger in truth. It teaches it that the rupture with religion is never definitive. That one must take up the task again. That truth must, once again and always, be secularised.'[40] Rather, I would say that antiphilosophy teaches us that the real danger, including for Badiou's own philosophy, is not the religion of meaning but rather the radicalism of the pure event as absolute beginning, the treatment of the event as some kind of archi-event, that is to say, in the end, the conflation of the event with the act.

What Badiou calls the act, which otherwise could be considered simply the antiphilosophical name of the event, functions very differently in antiphilosophy from the way the event functions in philosophy. Politics, art or science for the antiphilosopher serve not as conditions but as models to be imitated and absorbed into philosophy itself as though the latter, qua antiphilosophy, were capable of producing, or even of being, a grand event in its own right. This would mark a 'disaster,' but not in the sense of Badiou's *Ethics*, which defines the term as a complete forcing of a given situation, including the point that should remain unnameable, in the name of truth: 'This is why I will call this figure of Evil a disaster, a disaster of truth induced by the absolutization of its power.'[41] Instead, antiphilosophy presents us with a disaster that is closer to the way the term is used in the essays from *Conditions* appended to the English translation of the *Manifesto*, where philosophy is said to expose thought to a disaster by imagining that its empty category of truth (or Truth) can be filled and legitimated with extreme, even criminal prescriptions:

> The key to this turnabout is that philosophy is worked from within by the chronic temptation of taking the operation of the empty category of Truth as identical to the multiple procedures of the production of truths. Or else: that philosophy, renouncing the operational singularity of the seizing of truths, is *itself* presented as being a truth procedure. Which also means that it is presented as an art, a science, a

> passion or a policy. Nietzsche's philosopher-poet; Husserl's wish of philosophy as a rigorous science; Pascal or Kierkegaard's wish of philosophy as intense experience; Plato's philosopher-king: as many intra-philosophical schemata of the permanent possibility of disaster.[42]

This leads me, in a concluding series of reflections, to ask whether there are not also similarly disastrous antiphilosophical tendencies at work in Badiou's own thought. And if so, where? It is not just that philosophy, in its efforts to disentangle itself from its antiphilosophical opponents, must continue to sever its ties to religion. There is also another way of defining the antiphilosophical temptation at work within Badiou's philosophy. Here the book on Saint Paul can serve as a good point of comparison for understanding Nietzsche's case as well. Indeed, I would say that there is a profound oscillation that runs through this study between, on the one hand, an effort to delimit Paul's antiphilosophy as a discourse to be traversed and yet kept at a distance, and, on the other, a deep fascination with the ultraradicalism of this discourse, whose traits – including stylistic ones – as a result come to be transferred almost invisibly onto Badiou's own philosophy as well, both in this book and elsewhere. It thus becomes frequently impossible in *Saint Paul* to discern whether general statements regarding truth, the act, the subject, and so on, belong to the antiphilosophical aspect of the Apostle's doctrine, which therefore would have to be rejected, or whether they can in addition be attributed, as if written in a free indirect style, to Badiou's own theory of the event. This theory, in fact, is by no means impeded by but thrives on such indiscernibility. And the same is at least partially true for Badiou's take on Nietzsche's grand politics. In both cases, I would argue that there is something about the form itself – the form of the pure event – that is radically antiphilosophical. No wonder that Badiou, in most instances in his *Saint Paul* where 'the pure event' or 'the naked event' is invoked as a radical beginning, tends immediately to turn to a comparison with Nietzsche's archipolitical act of breaking the history of the world in two halves, even though elsewhere, for example in Badiou's *Ethics*, this act is called a disaster: 'Nietzsche is Paul's rival far more than his opponent. Both share the same desire to initiate a new epoch in human history, the same conviction that man can and must be overcome, the same certainty that we must have done with guilt and law.'[43] What emerges more clearly from Badiou's discussion of Nietzsche is the possibility that this desire for an absolute beginning is a deviation due to the influence of antiphilosophy, whose extremism the philosopher would therefore have the task of tempering, even if he allows its appeal to extend to his own theory of the event. Even in *Saint Paul*, while still discussing the rivalling proximity between Paul and Nietzsche, Badiou insists: 'The truth is that both brought antiphilosophy to the point where it no longer consists in a "critique," however radical, of the whims and pettinesses of the metaphysician or sage. A much more serious matter is at issue: that of bringing about through the event an unqualified affirmation of life against the reign of death and the negative.'[44] Is this not also the case of Badiou's conception of the event, which as a consequence would have to be considered as carrying an irresistible element of antiphilosophy within it?

In political terms, we could call this element the speculative leftism, or ultraleftism, that is common to all antiphilosophers. 'This imaginary wager upon an absolute novelty—"to break in two the history of the world"—fails to recognize that the real of the conditions of possibility of intervention is always the circulation of an already decided event,' Badiou writes in *Being and Event*: 'What the doctrine of the event teaches us is rather that the entire effort lies in following the event's consequences, not in glorifying its occurrence. There is no more an angelic herald of the event than there is a hero. Being does not commence.'[45] In most if not all cases, furthermore, this speculative leftism is nearly indistinguishable – in yet another characteristic vacillation – from its ideological opposite. Going over the list, there is not a single one among the antiphilosophers whose potential leftist leanings are not counterbalanced by suspicions of reactionary consequences, making their politics nearly impossible to pin down: 'Antipolitics, one could say, parallel to antiphilosophy.'[46] It is precisely such ultraradicalism that lurks behind the pure form of the event as defined on the basis of Christianity in Badiou's book on Paul, or on the basis of grand politics in Badiou's seminar on Nietzsche. In other words, the crucial point to be grasped in this regard is not just the split between good form (the protocol of evental universalization) and objectionable content (the fable of Christianity and the Resurrection). Nor, in the case of Nietzsche, will it be enough to revert to the good content (the French Revolution) so as to temper the extremism of the form (the disastrous breaking in two of history). Instead, the lesson to be learned from Badiou's careful engagement with Nietzsche is how antiphilosophy leads to a skewed understanding of the radical break of the event, including in its purely formal aspect, as some kind of archi-event: the act as the antiphilosophical deviation of the event.

For sure, there is a steep price to be paid for this radicalization. We saw this most clearly in how Nietzsche's 'grand politics' relates to effective historico-political events such as the French Revolution, not as conditions but as models to mimic and, if possible, outperform. But something similar occurs, I would argue, with Badiou's philosophical treatment of certain events such as Mallarmé's poetry or Beckett's prose. The latter, thus, in the hands of the philosopher almost by necessity, if not because of some kind of professional deformation, tend to become self-contained exemplifications of the event as event. In fact, perhaps in no other instance is this tendency more tangible than in Badiou's own relation to the radical acts declared by the antiphilosophers, from Paul to Nietzsche to Lacan, whose references are typically *not* effective events – with the possible exception of Lacan who is capable of invoking Freud as a really existing prior act and who because of this in the eyes of Badiou completes the cycle of contemporary antiphilosophy – but fables or cases of pure folly and self-imploding prophecies: 'That the event (or pure act) invoked by antiphilosophers is fictitious does not present a problem. It is equally so in Pascal (it is the same as Paul's), or in Nietzsche (Nietzsche's "grand politics" did not break the history of the world in two; it was Nietzsche who was broken).'[47]

Badiou's relation to Paul or to Nietzsche, I would argue, is similar to the respective relation of these two antiphilosophers themselves to Christ's Resurrection and to the French Revolution. It is a relation of rivalry and mimicry, developed into an amplified

mimetics of the act qua archi-event, whose radicalism cannot fail to seduce the philosopher for it suggests that even philosophy, after all, may be able to produce or even become an event in its own right. Now, this is something the philosopher, technically speaking, cannot proclaim without falling into the trap of a disastrous prescription that would at once put him in the camp of the antiphilosopher. 'Let us say, provisorily, that the antiphilosopher in this sense is *the event of philosophy*,' as Mehdi Belhaj Kacem writes in an open letter to Badiou: '*Only for the antiphilosopher can philosophy be an event*.'[48] Therein lies no doubt the seductive power of the antiphilosopher for Badiou as well. Even as a never-ending task, the demarcation of the supposed gap between philosophy and antiphilosophy allows the polemicist to have his cake (to define, by opposition to the act, the empty philosophical concept of the event, conditioned by effective truth procedures) and eat it too (to reabsorb the irrefutable radicality of the act as archipolitical, archiaesthetic or archiscientific break or absolute beginning, before discarding it as a mere act, in the theatrical sense of the term). This is why the philosopher actually thrives on the endless sparring matches with the most illustrious antiphilosophers. Finally, perhaps this is also why Badiou, contrary to what Nietzsche himself suggested in a letter to Brandes, is in no hurry to lose the author of *Ecce Homo*: 'Once you discovered me, it was no great feat to find me: the difficulty now is to lose me. . . .'[49]

In closing I would go still one step further so as to formulate the general hypothesis that today the dominant philosophical attitude is in fact thoroughly antiphilosophical in nature, even if the label itself is not always used or accepted. To be more precise, if philosophy today can still or again pretend to be radical, this is in no small part due to its antiphilosophical tendencies. Whence the interest, but also the difficulty, of Badiou's attempt to disentangle the two. In fact, in times of near-global reaction, it is not surprising that there should be such a strong push for an antiphilosophical act that claims to be both less illusory and yet at the same time more radical than the philosophical pursuit of truth. Antiphilosophy, in this sense, contributes to an ever more powerful maximalism. Especially since the break it announces is purely formal so that the question of its left or right-wing nature becomes moot, this maximalism at the level of radical thought fills in for what is missing in actuality.

Notes

1 Alain Badiou's seminar on Nietzsche is as yet unpublished; a semi-official transcription is freely available on-line. In French, only a summary has appeared in the form of a talk published as *Casser en deux l'histoire du monde?* (Paris: Le Perroquet, 1992); an even more distilled version of this text, also presented as a talk in the United Kingdom, has been translated into English under the title, 'Who is Nietzsche?', trans. Alberto Toscano, *PLI: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy* 11 (2001): 1–11. The complete Nietzsche seminar is forthcoming in both French and English as part of a collective project to edit all of Badiou's annual seminars not yet turned into essays or books. The brochure *Casser en deux l'histoire du monde* will also appear in English translation as part of Alain Badiou,

What is Antiphilosophy?, ed. and trans. Bruno Bosteels (Durham: Duke University Press, forthcoming).

2 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, ed. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 144.

3 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Münich/Berlin: DTV/De Gruyter, 1986), vol. 8, p. 500.

4 The secondary bibliography on Nietzsche's *große Politik* is much larger than the paucity of primary sources might suggest. For the sake of the present essay and after a brief comparison with Pierre Klossowski, though, I will limit myself exclusively to Badiou's take on the matter. For further studies in the English-speaking world, see Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), pp. 206–26; Keith Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 147–62; Alex McIntyre, *The Sovereignty of Joy: Nietzsche's Vision of Grand Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); and the articles by Paul van Tongeren, Thomas H. Brobjer, Herman Siemens and Keith Ansell-Pearson in *Nietzsche, Power and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche's Legacy for Political Thought*, ed. Herman W. Siemens and Vasti Roodt (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008). In French, as another interesting counterpart to Badiou aside from Klossowski, see Michel Haar, 'Institution et destitution du politique', *Par-delà le nihilisme: Nouveaux essais sur Nietzsche* (Paris: PUF, 1998), pp. 219–74. For a discussion of Nietzschean-style grand politics in contemporary Italian and Spanish thought, see Bruno Bosteels, 'Politics, Infrapolitics, and the Impolitical', *The Actuality of Communism* (London: Verso, 2011), pp. 75–128.

5 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe* (hereafter *KSA*), ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967–77; 2nd rev. edn 1988), vol. 11, pp. 518–19, 35[24]; quoted in Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 1.

6 Nietzsche, *KSA*, vol. 11, p. 519, 35[24]; quoted in Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, pp. 1–2.

7 Nietzsche, *KSA*, vol. 12, p. 414, 9[139], and *KSA*, vol. 11, pp. 91, 25[309]; quoted in Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, pp. 143 and 148.

8 Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, p. 169.

9 Ibid., p. 256.

10 Ibid., pp. 93 and 234.

11 See Alain Badiou, *Wittgenstein's Antiphilosophy*, translated and with an introduction by Bruno Bosteels (London: Verso, 2009); and Alain Badiou, 'Lacan et Platon: le mathème est-il une idée?' in *Lacan avec les philosophes* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1991). This last article is also published in a shorter and slightly modified version as 'Antiphilosophy: Lacan and Platon', in *Conditions*, trans. Steve Corcoran (London: Continuum, 2008), pp. 228–47. More recently, see the little volume on Lacan co-authored by Alain Badiou and Barbara Cassin, *Il n'y a pas de rapport sexuel. Deux leçons sur 'L'Étourdit' de Lacan* (Paris: Fayard, 2010).

12 Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 17.

13 See, above all, Didier Masseau, *Les ennemis des philosophes: L'antiphilosophie au temps des Lumières* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2000).

14 For three fairly different accounts of Lacan's antiphilosophy, all posterior to Badiou's talk at the conference *Lacan avec les philosophes*, see Jean-Claude Milner, 'L'antiphilosophie', in *L'Œeuvre claire: Lacan, la science, la philosophie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1995), pp. 146–58; François Regnault, 'L'antiphilosophie selon Lacan', in *Conférences d'esthétique lacanienne* (Paris, Agalma, 1997), pp. 57–80; and Colette Soler, 'Lacan en antiphilosophe', *Filozofski Vestnik* 27.2 (2006): 121–44. See also Slavoj Žižek's remarks, openly influenced by François Regnault, in *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999), pp. 250–1. More recently, see Adrian Johnston, 'This Philosophy Which Is Not One: Jean-Claude Milner, Alain Badiou, and Lacanian Antiphilosophy', *S: Journal of the Jan Van Eyck Circle for Lacanian Ideology Critique* 3 (2010), pp. 2–22. The figure who has dealt most extensively with the category of antiphilosophy in the wake of Lacan and Heidegger is the Argentine psychoanalyst Jorge Alemán. See, for instance, his *Notas antifilosóficas* (Buenos Aires: Grama, 2006). For a comparison with Badiou, see Carlos Gómez, 'El adversario y el doble en la filosofía de Badiou', *Badiou fuera de sus límites*, ed. Carlos Gómez and Angelina Uzín (Buenos Aires: Imago Mundi, 2010), pp. 87–120.
15 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 27.
16 Badiou, *Casser en deux l'histoire du monde?*, p. 24.
17 Alain Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, trans. Alberto Toscano (London: Continuum, 2009), p. 542.
18 Badiou, *Conditions*, p. 129. See also the following remark in *Logics of Worlds*, where Lacan is credited for upholding the notion of the subject against its Heideggerian critics, without lapsing into humanism: 'This is why the traversing of Lacan's antiphilosophy remains even today an obligatory exercise for those who seek to tear themselves free from the reactive convergences of religion and scientism' (p. 548).
19 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 47.
20 Badiou, *Wittgenstein's Antiphilosophy*, p. 75.
21 Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, p. 551.
22 Ibid., p. 425.
23 Badiou, *Wittgenstein's Antiphilosophy*, p. 80.
24 Jacques Lacan, 'Radiophonie', *Autres écrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2001), p. 427.
25 Badiou, *Wittgenstein's Antiphilosophy*, p. 87. Badiou's comments on Žižek go very much in the same direction: 'The Lacanian most prone to injecting the notions of the master into the most varied "bodies" of contemporary appearing is no doubt Slavoj Žižek, whose lack of affiliation to any group of psychoanalysts grants him a freedom which he delights in abusing: jokes, repetitions, a captivating passion for the worst flicks, quick-witted pornography, conceptual journalism, calculated histrionics, puns, . . . In this perpetual dramatization of his thought, animated by a deliberate desire for bad taste, he ultimately resembles Lacan', in Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, p. 565.
26 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 31.
27 Badiou, *Wittgenstein's Antiphilosophy*, p. 87.
28 Ibid., p. 88.
29 Badiou, *Casser en deux l'histoire du monde*, p. 11.
30 Badiou, *Wittgenstein's Antiphilosophy*, p. 80.
31 Badiou, *Casser en deux l'histoire du monde?*, p. 11.
32 Ibid., p. 10.

33 Nietzsche, *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Christopher Middleton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), Letter 200, p. 344; also quoted in Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, p. 232.
34 Nietzsche, *Selected Letters*, Letter 205, p. 346.
35 Ibid., Letter 206, p. 348.
36 Badiou, *Casser en deux l'histoire du monde*, p. 11.
37 Alain Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, trans. Norman Madarasz (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), p. 61.
38 Badiou, *Casser en deux l'histoire du monde?*, p. 14.
39 Ibid., p. 17.
40 Badiou, 'Who is Nietzsche?', p. 10.
41 Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (London: Verso, 2001), p. 85.
42 Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, pp. 128–9. Badiou's list of names should suffice to conclude that the temptation of disaster, understood in this sense, is not unique to antiphilosophers but applies to Husserl or Plato as well – and no doubt even to a Platonist such as Badiou, as I argue here.
43 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 72. Badiou discusses Nietzsche's notion of 'breaking in two the history of the world' as a 'disaster' in *Ethics*, p. 84. However, already in *Theory of the Subject*, which is supposed to be Badiou's most violently disruptive book due to the role of Maoism, the much-maligned notion of destruction is set up as an alternative *both* to structural conservatism *and* to Nietzschean grand politics: '"Destroy, he says": such is the necessary—and prolonged—proletarian statement. This barbarous statement forbids us to imagine the political subject in the structural modality of the heritage, the transmission, the corruption, the inversion. But also in that of the purifying cut, of the world broken in two', in Alain Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, trans. and intro. Bruno Bosteels (London: Continuum, 2009), p. 131.
44 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 72. Jacob Taubes discusses the proximity, jealousy and rivalry between Paul and Nietzsche in very similar terms, in *The Political Theology of Paul*, trans. Dana Hollander (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 76–88. Incidentally, it is in the context of this discussion that Taubes brings up what he too calls the antiphilosophers: 'These are the ones who break through, each in a different way, the completion of philosophy. They include Marx, on the one hand, who, like Themistocles, wanted to found a new Athens; on the other hand, they include Kierkegaard as a critic of Hegel, who thinks hard about the apostle—the genius of the apostle—but I wasn't formed by him. . . . Here I'm speaking about Nietzsche' (p. 77).
45 Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum, 2005), pp. 210–11. See also Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*: 'The deviation on the left follows a perspective of flight. It is a radicalism of novelty. It breaks all mirrors' (p. 207). I discuss the validity of speculative leftism for an understanding of Badiou's philosophy in the conclusion to Bruno Bosteels, *Badiou and Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 273–86.
46 Milner, *L'Œuvre claire*, p. 152.
47 Badiou, *Saint-Paul*, p. 108.
48 Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, *Événement et répétition* (Auch: Tristram, 2004), p. 217. Belhaj Kacem at one point was Badiou's most fervent disciple but he has since then viciously and in true antiphilosophical fashion turned against his master. See Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, *Après Badiou* (Paris: Grasset, 2011).
49 Nietzsche, *Selected Letters*, Letter 202, p. 345.

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