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“No one has yet determined what the body can do” : the turn to the body in Spinoza and Nietzsche

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“No one has yet determined what the body can do”

The Turn to the Body in Spinoza and Nietzsche

Razvan Ioan

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“No one has yet determined what the body can do”

The Turn to the Body in Spinoza and Nietzsche

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Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations 7

Introduction 14

Chapter I: Spinoza's Turn to the Body 19

I. The motivations behind Spinoza's turn to the body 19

I.1. Spinoza's critique of metaphysics 20

I.1a. The context of Spinoza's critique 20

The Jewish philosophical context 23

Maimonides 23

Matter and body 30

Key metaphysical notions 32

I.1b. Spinoza's critique of metaphysics 36

Teleology 36

Free will 42

The existence of a moral world order 44

The existence of evil 45

The unselfish **46**

Spinoza's critique of substance **48**

I.2. Spinoza's attitude to contemporary science **49**

I.2a. The influence **51**

Descartes on the Body **53**

The Meditations **54**

The teaching of nature **55**

The *Passions of the Soul* **57**

Hobbes on the body **65**

I.2b. The Critique **76**

II. The nature of the turn to the body **78**

II.1. Spinoza's theory of knowledge and its relation to the body **79**

The bodily correlate of inadequate knowledge **80**

The corporeal correlate of adequate knowledge **83**

II.2. Spinoza understanding of the body? **87**

The body in the Physical Interlude (EIIp13s to EIIp14) **87**

The body as a multiplicity of affects **92**

Conatus **95**

The body as an eternal essence **101**

Chapter II: Nietzsche's Turn to the Body 105

I. The context of Nietzsche's turn to the body 106

I.1. The Project of Naturalization 106

I.2. Naturalization, décadence and nihilism 110

I.2.1. Nihilism as an expression of degeneration 114

Tyrannical hierarchy 117

Disorganization of drives 119

I.3. Nietzsche's Critique of Nihilistic Values 120

Nietzsche's critique of substance 120

Teleology 125

Free will 128

The moral world order 130

Altruism 132

Evil 133

II. The nature of Nietzsche's turn to the body 135

II.1. The conceptual structure of the turn to the body 136

II.1.a. The concept of "body" 136

II.1.b. Philosophical physiology and its limits 143

II.1.c. The expressions of the body 149

II.1.d. Structure in Nietzsche's philosophical physiology 152

Type (*Typus*) 152

Force (*Kraft*) **154**

Action (*Aktivität*) and Reaction (*Reaktivität*) **156**

Hierarchy (*Rangordnung*) and struggle (*Kampf*) **158**

Affect (Affekt) **161**

II.2. The functions of Nietzsche's physiology **166**

II.2.a. Physiology of art **167**

II.2.b. Physiology of morality **171**

II.2.c. Conscious thought **173**

III. Philosophical Physiology and Science **177**

III.1. Nietzsche's Critique of Science **179**

Causal determinism **181**

Atomism **183**

Teleology and progress **185**

III.2. The difference between philosophical and scientific physiology **186**

What is reductionism? **189**

Is reductionism present in Nietzsche's philosophy? **190**

Chapter III: Comparative Study 194

I. Nietzsche's critique of Spinoza **195**

I.1. Nietzsche's diagnosis of Spinoza **197**

I.1.a. The first phase (up to 1883) 198

I.1.b. The second phase (1883-1884) 199

I.1.c. The third phase (from 1885 onwards) 200

I.2. The themes of Nietzsche's engagement with Spinoza 203

I.2.a. Reason and Knowledge 203

I.2.b. Affects 206

I.2.c. Self-preservation 207

I.2.d. Metaphysics 208

II. Evaluation of Nietzsche's criticisms 212

II.1. Reason and knowledge 212

II.2. Affects 213

II.3. Conatus and egoism 214

III. Systematic Comparison of Their Philosophical Physiologies 215

III.1. The critique of metaphysics 215

III.2. The motivations behind Spinoza's and Nietzsche's turns to the body 223

III.3. Conscious Thought 228

III.4. Similarities and differences in Spinoza's and Nietzsche's understandings of the body 232

IV. Ethics and politics in Spinoza and Nietzsche 241

IV.1. Spinoza's normative thought 241

IV.1.a. Description and normativity 242

IV.1.b. Freedom and necessity **243**

IV.1.c. The goals and methods of Spinoza's ethics and politics **244**

The ethical strategies of empowerment **244**

i. The first set of strategies **245**

ii. The second set of strategies **249**

Politics **251**

IV.2. Nietzsche's normative thought **261**

IV.2.a. Description and Normativity **261**

IV.2.b. "Fine, well-planned, thoughtful Egoism" in 1881 **266**

IV.2.c. Freedom and necessity **275**

IV.2.d. Empowerment and affirmation in Nietzsche's late work **283**

IV.2.e. The politics of the turn to the body **290**

Conclusion **302**

Bibliography **307**

Summary in English **330**

Summary in Dutch **339**

Curriculum Vitae **346**

Acknowledgments **347**

List of Abbreviations

Primary sources from Nietzsche and Spinoza are cited in the main text by abbreviation according to the standard conventions listed below. In some cases, I abbreviate longer titles of works when they appear in the main text.

Nietzsche

Nietzsche's works are cited by section number. In cases when sections are not numbered but named, an additional reference to the abbreviated title has been used. References to *Zarathustra* include the book number and chapter title (often abbreviated). Prefaces of works are referenced by a "Vorrede" after the abbreviated title. References to the *Nachlass* follow the notation in *Kritische Studienausgabe* (KSA). Any omissions are indicated in square brackets […] in order to distinguish them from Nietzsche's own ellipses. Any intervention in citations is indicated by square brackets: []. Emphases in Nietzsche's writings are rendered as underlined, and as *italics* in the translations.

All citations are accompanied by references to the relevant passage in the KSA, by volume (and page), e.g.:

JGB 230 5.169 = *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, aphorism 230, KSA volume 5, page 169.

Z II Erlösung 4.178 = *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Book II, "Von der Erlösung",

KSA volume 4, page 178;

9[86] 12.380 = note 9[86] in KSA volume 12, page 380.

List of Abbreviations**:**

AC The Anti-christ / Antichrist(ian): A curse on Christianity. (Der Antichrist. Fluch auf das Christenthum).

BA On the Future of Our Educational Institutions. (Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten).

EH Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is. (Ecce homo. Wie man wird, was man ist).

EH weise Why I am so Wise. (Warum ich so weise bin).

EH klug Why I am so Clever. (Warum ich so klug bin).

EH GT see GT.

EH M see M.

EH Schicksal Why I am a Destiny (Warum ich ein Schicksal bin).

FW The Gay Science. (Die fröhliche Wissenschaft “la gaya scienza”).

GD Twilight of the Idols, or How to Philosophize with a Hammer. (Götzen-Dämmerung oder Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophirt).

GD Sokrates The Problem of Socrates. (Das Problem des Sokrates).

GD Vernunft ‘Reason’ in Philosophy. (Die ‘Vernunft’ in der Philosophie)

GD Fabel How the ‘True World’ Finally Became a Fable. (Wie die ‘wahre Welt’ endlich zur Fabel wurde).

GD Moral Morality as Anti-Nature. (Moral als Widernatur).

GD Irrthümer The Four Great Errors. (Die vier grossen Irrthümer).

GD Verbesserer	The 'Improvers' of Humankind. (Die 'Verbesserer' der Menscheit)
GD Streifzüge	Expeditions of an Untimely One. (Streifzüge eines Un zeitgemässen).

GM On the Genealogy of Morals / Morality. A Polemic. (Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift).

GT The Birth of Tragedy. (Die Geburt der Tragödie).

JGB Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future. (Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft).

M Daybreak. Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality. (Morgenröthe. Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurtheile).

MA Human, All-too Human. A Book for free Spirits. Volume I. (Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister. Erster Band).

VM (MA II) Part One: Assorted Opinions and Maxims. (Erste Abtheilung: Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche).

WA The Case of Wagner: A Musician's Problem. (Der Fall Wagner. Ein Musikanten-Problem).

WL On Truth and Lies in an Extramoral Sense. (Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne).

WS (MA II) Part Two: The Wanderer and His Shadow. (Zweite Abtheilung: Der Wanderer und sein Schatten).

Z Thus spoke Zarathustra. A Book for All and None. (Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen).

Z I Vorrede	Zarathustra's Prologue. (Zarathustra's Vorrede).
Z I Hinterweltern	On the Hinterworldly. (Von der Hinterweltern).
Z I Verächtern	On the Despisers of the Body. (Von den Verächtern des Leibes).

Z I Götzen	On the New Idol. (Vom neuen Götzen).
Z I Von Kind und Ehe	On Child and Marriage. (Von Kind und Ehe).
Z II Inseln	On the Blessed Isles. (Auf den glückseligen Inseln).
Z II Erlösung	On Redemption. (Von der Erlösung).

References to Nietzsche's letters include the volume and letter number in KGB (*Nietzsche Briefwechsel. Kritische Gesamtausgabe).*

Reference Editions of Nietzsche's Works:

KGB *Nietzsche, Briefwechsel. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. 1975ff. Edited by Giogio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, continued by Norbert Miller and Annemarie Pieper. Berlin / New York: de Gruyter.

KSA *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*, 15 volumes. 1980. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 1967–77; Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.

Spinoza

References to the *Ethics* are by the standard format of part and proposition: page numbers are provided only when necessary for ease in finding a passage in the text. The following abbreviations are used in citations:

A	Axiom
D	Definition
L	Lemma
app	appendix
c	corrollary
dem	demonstration

pref Preface

p Proposition

s scholium

e.g. IIp40s2 is Part 2, proposition 40, scholium 2.

List of Abbreviations:

CM	Metaphysical Thoughts. (Cogitata Metaphysica).
E	Ethics. (Ethica).
KV	Short Treatise on God, Man and His Well-being. (Korte Verhandeling van God, de Mensch, en des zelfs Welstand).
TIE	Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect. (Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione).
TTP	Theological-Political Treatise. (Tractatus Theologico-Politicus).
TP	Political Treatise. (Tractatus Politicus).

References to the TTP and the TP are given by chapter and paragraph.

I use the Standard edition of Spinoza's Works in Latin:

Spinoza Opera, I–IV. 1925. Edited by Carl Gebhardt. Heidelberg: Carl Winter.

Other Classical Authors

Aristotle

Aristotle's works are referenced by the title of the work, Bekker numbers and line numbers.

Descartes

I cite the *Meditations* using the English translation by Ariew and Cress, with the AT page numbers. I reference the *Passions of the Soul* by article number and the *Correspondence with Elisabeth* by the date of the letter, and the translations are my own.

Schopenhauer

Schopenhauer's works are cited by title abbreviation and section number. I also indicate the volume number with a Roman numeral when citing WWV.

FR	On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason. (Ueber die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde).
WN	On the Will in Nature. (Ueber den Willen in der Natur).

WWV	The World as Will and Representation. (Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung).

Works by all other authors up to and including Hegel are referred to by the abbreviations in the following list:

De Cive	Thomas Hobbes. *De Cive, The English Version*.
Enneads	Plotinus. *Enneads.*
Guide	Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides) *The Guide of the Perplexed.*
KrV	Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason*.
Leviathan	Thomas Hobbes. *Leviathan*.
LHP III	Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy, The Lectures of 1825-1826, Volume III Medieval and Modern Philosophy.*
NO	Francis Bacon. *The New Organon*.
Phaedo	Plato. *Phaedo*. In *Plato: Complete Works*.
PPL	Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. *Philosophical Papers and Letters.*
Wars	Levi Ben Gershom (Gersonides). *The Wars of the Lord*.

References to other works are given as follows: (author date, pages), e.g. (Abel 1984, p.6).

Introduction

"Some men give more clear light and knowledge
by the bare distinct stating of a question about
something than others do by talking about it […]
for whole hours together"
(John Locke, *The Conduct of the Understanding*, 39)

On an almost daily basis we read about advances in neurophysiology, brain science and biology and we hear claims about their impact on how we must understand ourselves. How are we to respond to these scientific advances? What claims do *advances in the scientific understanding of human life make on* us? How do they impact on our self-understanding as moral and political beings? Within contemporary philosophy neurophysiology, brain-science and empirical psychology are having a tremendous impact on ethics. This thesis will offer a historical frame of reference and clues to these increasingly prominent philosophical appeals to empirical science. These appeals are often made without any historical awareness of the way in which the recourse to modern science has shaped philosophy from the Enlightenment on. The subject of this research is the turn to physiology in two prominent figures in the history of modern philosophy: Spinoza and Nietzsche. It involves comparative research into their emphatic appeal to physiology as the key to solving fundamental philosophical problems. While the groundwork for comparative research has already been laid in studies of a number of key concepts, a comparative study of Spinoza and Nietzsche focused on physiology has not yet been conducted.

It is customary to begin any comparative analysis of their philosophies with Nietzsche's famous postcard to Franz Overbeck:

> I am utterly amazed, utterly delighted! I have a *precursor*, and what a precursor! I hardly knew Spinoza: that I should have turned to him just *now*, was inspired by 'instinct'. Not only is his overall tendency similar to mine – to make knowledge the *most powerful affect* – but in five main points of his doctrine I recognize myself; this most unusual and loneliest thinker is closest to me precisely in these matters: he denies the freedom of the will, teleology, the moral world-order, the unegoistic, and evil. Even though the differences are admittedly immense, they are due more to the differences in time, culture, and science.[1] (KGB III/1, 135)

My thesis is that under "knowledge" they both understand knowledge of one's own body. In systematic terms the guiding hypothesis is that the philosophers reach many similar conclusions in response to similar philosophical problems and pressures. Both problematize the illusory character of Cartesian self-consciousness as well as teleological thinking while redirecting our attention to pre-conscious physiological intelligence as the key to self-knowledge. Both reject withdrawal from the world as the path to self-knowledge and emphasize the inter-connectedness of the body with its environment by showing that we are never "a dominion within a dominion" (EIIIpref). However, their motivations are not purely epistemological; they are primarily ethical and political in nature. Against the moral 'illusions' of free-will, the moral world-order and altruism or compassion, both philosophers seek to de-moralise and naturalize our understanding of human agency. For both, physiology translates the moral condemnation of human actions and passions onto the plane of immanence in an a-moral language of "lines, planes, and bodies" (EIIIpref) or the "underlying text of homo natura" (JGB 230 5.169). For both, physiology is also the key to an authentic freedom that surpasses the illusion of free-will, and both draw political consequences from physiology. For Nietzsche, the politics of the future or "great politics" involves a "spiritual war"

1 "Ich bin ganz erstaunt, ganz entzückt! Ich habe einen Vorgänger und was für einen! Ich kannte Spinoza fast nicht: daß mich jetzt nach ihm verlangte, war eine „Instinkthandlung". Nicht nur, daß seine Gesamttendenz gleich der meinen ist – die Erkenntniß zum mächtigsten Affekt zu machen – in fünf Hauptpunkten seiner Lehre finde ich mich wieder, dieser abnormste und einsamste Denker ist mir gerade in diesen Dingen am nächsten: er leugnet die Willensfreiheit –; die Zwecke –; die sittliche Weltordnung –; das Unegoistische –; das Böse –; wenn freilich auch die Verschiedenheiten ungeheuer sind, so liegen diese mehr in dem Unterschiede der Zeit, der Cultur, der Wissenschaft.".

against Christianity, in which physiology will play a key part as the "mistress of all the other questions" (25[1] 13.638; cf. JGB 23 5.38f). For Spinoza physiology is a privileged way to understand political organisation and, instead of writing a satire of human faults as many have done before, create a view that is best in agreement with practice (TP I 4).

Spinoza argues fervently for the necessity of understanding the human body before any other knowledge can be obtained and writes famously of our ignorance of the body: we "do not even know what a body can do" (EIIIp2s); without understanding the amazing power the body has of acting, all attempts to understand ourselves and the world around us are futile. For Nietzsche the body is "the far richer phenomenon" (40[15] 11.634; 2[91] 12.106; 5[56] 12.205), the seat of "great Reason" over and against the "small Reason" of conscious thought (Za I Verächtern 4.39), so that philosophical knowledge must proceed using "the body as the guiding thread". Moreover, both Spinoza and Nietzsche conceptualise the body as a genuine multiplicity, which, through intelligent processes of self-regulation, constitutes a derivative and relative unity in intense and complex interchange with its environment.

In order to deal with such a complex issue it is necessary to break it down into sub-problems that are easier to tackle individually. In the first two chapters, I will ask about Spinoza and Nietzsche respectively:

> 1) What drives their turns to the body? What are the philosophical problems they tackle and the moral and metaphysical illusions they seek to undermine?
>
> 2) In what scientific contexts do Spinoza and Nietzsche formulate their accounts of physiology, and how best to understand the relation between their philosophies and the sciences on which they draw? Does the recourse to physiology imply abandoning philosophy for science? How do the different scientific contexts and theories make their own accounts diverge?
>
> 3) What is the nature of their turn to the body? How do they understand the body and how does it interact with its environment? How should we

understand the methodological primacy of physiology and the relation between conscious and pre-conscious thought?

In the comparative study, I will ask:

1) What are Nietzsche's explicit criticisms of Spinoza? Are they justified? How can we use Nietzsche's pronouncements on Spinoza in order to articulate a systematic comparison of their philosophical physiologies?

2) What are the most salient philosophical problems on which Spinoza and Nietzsche agree and disagree? How do their physiologies address these problems, and how do they come to differ on key issues, such as conflict vs. agreement, growth vs. preservation and the power of reason?

3) What consequences do Spinoza and Nietzsche draw from their physiologies for ethics and politics? How can we account for the differences and underlying similarities between these consequences?

Their philosophical physiologies reveal, on the one hand, the crucial similarities in the way they think the fundamental ontological category of their philosophies, namely power, in contradistinction to much of western thinking running from Plato to Hobbes and Schopenhauer, and, on the other hand, how they problematize our epistemic access to the body – whereas in, for instance Schopenhauer, we have immediate, privileged knowledge of it. For both Spinoza and Nietzsche we do not have a body, we are a body. The essence of the body is its power and the question guiding the quest for self-knowledge is: what can a body do? The affirmation of the irreducible specificity of each body as the ground of the self-knowledge necessary for the project of liberation through cultivation of the body's power stands in direct contrast to the condemnation of the body as the prison of the soul (Phaedo 82e), a wild beast (Enneads I 1 10) that hinders thought and fills the soul with pleasures, desires and grief (Enneads IV 8 8), and which must be disciplined and made our slave (I Corinthians 9:27).

In thinking about the turn to the body, Spinoza and Nietzsche engage in two projects of paramount importance for the practice of philosophy. First, they think

about the nearest things, they bring to light what is closest to us. They reveal the problematic character of what seems self-understood but is in fact poorly understood and move from the implicit to the explicit. Second, they articulate the results of their turns to the body by creating a new conceptual vocabulary. They formulate a novel philosophical language suited to their philosophical physiologies.

This project is a comparative study in the History of Modern Philosophy focused on the recourse to physiology on the part of two key figures, Spinoza and Nietzsche. Nevertheless, its significance extends well beyond these two historical figures and their texts. The historical research will in effect provide two case-studies of the turn to physiology in philosophy that will shed light on other significant figures and tendencies in modern and contemporary philosophy. It will help to understand better the importance given to the study of affects in the phenomenological tradition, where Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty have, in different ways, used Nietzsche's legacy to develop their own philosophy, but also outside phenomenology for thinkers such as Gilles Deleuze, who has built a large part of his original philosophy on a detailed study of both Spinoza and Nietzsche. At the same time, this project will offer an historical frame of reference and 'genealogical' clues to the increasingly prominent appeals to empirical psychology, cognitive science and neuroscience in contemporary analytic ethics; appeals that are often made without any sense of the historicity of the philosophical recourse to physiology. References to Spinoza and/or Nietzsche are present in scientific literature in the works of researcher and Collège de France professor Jean-Pierre Changeux (1998) and neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (2003). The latter finds Spinoza to be the most relevant philosopher for his research and uses his insights for attempting an account of emotions that was not possible before. However, their remarks remain unelaborated.

Spinoza's Turn to the Body

My thesis is that Spinoza turns to the body in order to show the path towards the empowerment of the individual, the increase in her joy, freedom and, ultimately, the attainment of blessedness. This task requires dispelling a number of key philosophical errors and promoting adequate knowledge of the body.

In order to understand the nature of Spinoza's turn to the body, this chapter will proceed along the following steps. First, it will ask what drives Spinoza's turn to the body (section I). This will be broken down into two distinct lines of inquiry: the questions of what the key metaphysical errors are that Spinoza identifies and how he debunks them (section I.1); and what the key characteristics of the scientific context of Spinoza's time were and how he responded to them (section I.2). Second, it will ask what the nature of Spinoza's turn to the body is (section II). In order to answer this we need to consider Spinoza's theory of knowledge and how it is relevant for his turn to the body (section II.1); and how Spinoza understands the body (section II.2). The question of the ethical and political consequences of Spinoza's turn to the body will be discussed in the comparative chapter.

I. The motivations behind Spinoza's turn to the body

This section will begin by analysing the philosophical context of Spinoza's critique of metaphysics. The focus will be on five key notions (teleology, free will, the existence of a moral world order, the existence of evil and the unselfish) that Spinoza criticizes, as well as on their relations to the notions of matter and body (section 1a). I will then discuss why and how Spinoza formulates his critique of these five crucial notions and how this relates to his critique of the concept of substance (section 1b). I will then go on to consider how we should understand

Spinoza's engagement with the science of his time. First, I will ask how we should understand the salient features of the scientific outlook characteristic of the 17th Century and how we should understand the influence of scientific methods on Spinoza's turn to the body. In addressing this question I will focus on two crucial figures: Descartes and Hobbes (section 2a). Second, I will consider the manner in which Spinoza distances himself from science and ask how we should understand the points of departure (section 2b).

1. Spinoza's critique of metaphysics

1a. The context of Spinoza's critique

Spinoza's education can broadly be divided into two stages: the schooling he received as a member of the Jewish Community in Amsterdam and his studies of contemporary philosophic and scientific literature. The first stage consisted in the education he received in the school of the Jewish Portuguese community (Nadler 1999, p. 62) and in the Keter Torah study group[2] set up by the intellectual leader of the community, Rabi Saul Levi Mortera. It used to be widely held that Spinoza completed the education required in order to become a rabbi. However, Nadler has argued that there are good reasons to doubt whether Spinoza went further than the fourth, or perhaps the fifth grade out of a total of six (Nadler 1999, p. 65). Regardless of how matters stand on this point, Spinoza, as an exceptionally gifted young student, was part of Mortera's study group. There, he would have studied the Jewish Bible and the Talmud, together with medieval commentaries on them. In addition, he would have read a number of important Jewish philosophers, including Saadya Gaon, Maimonides or Gersonides. Spinoza felt increasing dissatisfaction with the traditional instruction he received and became interested in the new science and philosophy developing at the time. He could already have had access to it in the Jewish community through Joseph Salomon Delmedigo's book *Sefir Elim* (Book of the Gods) which is a study of Galileo's science (Nadler 1999, p. 138). These interests became the focus of Spinoza's life after his excommunication from the Jewish community on the 27th of July 1656[3]. Spinoza

2 Devoted primarily to the study of Jewish law.

3 The reasons for Spinoza's *cherem* (excommunication) have been the subject of debate in

learned Latin and was introduced to the study of liberal arts and sciences in the home of Franciscus van den Enden (Nadler 1999, p. 108). Later, he decided to improve his knowledge of philosophy, and especially Cartesianism, by attending the University of Leiden. He either lived in Leiden or made frequent trips to the University in 1658, and very possibly in 1657 as well. The university there was attractive to him because it was the best and the oldest in the Netherlands, and had professors openly dedicated to the study of Cartesianism and its applications in physics, medicine, logic and metaphysics. Spinoza never matriculated in Leiden, but that did not prevent him from attending courses (Nadler 1999, pp. 163-4)[4]. There were a number of individuals who would have been of interest to Spinoza (Jacob Golius, Abraham Heidanus, Frans van Schooten the younger), but his focus would probably have been on Adriaan Heerebord and Johannes de Raey. Heerebord was devoted to Descartes' thought and we shall see later that Spinoza was probably aware of his writings. By the late 1650s Heerebord had increasing difficulties at the University (due to his drinking problem) and was being eclipsed by de Raey[5]. De Raey was also an enthusiastic Cartesian who lectured on natural philosophy and other subjects including medicine (Nadler 1999, pp. 164-5). During his time in Leiden Spinoza met a number of students interested in the new Cartesian philosophy and in medicine, and who would later be part of his circle of friends: among them Lodewijk Meyer, Johannes Boumeester, and (probably) Adriaan Koerbagh (Nadler 1999, pp. 170-4).

the secondary literature, because the text of his excommunication, while the most virulent of the period, does not give us any precise details (Nadler 1999, p. 129). Some of Spinoza's heretical beliefs, which most likely played an important role, included the denial of the divine origin and the truth of the *Torah*, the immortality of the soul and the existence of a free God who acts as law-giver and as judge (Nadler 1999, p. 136). Israel, however, has argued that there was an economic substrate to the excommunication: Spinoza's family had become ruined financially and he decided to leave the community in order to extricate himself from debts and legal difficulties related to the failed family business (Israel 2001, pp. 171-2).

4 The fact that he never matriculated makes it impossible to know with certainty which courses he attended.

5 Joined by Arnold Geulincx around 1658, who had been forced to flee the University of Louvain due to his Cartesianism (Nadler 1999, p. 165).

It is not always easy to trace the sources of Spinoza's knowledge of philosophical literature. Spinoza very rarely quotes his sources[6], and even when he mentions the authors he refers to he does not always clearly indicate the passages in question[7]. Nevertheless, important studies have been dedicated to the question of Spinoza's intellectual and philosophical debts, starting with the classical work by Harry Austryn Wolfson[8]. Therefore, it is possible to attempt to situate his work in the philosophical context of his age and of his education[9]. The major influences on his thinking were: 1) Jewish philosophers and theologians he was acquainted with during his schooling in the synagogue, 2) classical and medieval philosophers that he came to know either after studying Latin under Van der Enden's tutelage or through the Hebrew authors he read, and 3) early modern philosophers like Bacon or Hobbes, with a special emphasis on Descartes and Cartesian thinkers. The Cartesian element is particularly important, given the fact that Descartes' philosophy was subject to lively debate in Dutch universities and in intellectual circles in the Dutch provinces. A study of Spinoza's letters shows that his circle of correspondents was also attuned to these debates.

Before considering Spinoza's reaction to his predecessor's treatments of a number of key philosophical issues, it is useful to present an account of the Jewish philosophical context Spinoza was familiar with. The emphasis will be on the accounts and evaluations of matter and of the body present in medieval Jewish thinking and on highlighting the main ways in which the themes of teleology, free will and morality were discussed. This account will focus on Maimonides, due to his pivotal role in the development of Jewish Philosophy, and his importance

6 There is a conspicuous absence of references to other authors in the *Ethics*, and yet the arguments indicate Spinoza's acquaintance with pagan, Jewish and Christian sources: Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Maimonides, Descartes, Bacon and Hobbes among others (Nadler 1999, p. 226).

7 To take the example of Spinoza's references to Descartes, who is mentioned two times by name in the *Ethics:* in the Preface to Book III there is no specific reference to any texts, and in the Preface to Book V there are only two precise references during the course of a detailed discussion of Descartes' philosophy.

8 See his monumental work *The Philosophy of Spinoza*, first published in 1934.

9 We possess a list of the books Spinoza had in his library at the time of his death, but his readings were most certainly not limited to that. To consider one example, the only book by Hobbes that was found in his library was *De Cive*. However, Curley believes Spinoza had also read the *Leviathan* (Curley 2005, note 10) and Garrett suggests he also had knowledge of *De Corpore* (Garrett 2003, p. 98).

to Spinoza himself. This will allow us to have a frame of reference in which to place arguments by other thinkers known to Spinoza: Saadya Gaon, Gersonides and Hasdai Crescas.

The Jewish philosophical context

Maimonides

Maimonides's major philosophical work, the *Guide of the Perplexed (*henceforth *Guide),* presents the reader with the following problem: it is a book intentionally full of contradictions. Maimonides begins by telling the reader that this is not a philosophical work that starts from clearly formulated, fundamental principles and then draws the appropriate inferences from these premises. Maimonides's own opinions are presented in a fragmented, scattered manner, sometimes in the guise of parables, and these ambiguities are reflected in the reception of the *Guide* from its earliest commentators up to modern scholarship. In the Preface to the *Guide*, Maimonides warns the reader that, unless he or she is intelligent, well-educated in religious literature, philosophy, the sciences and also faithful to Judaism, the *Guide* can be harmful. Similarly to Averroes, Maimonides distinguishes between exoteric knowledge, suitable for the mass of the faithful and esoteric knowledge, accessible and beneficial to only a select few. Maimonides believes that by introducing contradictions into his treatise, he will allow only the faithful and educated to perceive his true opinions [10]. In the *Guide,* Maimonides discusses the religious tradition of Judaism together with the philosophical arguments of Plato, Aristotle as well as their interpretation in Neo-Platonism and Arabic Philosophy. The difficulty of the *Guide* stems from the fact that the arguments and conclusions reached in these various traditions are not always easily reconcilable, and Maimonides is happy to not express explicit, definitive opinions on many issues. As a consequence, debates regarding Maimonides's views in the *Guide*

10 The exegetical problems raised by an attempt to understand the *Guide* are amplified by the fact that Jewish law forbids the discussion of the biblical accounts of Creation and of Ezekiel's Chariot in public, and it is specifically with these two episodes that Maimonides associates his exposition of natural science and metaphysics (Seeskin 2005, p. 82).

continue to this day (Feldman 2005, pp. 324-325)[11].

In order to best understand the aspects of Maimonides's philosophy relevant to Spinoza's turn to the body, we need to start with an account of medieval Aristotelian cosmology. The universe was conceived as a series of concentric material spheres[12] and had an absolute centre and an outermost limit[13]. Each sphere had an indwelling soul and a separate intellect. The separate intellects formed a hierarchy and were emanations from God. Each indwelling soul attempted to approximate the perfection of the separate intellect and this explained the movement of the spheres. In the case of the sublunary world, the separate intellect was called the Agent or Active Intellect and was to play a prominent role in metaphysical and epistemological discussions throughout the Middle Ages. The events that take place in the sublunary sphere can be explained[14] by the movement and influence of the superior, supralunary spheres, and by God's influence through the Agent Intellect. This Intellect contains in full God's plan for our sphere, i.e. the sum total of relations and forms obtaining in nature. Things arise and go out of being in an attempt to approximate the Agent Intellect and the intellectual forms it contains. It therefore follows that the Agent Intellect is of huge importance in epistemology, not just cosmology (Stern 2005, p. 110). Knowledge of nature can be obtained insofar as the human mind knows the forms and their relations as they are present in the Agent Intellect (Nadler 2001, pp. 82-7)[15]. As we will see, Maimonides

11 A classic example is that of Maimonides's account of creation. He presents three possibilities: creation *ex nihilo*, found in the beginning of the Torah, creation out of pre-existing matter, inspired by Plato's *Timaeus* and the eternity of the world, found in Aristotle's works. Maimonides does not decide in favour of any of these and the controversy about his actual views persists (Feldman 2005, p. 330; Seeskin 2005, pp. 91-4).

12 Maimonides believed there were at least 18 orbs encompassing the earth (Langermann 2003, p.160).

13 This picture of the world was debated in many of its aspects. For instance, the outermost sphere was thought by some to turn and thus initiate the motion of the inner spheres while Gersonides rejected the postulation of this "starless sphere" (Wars 1999, Book V 2.IV; cf. Nadler 2001, p. 82).

14 The degree to which human behaviour is already inscribed in the Agent Intellect depends on the view one takes on determinism and on how divine providence and omniscience are related to free-will. A strong determinist strain is present in the work of Hasdai Crescas, while Gersonides is willing to argue for a "soft" theory of divine omniscience in order to preserve free-will (Feldman 2005, pp. 342-3).

15 This cosmology will be criticized by Hasdai Crescas, who will argue that there is no dis-

argues that any immortality we might hope to obtain is a consequence of the conjunction between our intellect and the Agent Intellect, so understanding it is a matter of the greatest importance[16].

Maimonides's take on these issues, insofar as we can glimpse them from the *Guide,* is influenced by his critique of the capacity that human knowledge has to grasp the truth. The standard for knowledge, i.e. science understood in the Aristotelian sense, consists in knowledge of causes and principles together with rigorous deduction of any demonstrations from these principles. Maimonides, however, sees human knowledge more as a patchwork collection of truths and admissions of ignorance (Seeskin 2005, p. 82).

In the domain of theology, Maimonides denies that we can have knowledge of any of God's attributes. He argues that the only way we can approximate knowledge of God is through negative theology. We start by reading the *Torah* and imagining God as a ruler on a throne, then reach metaphysical knowledge of attributes and we ultimately realize that these attributes are also inadequate. What we are left with is contemplative silence, since the gap between God and creation cannot be bridged (Seeskin 2005, pp. 88-91). Maimonides argues that we can prove that God exists, but we cannot say anything about his essence. Therefore, a priori proofs that start with the postulation of a perfect being are impossible (Seeskin 2005, p. 83). What we can know, however, are God's actions, i.e. the creation. (Seeskin 2005, p. 88) Nevertheless, even here, Maimonides is skeptical of the capacities of the human mind. While he accepts the possibility of knowing the sublunary world scientifically, he argues that the movement of the spheres is not fully graspable by human minds because these spheres are not constant in their movement. This argument needs to be understood in the context of a "crisis" in Ptolemaic astronomy. Planets, as Maimonides observes, do not always move in the same direction and at the same pace; they sometimes appear

tinction between sublunary and supralunary realms and that planets move due to physical properties, not intellects. Therefore, everything is subject to generation and corruption (Robinson 2003, pp. 401-3). In this respect, Crescas anticipates important developments in early modern science.

16 It is not absolutely clear whether Maimonides believes in the immortality of the soul or not (Rudavsky 2010, p. 87).

to move backwards – the so-called apparent retrograde movement. He therefore concluded that the movement of the spheres is irregular, and not as Aristotle described it, i.e. proceeding necessarily and eternally from the deity. It follows that God has created these pockets of irregularity and that general scientific theory (knowledge of laws[17]) does not suffice for knowledge of astronomy (Freudenthal 2005, pp. 141-2; Seeskin 2005, pp. 96-8). In spite of this, Maimonides places great emphasis on knowledge (Stern 2005, p. 105). Of the four perfections he mentions: material possessions, health-perfection of the body, moral virtue and intellectual excellence, he values intellectual perfection the highest[18]. However, if knowledge of God or the supralunary world is inaccessible, what kind of intellectual perfection could Maimonides mean? Stern suggests that Maimonides is referring either to knowledge of teleology in nature in the sublunary realm[19] or to the process of obtaining knowledge, rather than whatever systematic results the process of investigation may yield (Stern 2005, p. 128). An added benefit is that awareness of our ignorance will lead to humility, which Maimonides believes is a virtue (Stern 2005, p. 129).

Knowledge of the sublunary world consists in understanding the forms, i.e. the general nature of things (Nadler 2001, p. 86), together with their order and connections. Understood in an Aristotelian context form is, in contrast with matter, the essence of a thing, what makes it knowable for the intellect. In order to understand how we may know these forms, Maimonides's view of the human being must be outlined. In conformity with hylomorphism, Maimonides views the soul as the form of the body, not as a separate substance. The soul contains faculties (appetite, imagination) that can only be exercised in conjunction with the body. The only exception is the theoretical intellect, which grasps the pure forms.

17 Maimonides doubts the very basis for science, i.e. the constancy of nature (Freudenthal 2005, p. 150).

18 There seems to be widespread agreement on this issue among Maimonides scholars. It would thus be strange of him to advocate that knowledge is the highest good and at the same time deny any prospect of obtaining it.
Those who doubt it do so only because Maimonides is very sceptical of the possibilities of human reason. See Pines (1979) who argues that Maimonides will come to value the practical over the theoretical intellect in a manner similar to Kant's.

19 Maimonides is never sceptical about knowledge in the sublunary realm (Stern 2005, p. 117).

In the context of his epistemology, the faculty of imagination plays a prominent role. Imagination is a storage of images that are not presently perceived and is the ability to compose or separate these images. It is a problematic faculty: Maimonides describes it as a power that supplies the intellect with images and is indispensable to the prophet in translating intellectual intuitions into images communicable to the people. At the same time, it is not constrained by what exists, it offers abstractions rather than universals, and misrepresents immaterial things because it is bound up with the body[20]. In other words, imagination serves a positive role, but it can at the same time be a hindrance to knowledge (Stern 2005, pp. 107-8)[21]. Our intellect has the images supplied by the imagination at its disposal, but must do better than obtain mere abstractions; it must obtain the forms of the things it investigates. At first our intellect, or material intellect, as Maimonides calls it, is almost[22] pure possibility. It becomes actual by abstracting forms from particular images and linking them in demonstrations (Stern 2005, p. 109). The transformation from potential to acquired intellect is explained by the action of the Agent Intellect which illuminates the human mind[23]. This acquired intellect, in virtue of being identical with the forms it cognizes, is eternal. Insofar as Maimonides has a doctrine of the immortality of the soul[24], the acquired intellect is where this doctrine can gain traction. This argument is grounded in the Aristotelian presupposition that the knower, the act of knowing and the object known are identical, and this assumption will turn out to be crucial for Spinoza's

20 A reaction to the *kalam* school of thought, who argued that knowledge is coextensive with imagination (Freudenthal 2005, p. 137).

21 This tension in the evaluation of the epistemological role of imagination is reflected in Spinoza's epistemology.

22 It does contain first ineligibles e.g. the whole is greater than its parts or two things that are equal, are also equal to a third (Stern 2005, p. 108).

23 Stern argues there are two models for understanding the action of the Agent Intellect and that Maimonides employs both. The first stems for the work of Al-Farabi: the Agent Intellect illuminates both the images in imagination and the material intellect. The Agent Intellect does not emanate knowledge, but makes the acquiring of knowledge possible. The second model is Avicenna's: the material intellect cannot do the abstraction itself, so it receives the form from the Agent Intellect (Stern 2005, pp. 110-111).

24 There is no personal immortality for Maimonides, who comes close to Averroes on this point (Nadler 2001, pp. 88-89). For the righteous, the soul will persist after death without interference from the body. In their case the resurrection of the body, an article of faith in Judaism by this time, will be only temporary (Nadler 2001, p. 75).

take on Maimonides. It has been argued in the secondary literature that, in *Ethics* IIP7s, Spinoza is referring to Maimonides when he writes that "Some of the Hebrews seem to have seen this[25], as if through a cloud". It is not difficult to go from Maimonides' argument for the identity of the knower and the known to the Spinozistic conclusion that God knows nature and therefore is identical with it. This also foreshadows the Spinozistic argument that the mind and the body are identical, since the mind is the idea of the body (Feldman 2005, p. 352; Wolfson 1983, vol 2, pp. 24-7).

We can observe that in Maimonides' epistemology, matter is the culprit if we fail to actualize our intellect. In fact, matter is an obstacle in two respects. The first, already alluded to, is the mixture of matter with the form we seek to know. Our imagination only grasps material images and makes it difficult (in Avicenna's account even impossible) for our intellect to cognize the immaterial form imprinted on matter[26]. Our intellect needs to abstract from all the accidents present in an object and present us with the universal form. The second respect in which matter is an obstacle is the fact that our body, insofar as it is matter, distracts us from theoretical pursuits. The body prevents us from focusing on contemplation through its demands, needs and desires. Matter is therefore an obstacle for the apprehension of the divine or the immaterial and for concentration on contemplation (Stern 2005, pp. 117-8; Rudavsky 2010, p. 89). Maimonides also argues that the fall of Adam, symbolic for the fall of humankind, is rooted in the weakness of the body, which makes us turn away from the intellect (Pessin 2009, p. 272)[27]. In Rudavsky's words: "Maimonides is obsessed with the material principle and its deleterious effects upon human behavior." (Rudavsky 2010, p. 138).

At the same time, Maimonides cannot ignore the body due to what Freudenthal has called "the biological foundations of intellectual elitism". In the article by the same name, he argues that Maimonides believes that humans are born unequal

25 That the thinking and the extended substances are in fact identical.

26 Matters are especially difficult when we try to understand wholly immaterial things, for instance God.

27 Maimonides famously compares matter to a married harlot (Guide III.8).

in their intellectual capacity and that this lack of equality is grounded in each person's biological constitution[28] (Freudenthal 2008, p. 293). Since intellectual powers depend not solely on innate capacities, but also on the humoral equilibrium present in the body, Maimonides will focus in his theory of morality on how to achieve this equilibrium (Freudenthal 2008, pp. 297-8).

The highest perfection available to a human being is knowledge. This belief is grounded in the assumption that the human being is fundamentally identical with the theoretical intellect and that the rest of our being is an unfortunate addition to our intellectual essence. As a consequence, moral perfection[29] is inferior to intellectual achievements. Discussions of morality in Maimonides occur in two contexts: propedeutic and consequent (Shatz 2005, p. 170). Propedeutic morality serves the purpose of preparing the individual for attaining intellectual perfection. In order to focus on contemplation of the forms, one must master the passions and cancel any influence of the body on the intellect (Shatz 2005, p. 188)[30]. The function of reason is to rule the whole body so that all its parts acquiesce to reason (Rudavsky 2010, p. 96). This can be achieved through ascetic training[31]. In the medical writings, Maimonides refers to the body as a beast of burden which must be trained and disciplined (Langermann 2003, p. 169). Consequent morality is an overflow of the intellect, once it has become conjoined with the Agent Intellect[32]. The virtues that arise from intellectual perfection are loving kindness, judgement and righteousness (Shatz 2005, p. 186). Morality is an inherently relational virtue, while, according to Maimonides, true perfection can be achieved by any person, even when living in isolation[33]. As a set of norms, morality is useful only in a world of matter, where we are subject to the passions (Shatz 2005, p. 168). The

28 For a less deterministic reading, see Rudavsky (2010, pp. 164-5).

29 When Maimonides speaks of morality, he can refer either to an action-based theory, inspired by Jewish law, or to virtue ethics, inspired by Aristotle, in which character traits, not actions themselves, are evaluated (Shatz 2005, p. 171).

30 Frank (1990) argues that Maimonides aims at the complete elimination of passions.

31 There is a certain ambiguity in Maimonides with regard to asceticism. On the one hand, he argues for the doctrine of the mean in Aristotelian fashion. On the other hand, he is influenced by the Neo-Platonic aversion to matter and body (Rudavsky 2010, pp. 100-1).

32 Whether this consequent morality is a heightened sense of moral action or a new perfection, an imitatio dei, is still up for debate (Rudavsky 2010, p. 193).

33 Moral virtues are conducive to communal order (Shatz 2005, p. 170).

fundamental problem with morality is that right and wrong are conventional terms, not rooted in reality. Moral virtues are therefore inferior to intellectual virtues (Rudavsky 2010, p. 164).

The last point that needs to be addressed is that Maimonides does not consider divine omniscience to be in conflict with free will. We must remember that he never claims that we can know God's attributes; therefore, we do not understand how God could be omniscient and anticipate choices that we believe we are free to make. The ignorance we are forced to profess on these matters may lead to doubts as to whether the world was created in order to reflect our interests and benefits. This view can be construed as an attack on anthropomorphism (Seeskin 2005, p. 101).

Matter and body

In order to grasp the complex understanding of the body in the Jewish Medieval Tradition, we need to place the discussion in the context of the analysis of matter. Matter is understood in relation to the notion of form, and their relation is conceptualized as a necessary play of opposites. It constitutes the fabric of reality and grounds a deep struggle between the body and the spirit. Following Greek thought, matter is "a kind of not-yet-being moment in the metaphysical analysis of things" (Pessin 2009, p. 269)

According to Pessin, there are three ways of understanding matter in Jewish thought. 1) negatively: matter seen as privation, the source of evil. This view, in which matter is inferior to form, can be found in Maimonides or Gersonides. 2) neutrally: in discussions of creation (Nahmanides, Gersonides, Abraham Ibn Ezra) or in Aristotle inspired analysis of physics and metaphysics (Maimonides and Crescas). 3) positively: in the work of Ibn Gabirol, with his exaltation of spiritual matter or, in a different manner, in Spinoza's philosophy (Pessin 2009, pp. 269-270).

1. The negative view on matter is focused on the critique of the body: happiness and rewards in the afterlife depend on intellectual cognition (at least for the rationalist Jewish thinkers) and the body makes this hard to achieve, if not impossible. We

have already seen how Maimonides treats this issue, and we must note that he is followed by Gersonides in urging to turn away from material needs and to care for the body only insofar as it facilitates intellectual pursuits (Pessin 2009, p. 274). Matter stands in the way of our conjunction with the Active Intellect. This understanding of matter is a testimony to the influence of Neo-Platonic Thinking on Jewish Medieval Philosophers[34].

2. The neutral discussion of matter is crucial to philosophical discussions of creation and of the supralunary and sublunary worlds. For the topic of this research, however, the most relevant study is that of the human body as an object of scientific consideration. Maimonides argues that, since the human body is created by God, and since it manifests an incredibly great complexity and perfection, it bears witness to the glory of the creator[35]. Such perfection cannot, in his opinion, be the result of chance, and since nature "has no intelligence and no organizing faculty" it cannot be the result of any mechanical art either. The only option left is divine or supernatural art. In the Appendix to book I of the *Ethics*, Spinoza will tackle this argument and, as we shall see, will argue that the structure of the human body is the result of mechanical art (Wolfson 1983, vol 1, p. 435).

3. The positive evaluation of matter finds a strong proponent in Ibn Gabirol. The matter he discusses is spiritual matter and is completely distinct from earthly, sublunary matter. In fact, it stands above celestial matter and above the Intellect (Pessin 2009, p. 290). Ibn Gabirol is a Neo-Platonist and spiritual matter is an emanation from God. In this context, Pessin warns us not to confuse Ibn Gabirol's positive view of celestial matter with Spinoza's: God is not identical with matter and spiritual matter is far removed from earthly matter for Ibn Gabirol (Pessin 2009, p. 296).

We must now consider, in light of the preceding discussion of Medieval Jewish Philosophy, the key notions Spinoza addresses in his critique of metaphysics illusions.

34 Matter lacks both being and goodness for Plotinus (Pessin 2009, p. 272).
35 Argument also used by Cicero.

Key metaphysical notions

Teleology

Maimonides' epistemology prevents him from engaging in a thorough discussion of the contents of divine will, and so his account of teleology cannot reveal a purpose for creation. Nevertheless, Maimonides never rejects the notion of final causes. He argues that the workings of nature cannot be the result of chance and that the only intelligible explanation of nature relies on the existence of an intelligent creator (Wolfson 1983, vol. 1, pp. 434-5). In the emanationist cosmology Maimonides and other Jewish thinkers adhere to, the cosmos is organized teleologically, since the movements of the spheres, as well as of the sublunary realm, are governed by intellects that emanate from God and are ordered in view of his plan. Gersonides, a thinker who shows much higher consideration for human cognitive faculties than Maimonides[36], argues that the cosmos is pre-ordered according to the divine plan and that we are capable of knowing it [37]. This is essential to Gersonides' theory of the immortality of the soul: the mind is immortal insofar as it knows essences as they are in the Active Intellect. The ordering of the world according to the divine plan is a commonplace of Medieval Jewish Philosophy. However, this is only one facet of teleology. The second is the belief that God has ordered the world for the benefit of human beings. This belief, as we have seen, is rejected by Maimonides due to his commitment to negative theology. He is not the only one to do so: Saadya Gaon[38] also rejects it because God is above any consideration of external purposes (Wolfson 1983, vol. 1, p. 426).

36 In contrast to Maimonides, Gersonides, who was an astronomer, argued that we can know the supralunary realm scientifically.

37 There is some debate about how much God does know according to Gersonides. The traditional view, stemming from Gersonides' immediate reception in 13th and 14th century Provence, takes him to say that God does not know particulars but only the general forms, essences and plan (Manekin 2003, p. 331). Manekin argues that this is not the case and that Gersonides believes that God has knowledge of particulars. Regardless of the merits of the arguments mobilized in this debate, I will refer only to the traditional view here, given that this is the one familiar to Spinoza.

38 Tenth-century rationalist.

Free Will

The medieval discussion of free will cannot be divorced from divine providence. If God is omniscient and directs the affairs of humanity, as the doctrine of divine providence assumes, this means that he already knows what an agent will do, and so the agent cannot be said to be free. Maimonides' solution was to say that God knows in a way radically different from the way humans do, and so we cannot say anything about God's knowledge that would detract from our capacity for free choice[39]. Subsequent Jewish thinkers, due to their commitment to different epistemologies, were not satisfied with this answer. In order to understand this, we need to distinguish between two kinds of providence: general and personal. General providence consists in the belief that God has endowed beings with the means for self-preservation. This line of thought, inherited from Aristotle, only considers species and not particular individuals. The second kind of providence depends on the personal relation between God and the individual. The more an individual understands forms, the more she is conjoined with the Agent Intellect and therefore the closer she is to God (Manekin 2003, p. 311). Gersonides' arguments in favour of free will and contingency stem from this distinction. God knows the order of nature, determined by the influence of the spheres, and also knows the Agent Intellect. However, God does not know if, at a specific moment, an agent will perform this or that action: this is because a human agent can choose between following his natural disposition and acting according to intellectual providence (Manekin 2003, p. 313). In contrast to these attempts at preserving free will, Crescas foreshadows Spinoza in suggesting that freedom of choice may be an illusion (Wolfson 1983, vol. 1, p. 428).

The Moral World Order

The premise that grounds the belief in a moral world order is, according to Schopenhauer, that: "Every great pain, be it bodily or spiritual, states what we deserve; for it could not affect us if we did not deserve it." (WWV II 664). Within the Monotheistic context of Jewish though, we should add that the retribution for

39 However, for an argument in favour of determinism in Maimonides, see Rudavsky (2010, p. 154).

what we deserve is meted out by God, and that it does not necessarily consist in punishment, but also in happiness. The discussion of the moral world order and therefore of reward and punishment must take into consideration the following parameters: who is being rewarded or punished, what reward and punishment consist in, and when and why is the retribution meted out.

Gersonides joins Maimonides in arguing that what makes us truly human is the part of our intellect that is rational. The theoretical intellect is the part of us that can achieve immortality, if it gains knowledge of the essences[40]. Within this anthropology that minimizes the role of corporeality and the functions of the soul associated with it, the rewards and punishment dispensed by God truly affect only the intellect. In his interpretation of the book of Job, Maimonides argues that Job suffers only because he is concerned with material, bodily and moral goods. If he were a wise man who understood his true essence, he would realize that all his suffering does not affect the highest part of his soul. Maimonides bases his interpretation on the description of Job as a morally virtuous man, but not as an intellectually perfect one (Rudavsky 2010, p. 146). The consequence of this view is that the reward of the virtuous man is the enjoyment of intellectual cognition. Those who fail to achieve this perfection are condemned to be bound to their bodies and to the lower corporeal functions. During the Renaissance, Judah Abravanel, also known as "Leone Ebreo", will pick up on this intellectualist tradition and modify it in two ways that are important for Spinoza: 1) he identifies the Agent Intellect with God and so makes knowledge of essences knowledge of God; and 2) he describes the relation of the individual to God not only in terms of obtaining knowledge, but also as a relation of intellectual love of the Deity. God is therefore the formal, efficient, and final cause of all reality (Feldman 2003, p. 427). While Spinoza will of course depart greatly from the Neo-Platonic Judah Abravanel, his influence is apparent[41].

The problem that the notion of a moral order raises is the apparent absence of one. The problem of theodicy, as it would later be named by Leibniz, runs through

40 Gersonides is not as ambiguous as Maimonides about the possibility of immortality: the intellect, insofar as it knows forms, is eternal.

41 Abravanel's book *The Dialogue of Love* was found in Spinoza's library after his death.

Jewish thought. The issue has as its premise the belief that God is all-powerful, all-knowing and benevolent, and yet allows the virtuous to suffer and the wicked to prosper. The solution suggested by Saadya Gaon is the following: all humans perform good and evil actions, the only difference lying in the proportion of good and evil actions. Therefore, each human being deserves a share of punishment, but also of reward. It is up to God to decide when the reward and the punishment are meted out, whether in this life or the next (Nadler 2001, p. 150). Saadya Gaon also differs from Maimonides and Gersonides in his discussion of the body in relation to the afterlife. While they all focus on the role played by the Intellect, Saadya believes that all humans, righteous or wicked, suffer from the separation of the soul from the body upon death. The difference in suffering is only one of degree (Stroumsa 2003, pp. 85-6).

The question of why divine retribution is dispensed has two possible answers: either it is the result of good or evil actions on the part of the individual, whether in accordance with general moral principles or with the Law of the Torah, or it is the result of intellectual perfection. It should come as no surprise that the "rationalists" Maimonides and Gersonides focus on intellectual perfection. They encounter opposition, however, from Crescas, who argues that immortality is not intellectual. The individual soul persists after death and is rewarded with pleasure as a consequence of its obedience to God's laws. Immortality, therefore, is not limited to philosophers (Robinson 2003, p. 406).

The Existence of Evil

Spinoza's dismissal of evil as a figment of imagination has its roots in Jewish philosophy[42]. Its origins can be traced to Maimonides, who argues that all of God's creation is good, and that evil can only be spoken of in relation to us: "Evils are evil only in relation to a certain thing […] All evils are privations […] It cannot be said of God that he directly creates evil […] His works are all perfectly good" (Guide III.10). In the early Short Treatise Spinoza argues that good and evil are entities of reason (KV I.10). Spinoza's argument is that good

42 Spinoza's dismissal of moral values is more radical than Maimonides' in that he rejects both good and evil as illusions.

and evil exist only in our understanding and not in nature and are therefore only relations. This means that we call things good or evil depending on their relation to us and this judgment says nothing about the essence of things. This provides Spinoza with the foundation on which to argue that the moral values of good and evil are illusory insofar as they are understood to express universal and absolute values that have independent existence. In the *Ethics*, Spinoza will speak of good and evil in the moral sense as entities of imagination, instead of reason (Wolfson 1983, vol. 1, p. 437).

1b. Spinoza's critique of metaphysics

References to key ways in which other sources, particularly early modern philosophy, influenced Spinoza's critique of metaphysics will be made in the course of the following discussion. This will begin with arguably the most important illusion Spinoza counters, the belief in final causes.

Teleology

Spinoza argues teleology is a specifically human concept that arises out of the ignorance of true causes and out of desire. According to Maimonides, there are two ways of rejecting final causes: either claiming that everything is the result of the arbitrary will of God or that everything is the product of mere chance and accident. Spinoza rejects both approaches (Wolfson 1983, p. 423).

EIp16 is of paramount importance to understanding why God does not act teleologically according to Spinoza: From the essence (or adequate definition, as the intellect conceives it) of a thing (*res*) there follow, by necessity, multiple properties of that thing[43]. The more reality a thing has, the more properties follow from its essence. God, having an infinite number of attributes which express an absolutely infinite essence, has the greatest reality. Therefore, an infinity of things follow from God's essence in infinite ways (Gueroult 1968, p. 260). In the first corollary to proposition 16, Spinoza draws the inference that God is the efficient

43 Nadler argues that there is no difference between causal and logical necessity in Spinoza. The distinction only shows there are two ways of explaining how something is necessitated: internally, from its essence, or externally, due of tis antecedent conditions (Nadler 2006, p. 87).

cause of all things - since all things follow from God's essence or nature. Given this understanding of God's absolutely infinite production of things in nature, we can see why final causes have no place in Spinoza's system. God might not produce all things directly, but all the causal chains can be traced to God as the absolute first cause (EIp16c3).

In EIapp[44], which is dedicated to unmasking the errors behind the belief in teleology, Spinoza reveals the reasons for paying special attention to final causes: the prejudices that he exposes, e.g. the existence of good and evil, the existence of order and confusion in nature, the notions of praise, blame, sin and merit, all stem from an unwarranted faith in teleology[45]. This has led one commentator to argue that "Final causes [...] stand for almost everything that Spinoza opposes" (Allison 1987, p. 37). He rejects them because they can only lead to inadequate and unscientific explanations, and they stand in the way of achieving self-understanding and joy[46]. Spinoza's argument in the Appendix can be divided into three sections. The first shows why people believe that final causes exist. Here, Spinoza claims that humans are inclined by nature to embrace this prejudice. The second section contains arguments for the thesis that final causes are only an illusion. In the third section Spinoza shows how other prejudices follow from teleology. Before we go on to consider each section in detail, two general remarks are needed. First,

44 Spinoza claims that the rationale behind him writing the Appendix is that, even after the demonstrations of Book I, "many prejudices remain that could, and can, be a great obstacle to men's understanding the connection of things in the way I have explained it" and that he considers it "worthwhile to submit them here to the scrutiny of reason". This raises the question of why and in what way Spinoza believes his demonstrations in the first book are insufficient and need the addition of an Appendix. In order to answer this question it is useful to situate Spinoza's writings and, more specifically, Spinoza's critique of theology and associated illusions, within two contexts: philosophical and political, or doctrinal and historical (Balibar 1998, p. 9). The demonstrations in Book I can be read primarily from a purely philosophical perspective, insofar as they offer adequate knowledge of God and nature. It is nevertheless insufficient to read Spinoza only as a pure metaphysician whose interests lie exclusively in uncovering eternal truths. As is shown by his many political writings, he is also concerned with the deleterious practical effects of metaphysical illusions under various guises. EIapp can be read as an attempt to address directly the specific formulations of metaphysical illusions prevalent in Spinoza's historical context.

45 Spinoza here follows the Cartesian principle that in order to dispel a number of errors, it is sufficient to reject their common source (Gueroult 1968, p. 393).

46 EIapp is a direct refutation of Cartesianism (together with its residual Christian dogmatism) and its refusal to exclude teleology in discussions of God (Gueroult 1968, pp. 399-400).

Spinoza seems to conflate two senses of teleology. It is one thing to believe that everything in nature, including God and humans, act on account of an end. It is another to say that God has made all things for the benefit of mankind[47]. The first meaning can indeed adequately describe the views on teleology that govern the medieval cosmological picture, and Spinoza's formulation is also very close to the way Heereboord, a contemporary Cartesian, explains teleology (Wolfson 1983, p. 425)[48]. The second, however, is much more controversial, and we have seen how both Saadya Gaon and Maimonides reject this kind of anthropomorphism. The second remark is that, while it seems clear that Spinoza rejected a teleological explanation for divine causation and the world as a whole, his understanding of the world does not necessarily exclude teleological explanations in all cases. Bennett argues that Spinoza surreptitiously introduces teleology into the discussion of self-preservation in the beginning of Book III of the *Ethics* (Bennett 1984, pp. 244-5). He argues that Spinoza is allowed to infer from propositions 4-6 of Book III only that individuals have a self-preserving tendency i.e. they resist a harmful external force. If an individual does something, then that action will help her. However, Spinoza concludes that if something benefits an individual, then she will do it. The premise here implies that the actions of an agent are explained by her intentions and beliefs, and that final causes do play a role in accounting for behaviour. A similar criticism is formulated by Nietzsche in JGB 13 where he claims that Spinoza makes use of "superfluous teleological principles". Nadler suggests that one way of dealing with this is to say that Spinoza is fine with using teleology in the explanation of conscious human actions, but nothing else (Nadler 2006, p. 198). After all, Spinoza writes in EIapp that "men act always on account of an end". There are two main difficulties with this approach. The first is that Spinoza tries to displace a teleological self-understanding of humans with one formulated in terms of efficient causes, structured according to the geometrical

47 The first meaning of teleology is different from the second because the first meaning does not imply that God is benevolent and therefore directs his actions towards the benefit of mankind.

48 Compare Spinoza's "all things in nature, like men, work for some end; and indeed it is thought to be certain that God himself directs all things to some sure end." with Heerebord's "all natural things work for some end, or, rather, they work to some end, since they are directed by God to an end pre-determined for each thing" (Wolfson 1983, vol. 1, p. 425).

order: "I shall consider human actions and appetites just as if it were a question of lines, planes and squares." (EIIIpref). The second is that it is not clear how Spinoza can be entitled to distinguish between (teleological) explanations of human actions on the one hand and (non-teleological) explanations of inanimate object or animals, on the other hand (Nadler 2006, p. 198). Furthermore, the issue is complicated by the fact that Spinoza does not have a fully developed (if any) account of consciousness[49]. This will be discussed in greater detail in section II.2 of this chapter and in the comparative section.

The first section of the Appendix has two premises: humans are born ignorant of causes and are conscious of their appetite to seek their own advantage. Therefore, humans believe themselves to be free[50] and always act with a view to their advantage. It follows from this that when trying to understand what has been done, humans do not look for the efficient, but for the final cause. If they are not told what the final cause of an action was, they look to what usually determines them to act in such a way, and assume the same explanation is valid for the action they have observed. This way of thinking shows its deleterious effects in the attempt to understand nature. Humans encounter many things which can be used to their advantage and infer that they have been prepared by someone else for their use. They know these things are not man-made (e.g. eyes for seeing, teeth for chewing, plants and animals for food, etc.) and so reach the conclusion that a God or a number of deities, endowed with freedom, have created them. They know nothing of these rulers and so believe that they must be similar to human beings. They therefore believe that God must be worshipped, since he desires to be held in the highest honor by the men he has helped:

> Hence, they maintained that the gods direct all things for the use of men in order to bind men to them and be held by men in the highest honor. So it has happened that each of them has thought up from his own temperament

49 Attempts to find a theory of consciousness in either Spinoza's doctrine of "ideas of ideas" or in his account of the complexity of the human mind/body do not seem to be entirely convincing (see Matheron, 1994a; Nadler, 2008; Wilson, 1999).

50 Crescas anticipates Spinoza by saying freedom of choice may be a delusion (Wolfson 1983, vol. 1 p. 428).

> different ways of worshipping God, so that God might love him above all the rest, and direct the whole of Nature according to the needs of their blind desire and insatiable greed (EIapp II/79).

When confronted with the fact that inconveniences happen to the pious and impious alike, humans appeal to ignorance of divine judgment. This constitutes the bridge to the second section of the appendix. As in the case of the definition of teleology that he presents, Spinoza here fails to distinguish between the multiple attempts at theodicy in the medieval tradition. The position he attacks is attributed by Maimonides to the Ashariya school (Wolfson 1983, vol.1, p. 431), but other explanations for the existence of evil have been suggested.

The second section begins with a reference to EIp16 (already considered above) and to the two corollaries of EIp32. The thesis that final causes are nothing but human fictions is based on the premise that modes follow necessarily from divine nature, not from the arbitrary freedom of divine will. Proposition 32 and its corollaries demonstrate that the will is a mode of thinking and, therefore, is determined by a necessary cause. This is true whether the will is infinite or not. Spinoza believes that the arguments he has presented so far should be sufficient for the dismissal of final causes. However, he adds four more considerations on this topic, meant to show the absurdities implied by teleology. The first consideration shows how final causes reverse the order of Nature. Teleology consists in considering the ends of things to be their cause and their real (efficient) cause an effect. In other words, it makes what is prior by nature posterior, or what is "supreme and most perfect" imperfect[51]. As justification for the last formulation, Spinoza refers to propositions 21 to 23 of the first book of the *Ethics*. Within the project of uncovering how modes follow from the essence of substance, Propositions 21 to 23 have the role of explaining the passage from the eternal, infinite and indivisible attributes to infinite modes. We know from E1P16 that God produces an infinity of modes, but the propositions under consideration here show that between attributes and finite modes we must place infinite modes[52]. Infinite modes are eternal and necessary

51 Perfection is power according to EIp11s i.e. power to exist and to produce effects (Gueroult 1968, p. 266).

52 In Letter LXIV to Schuller, Spinoza writes that the absolutely infinite understanding of

through their cause (the attribute). They possess second order infinity and do not involve absolute indivisibility, in opposition to the attributes (Letter XII to Meyer; cf. Gueroult 1968, p. 309). The power of the attributes is expressed as a whole through the infinite modes, but not so in the finite modes[53]. Given that Spinoza understands perfection as a measure of the power of a thing, we can appreciate why the doctrine of infinite modes is invoked in this context: God, expressed through the attributes, produces first infinite and then finite modes, and the infinite modes, being produced first, are more perfect. Teleology would like to put ends first and judge them to be the standard for perfection, but this would mean that creation occurs for the sake of finite modes, the least perfect things in nature (EIapp II/80). The second consideration proves that the doctrine of final causes takes away God's perfection, since it means that God wants something that he lacks. Spinoza dismisses as a mere verbal quibble the distinction between end of assimilation and end of need which was used by scholastics in order to support teleology[54]. To say that God creates for an end of assimilation implies that God does not work for his own benefit, but for that of things outside him. However, before creation, there are no things outside God for which he could work (Gueroult 1968, p. 396). Therefore, Spinoza argues that if God creates something and works for a certain end then he lacks something and so is not perfect (EIapp II/80). The third consideration is aimed at rejecting the belief that every occurrence in the natural world is the result of God's arbitrary decree. This belief has two premises: the first is that things themselves have no power and that they must be continuously created anew by God, an idea found both in Descartes and Heerebord, and the second is that we are not aware of the reasons why God makes everything happen,

God and motion and rest are infinite modes under the attributes of thought and extension respectively. He also says that there is a mediated infinite mode under the attribute of extension, the *facies totius universi*. He never mentions an infinite mediated mode under the attribute of thought (Gueroult, 1968, p. 314).

53 Infinite modes could be understood as the sum of the essences and of their existence under any given attribute (Gueroult 1968, p. 319) or as "the most universal and basic principles that govern all of the other things which belong to that aspect of the universe represented by the attribute" (Nadler 2006, p. 89).

54 The notion of end of assimilation refers to the idea that, as Heerebord put it, "God has done all things for an end … by making them like himself" God does not need anything but wants to make the objects of creation similar to himself (Wolfson 1983, vol. 1, p. 432).

but that there is no other way of explaining the great number of circumstances that concur in order for any event to take place. This second premise can be traced back to the Asharyia School, and is based on the same appeal to ignorance we saw in their attempt at a theodicy (Wolfson 1983, vol. 1, p. 434). Spinoza rejects the notion that limited things have no power, because, as expressions of God or nature, their essence is precisely a certain amount of power. He also rejects the attempt to understand natural occurrences as the result of a divine arbitrary decree because this belief amounts to nothing but the desire to find refuge in ignorance (*ignorantiae asylum)*.

The fourth consideration is aimed at countering the assumption that the structure of the human body is too complex to be produced by any mechanical art[55] and so must be the result of divine causation. This argument had been previously used by Cicero and Maimonides (using the example of the structure of the eye) and is based on the assumption that there are only two possible causes for the generation of the human body: divine art and chance. Maimonides believes nature possesses no intelligence or organizing faculty and so he does not entertain the possibility the mechanical art could have created the human body which Spinoza clearly does (Wolfson 1983, vol. 1, p. 435).

The third section focuses on the consequences of the belief in final causes. Teleology leads one to believe that "what is more important in each thing is what is most useful". Therefore, each person judges things according to the disposition of her brain and accepts the affections of the imagination as true. This leads to skepticism and lack of any true knowledge, since every person is disposed and affected differently. The target of criticism here is not so much subjectivity as the fact that the judgments made follow from imagination, not from adequate knowledge (Gueroult 1968, pp. 397-8).

Free Will

Spinoza is just as critical of the notion of free will as he is of teleology. The premises for his critique of presumed human free will are laid down in the discussion of

55 Mechanism will be discussed in section II.

God in Book I. Proposition 11 is crucial because here Spinoza argues that God must be conceived as *causa sui:* first, he shows that God's essence involves his existence and then, from the assumption that there must be a cause for everything that exists, he infers that the cause of God's existence is internal to God. This proposition serves not only the purpose of explaining God's nature, but also leads to establishing the standard according to which we judge whether a thing is free or not. God is absolutely free not because he is capable of both doing and not doing something – he is not (Nadler 2006, p. 187) – but because he is determined to act solely by his own nature[56]. True freedom consists in acting solely out of one's own nature (EIIId4)[57].

If free will is understood as the capacity to do a thing or forbear doing it (Nadler 2006, p. 186) then humans are no more capable of this than God is[58]. The source of the belief in free will is the fact that humans are conscious of their actions and appetites but unaware of causes (confirmed by EIIp35s). Starting with Book III Spinoza will try to show a path towards freedom conceived as determination by one's own nature, but this should not be confused with free will. This line of thought is present from Spinoza's earliest surviving writing: in the *Short Treatise* he writes that true freedom does not consist in being able to do or omit something (KV I.4), i.e. it should be not confused with spontaneity.

The attack on free will can be read as a reaction to the Cartesian doctrine outlined in the fourth Meditation. Descartes' argument is that the will and the understanding are different faculties. Human judgment presents ideas to the will for consideration and the latter can affirm, deny or suspend judgment on them. Spinoza's argument is that there are no general faculties, only particular ideas and volitions. Furthermore, ideas and volitions are not external to each other,

56 God creates everything out of his own nature, including ideas of all existing modes. This line of thought is directed against Gersonides' claim that God does not know particulars.

57 In letter LVI to Boxel Spinoza argues that there is no real opposition between free and determined, but between being caused by external and by internal causes. Only in the latter case can one be called free, and only God is absolutely free.

58 Developing the suggestion about absence of free will found in Crescas and moving away from Maimonides' argument for free will, argument grounded in our ignorance of divine omniscience.

but any idea already implies volition[59] (EIIp49s). The whole decision-making process described by Descartes is an illusion and particular ideas and volitions are determined (Nadler 2006, pp. 187-8).

Spinoza finds it remarkable that we believe the mind not to be determined, even if the body is subject to causal laws and has no freedom. This mistake is made by those who are unaware that the mind and the body are one and the same thing (Nadler 2006, p. 186). Acknowledging the identity between mind and body established in IIp13 is not only the best way for dispelling the illusion of free will, but is also the starting premise for promoting freedom understood in an adequate manner.

The existence of a moral world order

Spinoza's attack on the notion a moral world order is better understood if it is divided into arguments against an imaginary order in nature and then against a particular variety of this order based on moral concepts.

The only order present in nature is the intelligible one presented in the *Ethics:* nature can be explained using the key notions of substance, attributes and infinite or finite modes. Each finite thing has a cause, which in turn has a cause and so on, ad infinitum. Human beings who are ignorant of the order and connection of things judge things according to their imagination and consider things to be well ordered if they can "easily remember them" (EIapp II/82). They therefore believe that God has disposed things for their own benefit. They thus "unknowingly attribute imagination to God" (EIapp II/82) because they claim that God acts according to the way they imagine things to be well ordered, rather than from God's intrinsically rational nature. What the ignorant call confusion is their lack of ability to understand the true order of nature[60]. Their lack of understanding stems from their belief that universal ideas are adequate[61].

59 A volition consists in assenting to or denying the judgment contained in the idea.

60 Spinoza's use of the term confusion likely refers to and attacks what Maimonides calls "absence of order" and Gersonides and Crescas "ill-order" (Wolfson 1983, vol. I, p. 437).

61 Spinoza could have found the idea that "species and other general ideas are only things of reason, whilst everything that exists outside the mind is an individual object, or an aggregate of individual objects" in Maimonides (Wolfson 1983, vol. 1, p. 437).

The moral world order refers to the idea that God creates the world and governs it in such a way that good is repaid and evil punished. This could happen in this life or the next, as Saadya argues. The concept of eternity of the mind present in Book V of the *Ethics* has been subject to much scholarly debate[62], but what seems clear is that Spinoza does not entertain any notion of temporal immortality[63] after death. Furthermore, the part of the mind that is eternal is not subject to divine judgment and retribution. It therefore follows that the only possible moral order is in this life and that divine providence must guarantee it. However, Spinoza rejects both types of providence discussed by medieval thinkers. He cannot accept general providence, since God does not endow beings with the means for self-preservation. He merely produces everything that follows from his nature, regardless of whether these things can preserve their own being or not. Spinoza cannot accept personal providence either, since God cannot be said to love or tend to the needs of any individual. Even the person who has adequate knowledge and loves God "cannot strive that God should love him in return" (EVp19) since God is without any passions, whether they be of joy or sadness (EVp17)[64].

The existence of evil

The word "malum" that Spinoza uses can be translated either as 'evil' or as 'bad'. In EIapp he focuses on what we would translate as 'evil'. Those who are ignorant of true causes will regard everything only with respect to how it affects them. If an event suits them then they call it good, while if the event harms them in any way they call it evil. They mistakenly believe the event or thing is evil in itself when they should just notice that it is contrary to their nature[65]. In EIVpref the

62 See, for instance, Curley (1988), Hampshire (1951), Moreau (1994), Morrison (1994), Nadler (2001), Wolfson (1934) or Yovel (1989).

63 Temporality is a concept essentially different from the a-temporal notion of eternity. The concept of temporal immortality refers to the hypothesis that the soul might endure after death for an unlimited period of time.

64 Spinoza's God or nature is not the same benevolent divinity we find in the stoics (Matheron 1994b, p. 156), but it must be mentioned that Spinoza transforms, in the *TTP*, the two meanings of the concept of divine providence. In Chapter 3 (pp. 45-6) he speaks of the external help (*auxilium)* given by God, which is the "fixed and immutable order or nature" and the internal help, which is the power specific to each human nature. One may wonder whether the word "help" is ironic.

65 An idea already present in Maimonides (Wolfson 1983, vol. 1, p. 437).

significance of "malum" is closer to what we would call bad. Human beings tend to evaluate things according to the ideal picture[66] they have in their minds of how that thing should be. For instance, they have an ideal of a house and they evaluate the perceived object according to how closely it approximates their ideal. This implies that humans believe they know the intentions of the author of an object. While this is already highly problematic in the case of man-made objects, it is a completely inadequate way of considering objects produced by nature without any human interference. Spinoza argues that nature does not act according to final causes and so there is no ideal according to which we are to judge the products of nature. Evaluating a thing as good or bad may say something about us and about our ignorance, but it cannot say anything about nature. Good or bad, or perfection and imperfection[67], are notions that human have devised and that are inadequate.

Spinoza does not do away with the notions of good or bad/evil and perfection or imperfection all together. What he does is change their meaning so that it suits his thought. As he argues in the same preface to Book IV, he does want to keep the notion of good in order to designate an ideal that humans should approximate. The details of this notion, together with the similarities with Nietzsche's imperative to think "Beyond Good and Evil", will be explored in the comparative chapter, but it suffices to say here that it is not a moral ideal. Attaining this ideal is a question of increasing one's power of acting, rather than behaving according to some confused and arbitrary norms or ideals that we imagine.

The unselfish

What does Spinoza understand by altruism, why does he criticize it as an illusion, and what is the alternative he offers? The last question will be dealt with in greater detail in the analysis of Spinoza's normative thinking in the comparative section. For the moment, it is important to formulate the guiding questions that will allow us to investigate the nature of Spinoza's normative position and to compare it with Nietzsche's.

66 Spinoza's critique of universals will be outlined in section II.1.

67 Taken here to describe the greater or lesser correspondence between the intention of the agent and the outcome of her actions, and not in the spinozistic sense of greater or lesser power.

Della Rocca has argued that, given the framework of Spinoza's system, we need to understand altruism in the following manner:

> It is possible for an object x to strive to do F, not because such an action would increase x's power of acting or offset a decrease in x's power of acting, but because such an action would increase another individual's (y's) power of acting or offset a decrease in y's power of acting. (Della Rocca 1995, p. 231).

Spinoza's criticism of an altruistic explanation for our actions is that it fails to grasp the essence of (human) nature. In EIIIp6 and 7 Spinoza argues that the essence of each thing is its conatus, i.e. the striving to persevere in its being. This effort follows solely from the essence of each thing, and not from the essence of anything else. In IVp25 Spinoza uses this argument in order to show that nothing strives to persevere in its being for the sake of another, but only for its own sake. From this it follows that if we believe we are acting for the sake of another we are merely deluded, and so offer an inadequate interpretation of our actions. Della Rocca uses two examples in order to show how the apparently unselfish motives behind our actions are in fact concealed egoism according to Spinoza (Della Rocca 1995, pp. 232-3). The first example is the situation when I am motivated to assist another person out of pity. According to Spinoza pity is a form of sadness (EIIIp22s) and so when acting out of pity I am actually trying to alleviate my own sadness (EIIIp27c3dem)[68]. The second example is when we strive to make others act according to the dictates of reason (EIVp37). What might on the surface appear a noble altruistic impulse is in fact the desire to make others useful to us, since nothing is more beneficial to us than other human beings living according to reason (EIVp37dem).

Spinoza's critique of altruism is part of his project of undermining traditional forms of morality found in the Jewish and Christian traditions of his time. The question we must turn to now is what Spinoza's own ethical project is. If we grant Spinoza the premise that human beings act only selfishly, we must ask whether his

68 Pity is bad and useless (EIIIp50) and humility is not a virtue (EIIIp53) - contra Maimonides.

ethics amounts to an endorsement of unmitigated egoism and moral relativism. Spinoza's answer is that he advocates an enlightened form of egoism, which consists in the enhancement of power (according to reason). In the comparative section we will therefore have to ask why Spinoza values the enhancement of power, why the process of enhancement should be guided by reason, and how Spinoza's normative project is based on an adequate understanding of the essence of human beings. Once we understand Spinoza's ethical and political arguments in the context of his commitment to immanence, naturalism and an ontology of power we can better see how his commitment to the enhancement of the power of other human beings depends not on altruistic principles but on enlightened egoism.

Spinoza's critique of substance

In order to better situate the five points mentioned within Spinoza's general philosophical project, it is crucial to sketch the dominating feature of his metaphysics, namely his critique of the metaphysics of substance, especially in its Cartesian form. This is important because it shows how Spinoza's understanding of substance precludes any notion of teleology or free will in God, as well as how the doctrine of immortal, separable souls is an absurdity. It further has the added benefit of showing the inseparability of body and mind.

Spinoza's critique of substance is not aimed at discarding the notion of substance altogether, as will be the case with Nietzsche. It is rather aimed at a reconfiguration of this fundamental notion. There are two salient features of this transformation that need to be emphasised in the context of the present research. First, Spinoza rejects an understanding of God or substance without the attribute of extension. This implies that the body and the material are not metaphysically inferior or subordinated to the soul or thinking substance. The essence of a mode of substance (e.g. a human being) is not determined by the attribute of thought alone [69]. This will have crucial consequences for Spinoza's arguments in Book V of the *Ethics*, when he will consider the part of the mind that is eternal and will argue, as will be

69 In contrast to so many of his Jewish predecessors' hostile attitude towards matter and the body.

shown later in this thesis (section II.2), that there is also an eternal essence of the body. This view will also have important consequences for Spinoza's physics, since he will argue that motion is inherent to matter and not given to it by a transcendent cause, i.e. God. This stands as a guarantee for the autonomy of the physical, given that explanations in natural philosophy can be given without recourse to causes outside the attribute of extension itself. Secondly, Spinoza argues from the very beginning of Book I of the Ethics that there is no plurality of substances. This means that there is no plurality of entities that can be considered in and through themselves (i.e. substances), in isolation. Given that adequate understanding mirrors the order of nature, there can be nothing in nature that can be understood in isolation from everything else. For human beings, this means that, as Spinoza famously put it in EIIIpref, the human is not "a dominion within a dominion". Human beings cannot be understood on their own, do not have free will and must struggle in order to increase their power to act and so their freedom. The *Ethics* is an account of how this enhancement is possible and Spinoza's turn to the body is an integral part of this project. The question of how Spinoza's revaluation of the notion of substance and his critique of metaphysical values relate to Nietzsche's will be discussed in the third chapter.

I.2. Spinoza's attitude to contemporary science

Spinoza does not play a fundamental role in the history of science. He is far from having the same degree of influence on the development of 17th Century science as his famous contemporaries, Descartes or Leibniz. Nevertheless, he was well aware of the scientific developments of his own age, corresponded with some of the leading scientific figures in Europe and his philosophical thought is a testament to the profound influence scientific thought had on him (Barbaras 2007, p. 22; L'écrivain 1986, p. 16). This section will first investigate some of the ways in which Spinoza's thought was informed by science and will then proceed to analyse Spinoza's critique of scientific thinking.

It might seem surprising that a thesis dedicated to the turn to the body deals with Spinoza's relation to science as a whole. This is the result of a peculiarity of 17th Century science, namely the lack of distinction between scientific disciplines.

Aristotle had previously argued for the need to distinguish between various domains of theoretical knowledge. Distinctions stem from either the specific principles that different disciplines use, or from the various degrees of clarity or certainty they offer[70]. Modern researchers would also, of course, distinguish between, for instance physics, anatomy and biology. Spinoza's time, however, sees many attempts to undermine the distinctions between the various methods and conceptual apparatuses at work in different sciences[71]. Descartes holds that everything in nature can be accounted for using mechanical principles (Hatfield 1992, p. 335; Shapin 1996, p. 56). Boyle argues that two principles, matter and motion, are enough in order to explain the entire physical world (Shapin 1996, p. 46). Leibniz opines that "*everything happens mechanically in nature*, that is, according to certain mathematical laws prescribed by God". Bodies can be understood only through reference to "magnitude, figure, situation, and changes in these, either partial or total" (PPL 1989, 189)[72]. This should not, nonetheless, lead us to conclude that there was widespread consensus among the leading scientists regarding the nature of the method to be employed (Shapin 1996, pp. 3-4). This appeal to mechanistic principles is a result of the dissatisfaction with the old, scholastic physics[73]. Some scholars have argued that what made the scientific

70 In the *Posterior Analytics*, the locus classicus for his discussion of science, Aristotle argues it consists in demonstrations that start from primary, immediate and true principles, known with certainty. Science gives us knowledge of what is necessary, i.e. cannot be otherwise (see Posterior Analytics 71b9-72b4, 73a21-74a3). Of the principles used in scientific demonstration "some are proper to each science and others common – but common by analogy" (76a37-40). There are primitive principles in each genus (74b23-4), and one cannot prove anything by crossing between genera (75a38-39).
In the case of practical philosophy, Aristotle speaks of the "clarity that accords with the subject matter", because "one should not seek out precision in *all* arguments alike". Political art examines things that "admit of much dispute and variability" and so it is enough if one demonstrates the truth "roughly" (Nicomachean Ethics 1094b12-1094b25).

71 'Physiology', for example, had two coexisting and related meanings in the seventeenth century: the study of nature in general and the study of the human body as a part of nature (Hatfield 1992, p. 338).

72 Letter to Herman Conring, dated March 19th, 1678.

73 This should not mask the continuities. It has been argued, for instance, that the distinction between primary and secondary qualities can be traced back to Ockham (Dijksterhuis 1975, p. 475). We can observe the debts of early modern scientists to their medieval predecessors in Boyle's preservation of the notion of form: what he does is change the meaning of the notion from substantial form to structure of the corpuscles that make up the object (Dijksterhuis 1975, p. 483).

revolution a coherent movement was not an agreement about the correct way of explaining nature. It was rather a common rejection of the scholastic tradition in natural philosophy (Clarke 1992, p. 258; Shapin 1996, pp. 54-55, 133)[74].

In spite of the numerous differences, it is possible to group scientific developments in early modern Europe under the heading of the project of the mechanisation of nature. Mechanism consists in the belief that nature is composed out of particles or corpuscles of matter that are fundamentally inert. They are set in motion by collisions which always imply direct physical contact. Therefore, no action at a distance is allowed. The observable forms and qualities of things are best understood in terms of the size, motion, rest and position of particles (Macherey 1995, pp. 745-6). In order to understand what Spinoza thought science had to say about the body during the 17th Century we have to gain a more detailed understanding of what mechanism means, together with the specific accounts of the body offered by those thinkers particularly important to Spinoza. Special attention will therefore be paid to Descartes' and Hobbes' accounts of the body.

2a. The influence

The mechanisation of nature comprised four distinct elements (Shapin 1996, p. 13):

1) The use of mechanistic "metaphors" in order to understand natural processes. Scientists like Kepler, Descartes or Boyle elaborated analogies between the natural phenomena they observed, whether the movement of the planets or the behaviour of natural bodies, and the causal workings of machines, particularly clocks. If the movement of mechanical parts was enough to explain the motions of clocks, mills etc., they believed it would be adequate for understanding the planets or the human body. The metaphor of the clock was especially appealing to seventeenth Century thinkers because its inner workings were perfectly intelligible and, while the clock itself is inanimate, it could mimic the complexity and purposiveness of intelligent agents. Everyone was of course aware that clocks needed intelligent designers,

74 It can be argued that the version of scholasticism under attack was a simplification and caricature of the natural philosophy of the Schools (Clarke 1992, p. 260).

but in the same way the workings of the clock did not require any intervention from its maker, the natural world did not require intervention from its creator, God, in order to function (Shapin 1996, pp. 33-6). Knowledge of machines served as a model for all knowledge because machines had a determinate structure: their components and their creation were known and, in principle, always specifiable. They were models of uniform and regular motion (Shapin 1996, p. 36). The use of mechanistic explanations required the repudiation of two traditional assumptions: a) that there is a radical distinction between nature, created by God, and artifice, which can only imitate nature imperfectly. It had previously been argued that nature, as divine creation, was far superior to anything humans could produce and that it would be immoral to try to compete with the Divine creator (Shapin 1996, p. 31); b) that there is a break between the sublunary and the supralunary realms, so that the motion of the heavenly bodies is caused by souls rather than by physical causation (Shapin 1996, pp. 17-8).

2) The mechanisation of knowledge: the use of an explicitly formulated method of investigation that leads to the elimination of the effects of passions and interests in order to obtain a pure knowledge of nature. In England, due to Bacon's influence, the emphasis was on an inductive and empirically grounded procedure that accumulated knowledge of particulars and proceeded to offer causal knowledge and general truths (Shapin 1996, p. 92). Continental philosophers, following Descartes, expressed skepticism concerning the possibility of reaching knowledge of nature from experiments. Experiments were designed to confirm the results of rational inquiry, but could not be used to select among the multiple possible causal accounts for the same phenomenon (Shapin 1996, p. 115).

3) The depersonalisation of knowledge: an increasing separation between the knower and the object known as evidenced in the distinction between everyday experience and what nature "is really like". Copernicus dealt a powerful blow to common experience when he argued that we are not situated on a static body circled by the heavenly bodies. Common experience was reduced to the status of mere "appearance" (Shapin 1996, p. 25)[75]. We perceive forms and qualities,

75 Nevertheless, Descartes or Hobbes still display suspicion of artificial experiments and

but according to mechanism, focusing on them leads to a confused knowledge of the world. What is required of the scientist is to explain the world in terms of primary qualities, independent of any observer: extension, motion, number, and figure. The primary qualities were taken to be objective, geometrical-mechanical properties of bodies, while secondary qualities were understood to be subjective labels for sensations and for our reaction to them in terms of pleasure and pain (Dijksterhuis 1975, p. 474).

4) The knowledge obtained is used in order to control nature and in order to promote social, moral, ethical and political goals. This was to be accomplished in the most rigorous fashion possible, i.e. without recourse to passions. The same method employed in the investigation of natural bodies could be employed in order to study and gain power over oneself, other human beings and political entities.

Descartes on the body

In Descartes' work the body features in two distinct ways: as an object of science and as "my" body, i.e. the personal, felt body, the place of the passions. Both meanings are present in the two works under consideration here: *The Meditations on First Philosophy* and *The Passions of the Soul.* The difference lies in the priority given to the two meanings in the two works. In the *Meditations*, Descartes' focus is on establishing the metaphysical grounds necessary for the science of physics, and so the scientific understanding of the body is his primary interest. In the *Passions*, however, he is investigating the nature and power of passions, the influence they have on the individual and how they can be mastered. Therefore, the scientific understanding of the body is subordinated to this task. This difference in priority translates, as I will argue, into a difference in Descartes's understanding of the body in these two works. I will end this section by asking: In what way can we consider Descartes to be a precursor to Spinoza's turn to the body?

show a certain preference for common experience (Shapin 1996, p. 82).

The Meditations

In the *Meditations,* Descartes' understanding of the body is dominated by his famous doctrine of the mind-body dualism. The change in the subtitle of the *Meditations* from the first to the second edition of the work is telling. The subtitle for the first edition (1641) is: *In which the Existence of God and the Immortality of the Soul are Demonstrated*. For the second edition (1642), the subtitle reads: *In which the Existence of God and the Distinction between Soul and Body are Demonstrated.* Descartes was dissatisfied with his proofs for the immortality of the soul[76]. What he felt his arguments did lead to was the real distinction between mind and body[77].

The mind-body dualism is rooted in the distinction between extended and unextended substance. Matter[78], or corporeal substance, is characterized as inert. The movement of matter therefore needs an external cause, which it finds in God. Besides God, the mind can also imprint movement on matter, on bodies (Garber 1992, pp. 321-2). This seems to be a threat to the possibility of understanding nature since, if we are to conceive the laws governing it, nature must be subject to constant laws. If the quantity of movement can be changed at any time by a non-corporeal agent, then we have no guarantee for the veracity of the science of physics. Descartes' solution is to argue that motion is the product of mass times velocity and that the soul can only influence the direction of movement (Garber 2001, p. 137)[79]. Even if the soul is not a threat to the veracity of Cartesian physics, any investigation of nature depends on the movement imparted by God on matter.

76 See the letter to Mersenne from December 24th 1640: "As for what you say, that I have not said a word about the immortality of the soul, you should not be surprised. For I could not prove that God cannot annihilate it, but only that it is of a nature entirely distinct from that of the body, and consequently it is not bound by nature to die with it.".

77 See also the letter to Elisabeth 21 may 1643.

78 Matter is recognized as such in virtue of being extended (Principles of Philosophy II: 23, see Cottingham 1992, p. 239). The principle that matter is to be understood in terms of a single defining property was probably inherited from the scholastics (Clarke 2006, p. 165).

79 A version of the law of the conservation of matter that will later be criticized by Leibniz (Garber 2001, pp. 138-9).

In the Second Meditation a body is understood as something

> that is capable of being bounded by some shape, of being enclosed in a place, and of filling up a space in such a way as to exclude any other body from it; of being perceived by touch, sight, hearing, taste, or smell; of being moved in several ways, not, of course, by itself, but by whatever else impinges upon it. (Meditations, 26).

A body is (first and foremost) extended, flexible and mutable (Meditations, 31). Descartes proves the existence of bodies by arguing that ideas of bodies are the effect of an external active force. These ideas do not depend on my consent and are more vivid and, in a way, more distinct than what I know through meditation or in memory (Meditations, 75). Since God is not a deceiver and I know that these ideas of bodies do not come from me, they must come from things (Meditations, 80). This, or course, is not a guarantee that bodies resemble the ideas one has of them and it is not clear whether a body can be known clearly and distinctly. In the Replies to the Objections to the Meditations, Descartes elaborates on the body and argues that there is no power in the body by which it produces or conserves itself (Meditations, 118).

Descartes does not present his natural philosophy as true, but merely as a reasonable hypothesis (Clarke 1992, p. 262). Nevertheless, an advantage of Descartes' physics is that it eliminates teleology from the study of nature. Descartes accepts that natural philosophy cannot give us an understanding of nature beyond any doubt, but, as a methodological principle, he investigates matter in isolation, without considering the Divine plan (Kennington 1972, p. 94). As opposed to Leibniz, he considers God only insofar as he produces movement in matter, not insofar as this production has a purpose (Garber 2001, p. 163).

The teaching of nature

While scientific knowledge of matter, and therefore of the body as an object of science, is only hypothetical, it offers more certainty than the grasp of the body as "my" body. Sleeping and dreaming show that I can have the same experience of my body during my slumber that I have when awake. I can easily recall having been

deceived about the state and actions of my body during my slumber, and therefore must conclude "that there are no clear and definitive signs by which to distinguish being awake form being asleep" (Meditations, 19). Nevertheless, Descartes argues that my body seems to be called mine by a special right. Otherwise, why would sensation lead me to desire, do or feel something (Meditations, 76)? Given the dualist starting point, Descartes is forced to concede that there is no affinity between the bodily sensation and the will present in the soul that nonetheless seems to follow from the sensation. He is forced to admit that he has no explanation for this other than that he has "been taught this way by nature" (Meditations, 76).

From what has been said so far, it seems that Descartes' discussion of the body excludes teleology. Nevertheless, Descartes' doctrine of the teaching of nature confounds such expectations. The teaching of nature, while imperfect, has been supplied by God for our preservation (Hatfield 1992, p. 360)[80]. Nature is understood by Descartes as "God himself or the ordered network of created things" (Meditations, 80). My nature refers to the combination of all things bestowed upon me by God, and Descartes believes that the teaching of nature must therefore contain some truth (Meditations, 82). The teaching of nature should be distinguished from the light of nature, which offers clear and distinct ideas. The teachings of nature are not a guide to the nature of things, but they inform the mind of what is beneficial or harmful for the composite of which the mind is a part. The teaching of nature is therefore teleological in nature. The teaching of nature has been bestowed on me by God insofar as I am composed of mind and body in order to follow what produces pleasure and avoid pain (Meditations, 82). This line of thought is based on the assumption that nature teaches me that 1) I have a close, intimate unity with my body, 2) I exist among other bodies which are useful or detrimental and that 3) I am aware of inner affections, signalled by hunger, thirst and pain.

Nature in humans is not omniscient, it can inadvertently guide us to do wrong because it drives us to many thing with which reason does not agree. The teaching of nature is a spontaneous impulse that has been instituted in us by God in order

80 Perhaps reminiscent of medieval discussions of general divine providence.

for our body to function in the majority, but not all, of the situations we encounter (Meditations, 87)[81]. It should therefore not be confused with the habit of making reckless judgments (Meditations, 82), nor should we believe that nature is corrupt and always diverts us from the good and the true (Meditations, 84). The existence of the teaching of nature is a proof of God's goodness (Meditations, 87).

We can summarize the notion of "teaching of nature" by distinguishing between its theoretical and its practical functions. The theoretical is subordinated to the practical function, which has a strong teleological component: we are endowed by God with the capacity to strive for what is good for us as a unity of mind and body. The focus of the *Meditations*, however, is a theoretical one, i.e. to provide the metaphysical foundation necessary for physics, and so the practically-oriented line of thought is not fully developed. The emphasis will nevertheless change in Descartes' later work, when his focus will be on the pursuit of the good. This is made possible by a focus on the affective structure of human beings, considered as a unity, rather than as the uneasy association of two radically distinct substances.

The *Passions of the Soul*[82]

There is a noticeable tension in the *Meditations* between on the one hand the strict mind-body dualism and on the other hand the teaching of nature that shows us that our mind is united to our body. One way of resolving the tension is to argue that nature deceives us and that dualist metaphysics is a true description of the world and of ourselves. Descartes, however, does not take this route. He is aware of the problems raised by understanding mind-body interaction in his metaphysics, as they are discussed in his correspondence with Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia. In the letter from May 16th 1643 Elisabeth argues that movement requires extension and physical contact, which manifest themselves in the impulse

81 The body has a series of nervous paths that lead to the brain. If any part of the chain is affected, the signal will be interpreted as being caused by the first element in the chain. The fundamental problem is that we do not always have the proper reference for the sensation we feel (Meditations, 86-7).

82 Focusing on this treatise is not accidental: Spinoza had studied it with special interest, probably in the Latin translation of 1650, and it is the only work mentioned by title in the *Ethics* (Beyssade 1999, p. 115).

of the thing moved, the manner in which it is moved and in the qualities and shape of the surface of the mover. It is not at all clear how an immaterial thing, possessing none of these characteristics, could move a body. Elisabeth writes that the word immaterial seems to mean simply the negation of matter and to point to a lack of knowledge of the true cause of movement (Letter to Descartes, June 20th 1643). The first of Descartes' responses, dated May 21st 1643, centres on the distinction between four kinds of primitive notions. Primitive means that each idea can be understood only though itself and all other knowledge is based on the primitive ideas. Descartes argues that all human knowledge (*science)* consists in distinguishing these notions and in attributing each only to the object it belongs to. The first kind consists in the most general ideas: being, duration, number, etc. Second, we have the primitive idea of the body: extension, from which follow shape and movement. Third, the primitive idea of the soul consists in thought, which includes perceptions of the understanding, and inclinations of the will. Fourth, and most interestingly for the argument present here, we have primitive notions of the soul and body together: their union, on which depends the power of the soul to move the body and of the body to act on the soul, in order to cause sensations and passions[83]. Descartes argues that the fourth type of primitive notion is evident to those who do not philosophize, because they only use their senses and conceive of the mind and body as one thing (Letter to Elisabeth, June 28th 1643). Descartes recommends to Elisabeth a therapeutic course[84], rather than a line of arguments, in order to grasp this union (Garber 2001, p. 174). This is not to say that Descartes considers Elisabeth incapable of philosophical speculation, but rather that this resonates with other doubts that Descartes expresses regarding philosophical (metaphysical) contemplation[85]. In order to explain what he means by the union of mind and body further, Descartes uses an example taken from

83 Garber makes the interesting point that the intelligibility of the mind-body connection and its actuality are slightly different issues and do not necessarily overlap (Garber 2001, p. 170). Descartes can be read here as dealing only with the second issue.

84 "it is by using only life and everyday conversations and in abstaining from meditating and studying those things which exercise the imagination that we learn to conceive the union of soul and body" (Letter to Elisabeth, June 28th 1643).

85 Descartes argues that the study of metaphysics should be undertaken only once (Letter to Elisabeth, June 28th 1643) as propaedeutic to physics (Letter to Mersenne, Jan 28th 1641). See also Hatfield (1992, p. 336).

scholastic natural science: the case of heaviness (Letter to Elisabeth, May 21st 1643). The scholastics understood heaviness as a quality or force inherent in the object, but distinct from it, that makes it tend towards the earth (Garber 2001, p. 177). This is inaccurate insofar as we are trying to do physics, but it is an adequate way of comprehending the relation between the soul[86] and the body. We grasp the union by abstaining from the activity of the understanding and from that of the imagination. We must focus on the senses (*les sens)*, as those who never philosophize do (Letter to Elisabeth, June 28th 1643).

In the *Passions of the Soul* (1649) Descartes elaborates on the union between soul and body from the point of view of passions (art. 2) and metaphysical discussions of substance distinctions are abandoned[87]. Passions are "perceptions, feelings or emotions of the soul that we relate to it and that are caused, maintained and fortified by some movement of the spirits[88]" (art. 27). Passions are caused by physical objects acting on our body, by inner agitation of animal spirits or even, through a complicated mechanism, by movements imprinted on the body by the soul (art. 12). As opposed to sensations, they are experienced as being in the soul (art. 25). Insofar as they are considered in the body, passions are actions. Passions incite the soul to want what they have disposed the body towards (art. 40). The soul has volitions in its power, but as Descartes concedes in a letter to Elisabeth (September 1st 1645), the body can shape the will. Descartes argues that passions are not to be feared, since they can be very useful when guided properly (art. 211). This is very far from considering the body the cave of the soul (Kennington 1972, p. 100), from which it must emerge. How then are the body and its movements understood by Descartes in this context? In a similar vein to the earlier *Traité de l'homme,* (composed in the early 1630's) Descartes treats the human body as a machine. He is therefore optimistic about how much can be understood about the body on the mechanical model (Cottingham 1992, pp. 245-6). In articles 12

86 Descartes sometimes speaks of the soul as the true substantial form of man (AT II 505, AT III 503, AT IV 346), i.e. that from which characteristic behaviour of a thing follows (Garber 2001, pp. 196-7).

87 The greater part of the science of nature must come from mechanics and kinematics. Metaphysics, deductive theoretical physics and the laws of motion serve only as background for explaining natural phenomena (Rorty 1992, p. 376).

88 Animal spirits.

and 14 he argues that there are three causes of movement in the body: the soul[89], the sense impressions we get from outside the body and the unequal agitation of animal spirits[90] and the diversity of its parts. In article 5, Descartes argues that a considerable error in understanding the body stems from believing that the absence of the soul causes cessation of movement and disappearance of heat. All the actions of the body that we share with animals can be entirely explained by understanding the machine that our body is; there is no need for the soul as an explanatory principle (art. 16). Descartes draws a parallel between living and dead bodies on the one hand and a working and non-functioning clock on the other hand (art. 6)[91]. The body is no longer the *locus* of inert matter we saw in the *Meditations*. The focus has shifted to the activity of the body. The movement present in the body is no longer traced back to God, but to the interaction with other bodies and to the activity of animal spirits.

The fact that Descartes no longer engages with the metaphysical conundrum of mind-body dualism allows him, throughout the *Passions*, to engage with the notions of body and of mind-body union without having to consider the soul as a distinct substance. He also considers at length the positive role that the passions, and therefore the body, can play for the well-being of the individual, even if the passions do not necessarily furnish clear and distinct knowledge and they need to be correctly interpreted (Rorty 1992, p. 379). The practical aspect of the teaching of nature is reconsidered with a view to a selfish concern for one's own good (Kennington 1972, p. 99).

The novelty of Descartes' position in the *Passions* extends, however, beyond this. The study of the human being, not just the body, is now pursued through the study of the conflict of passions on the basis of the mechanistic categories of stimulus and response (Kennington 1972, p. 115)[92]. The passions are important

89 See articles 31, 34.

90 Descartes inherits the notion of animal spirits, together with much of his physiology, from scholastic and Galenic physiology. His radical innovation is to translate these notions into mechanistic categories. (Hatfield 1992, p. 341).

91 We see here that for mechanism the normative and teleological aspect of well-functioning machines is crucial (Hatfield 1992, p. 361).

92 A similar argument is made by Susan James in her book on *Passion and Action: The*

due to the fact that they are expressive of states of the person[93]. If we consider the information provided by the senses[94] using the primitive notion suitable to the mind-body union, we may be able to decipher the code contained within passions in order to advance our understanding of the capacity of the mind and body to act and be acted on together. The task of the philosopher is not to be satisfied with the knowledge of those who have no doubt that the soul moves the body and the body acts on the soul (Letter to Elisabeth, June 28th 1643), but to analyse this union using its primitive notion as "natural scientist"[95], on the model of Descartes' investigation in the *Passions.* While the notion of the union of mind and body is indeed primitive, that does not entail that it is exempt of all further analysis or interpretation[96]. The apparently "incomprehensible character" (Vandenbussche 2015, p. 225) of the mind-body union can be made clearer if we focus on the notion of activity understood mechanistically. The mechanistic account of the body, using 'animal spirits', is used by Descartes in order to provide an account of how the motions of the body and the passions in the soul can coincide (see art. 38). Passions are modulations in the power of the person's soul to "act and be acted on together with the body"[97] and they express variations in this integrated power depending on whether and to what extent the mind and the body co-operate[98].

Emotions in the 17th Century Philosophy. She argues that the focus on the *Meditations* in secondary literature has led to the overemphasizing of the role of dualism in Descartes' philosophy. She also argues that this led to focusing on the objective aspect of perceptions in Descartes to the detriment of his insights into emotions (James 1997, p. 106).

93 I agree with Greenberg (2007) or Brassfield (2012) that we have good reason to doubt they actually have any representational content. Besides expressing various states of the person, they also help focus the mind on certain objects or motivate the agents (Greenberg 2007, p. 715).

94 This is the faculty whose use is recommended by Descartes to Elisabeth in the letter dated June 28th 1643. In the *Meditations* sensations represent things as good or bad to us (Greenberg 2007, pp. 715-6). I believe (but cannot fully argue for here) that the correspondence with Elisabeth marks the beginning of a new, broader way to think about the senses: 1) they cover everything we know about the person, the mind-body union 2) we should be mindful not just of what they tell us, but of what they indicate of the person's capacity to act and be acted on, i.e. its states.

95 "physicen" (letter to abbé Picot, August 14th 1649).

96 As claimed by Vandenbussche (2015, p. 225).

97 In the letter to Elisabeth dated May 21st 1643 Descartes argues that two things belong to the human mind: to think and to be united with the body, i.e. "to act (*agir*) and be acted on (*pâtir*) together with the body".

98 Williston (1999, p. 55) writes that "concurrence of nature and habit, volition and right reason […] is the highest goal of Cartesian moral science". My thesis is that we need to take a step back and argue that the concurrence of the powers to act and be acted on of the body and soul

Descartes speaks of the passions using physical and mental accounts, but also a psycho-physiological discourse, which shows us their union and takes precedence over the first two. This opens up the possibility that the mind-body union, the person, possesses an endogenous power to act, which, even if not known through the primitive idea of extension, can be known through its own primitive notion without recourse to first philosophy.

In other words, the thesis that I put forward here is that Descartes' account of the person in the *Passions* combines a mechanistic approach to understanding the human with a rejection of mind-body dualism. The dualist account of persons in the *Meditations* is replaced by an explanation "*en physicien".* Kennington goes so far as to argue that the metaphysical language of substance is actually a threat to the founding of science[99]. Instead of considering the mind-body dualism as fundamental to Cartesianism, we should instead focus on the dualism and interplay of mechanism and teleology (Kennington 1972, p. 115). While, as we have seen, teleology plays an important part in Descartes' understanding of the Teaching of Nature, mechanistic principles come to the fore in Descartes' treatment of passions[100].

We are now in a position to suggest an answer to the question of how Descartes' work on the passions may have influenced Spinoza. The most obvious possible objection to a rapprochement is that Descartes speaks of passions, which are physical in cause and mental in effect, whereas Spinoza speaks of affects, of which passions are only a subcategory, and which of course cannot be explained by causation between attributes. However, this objection should not discourage us for two reasons. First, in the *Passions of the Soul*, Descartes speaks of the passions using physical and mental accounts, but also a psycho-physiological discourse, which is based on their union[101]. This anticipates Spinoza's threefold account of

are of the utmost importance.

99 In the case of human beings, science must study composite phenomena that are not reducible to thinking or extended things (Kennington 1972, p. 115).

100 I do not claim that teleology is eliminated from Descartes' discussion of the passions, only that it no longer plays the same dominant role it did in the Teaching of Nature.

101 Contra Schrijvers's claim that Spinoza undertakes "the consideration of a new dimension, so far unknown, of the affections of the body" (Schrijvers 1999, p. 64).

affects in the *Ethics.* Spinoza could find in Descartes the thesis that the human is a single person that has body and thought and that the passions dispose the mind to will the same things that they drive the body to perform. Spinoza differs only insofar as he takes this accord up to full "equality and identity" (Beyssade 1999, p. 123). Second, it is not sufficient to argue that spinozistic affects are broader because they include actions. Descartes, while not using the same technical language Spinoza does, includes affective activity under passions (Jaquet 2004, pp. 49-50)[102]. Further impetus for analysing the two together is provided by the fact that both attempt to treat of passions as part of nature and therefore subject to rational scrutiny (Jaquet 2004, pp. 59-61). They both seek to identify the simple passions or affects from which the rest are composed. Descartes stands as Spinoza's precursor in the project of synthetically reconstructing affects from their "proximal causes", and in this they differ from the phenomenological description provided by Aristotle (Schrijvers 1999, p. 63). The important similarities are not cancelled out by the fact that they provide different lists of primary passions, nor by the fact that Descartes aims to treat of passions as a natural scientist, while Spinoza claims that he will study affects as if they were "lines, planes and bodies" i.e. geometrically[103] (Jaquet 2004, p. 62). Furthermore, they both denounce their predecessors' inadequate treatment of passions or affects. Descartes distances himself from 1) the practices of the Jesuits – grounded in a tradition going back to Latin poets and philosophers like Seneca and Cicero – who aim to develop a cathartic discourse regarding the passions, rather than understand them and 2) the attitude of moral philosophers who see the passions as disturbances which cannot be the proper object of science. Spinoza also denounces the satirists who laugh at human affairs, the theologians who curse them and the melancholics who disdain humans (EIVp35s; cf. Jaquet 2004, pp. 57-9).

102 Nevertheless, affective activity in Descartes involves only the mind, not the mind and the body (Beyssade 1999, p. 124).

103 As we will have the chance to see later in this chapter, the question of what the geometrical order means for Spinoza is highly problematic, but it must include a dynamic account of reality that follows from his power ontology. This, as well as his claim in the *TP* (I 4) that he will study affects as atmospheric phenomena (rather than as geometrical entities, see Jaquet 2004, p. 117), brings him very close to Descartes' method.

These initial and important points of contact should not blind us to the fundamental differences. Spinoza rejects the teleological aspect of Descartes' doctrine of the teaching of nature, together with the hypothesis that passions are good in nature (art. 211) because they are instituted by God (Meditations 63-4). In the background, we also have Spinoza's very clear rejection of an understanding of matter as inert and of the idea that bodies have only an exogenous source of movement. He also argues against the notion that some of our desires, and therefore some passions, can be mastered using our free will (art. 144)[104] or that we can have absolute mastery over the passions (art. 150; cf. Jaquet 2004, p. 70). Despite these differences, Descartes' work on the passions and the shift in the understanding of the body opens up the possibility of thinking about affects beyond the mind-body dualism. Descartes strives to offer an account of the passions outside the context of his dualist metaphysics and of teleology. In virtue of his argument that only the improper usage of the passions should be feared (art. 211), Descartes can focus on analysing the dynamics of passions and the possibility of mastering them without appeal to transcendent causes. We can identify here a number of therapeutic methods that are important to Spinoza: deleterious passions can be changed through habit (art. 44), they cannot be combatted directly by our will, but indirectly using the representations of object associated with the passions (art. 45), can be combatted by firm judgement regarding good and evil, but sometimes also by other passions (art. 48), by distinguishing what depends on us from what does not (art. 144 and reminiscent of stoic moral philosophy) or through generosity and reflection on the necessity imparted on the world by divine providence (art. 145)[105]. Even though Descartes did not develop a metaphysical system suited to a purely immanent treatment of passions, he does join Spinoza in emphasizing that his discussion of the passions is aimed at showing how to act according to virtue with a view to the greatest good, which is happiness, or the increase in joy (art.148). While Descartes speaks of the possibility of absolute mastery over the passions (art. 50), the arguments he mobilises in order to show the conditions of possibility for this

104 Also against the claim, attributed by Spinoza to Descartes, "that the mind has absolute power over its own actions" (EIIIPreface) and over the passions (EVPreface).

105 See also Jaquet, 2004, 71: the starting point for all these changes is the natural disposition of our pineal gland.

absolute mastery show that it can only be considered an ideal. Absolute mastery requires perfect knowledge, or science (art. 48, 49) which we do not possess (Letter to Elisabeth, September 15th, 1645), it requires an uninhibited power of the soul over its own volitions, which we do not possess (Letter to Elisabeth, September 1st 1645), and it requires a great deal of industry and habit, in order to change the normal course of our passions (art. 44). While Spinoza is influenced by these themes in his own critique of the possibility of absolute mastery over the passions[106], his practical philosophy is shaped by a deeper fundamental shift away from Descartes. Spinoza, as I will argue in chapter III, thinks the possibility of exercising power over the affects starting from a critique of the thesis that firm, determinate and true judgments lead to self-transformation and empowerment. His thesis is that the two are identical, and that there is a deep continuity between epistemological certainty and empowerment precisely because they are different descriptions of the same thing. This amounts to a reformulation of the notion of "power over the affects" that shows the deep continuity between the descriptive and the normative aspects of Spinoza's philosophy[107].

Hobbes on the body

Hobbes is relevant to this thesis on two counts: a) his explanation of the mental and affective nature of human beings in mechanistic terms and b) his development of a scientifically-inspired method of research for understanding the constitution of the body politic.

a) Hobbes' critique of scholasticism is based to a large degree on his attack on the language that the Schools use[108]. One of the instances he criticizes is the expression "metaphysical motion". This "metaphysical (or metaphorical) motion" is used by the Schools in order to explain the operations of the mind and the beginning of

106 Both Descartes and Spinoza criticize the Stoic ideal of the perfect sage, unmoved by passions.

107 Jaquet argues that Spinoza writes that Descartes shows the "cleverness of his understanding" (*ingenii acumen*) (EIIIPref) because he saw the true problems concerning affects but gave fictitious, occult solutions based on mind-body dualism and free and infinite will (Jaquet 2004, p. 74).

108 Hobbes contrasts his nominalism: "for every idea is one, and of one thing" with the belief in universal essences to be found in scholasticism (Watkins 1955, pp. 138-9).

voluntary action (James 1997, p. 126). Hobbes writes that

> because some Motion they must acknowledge, they call it Metaphoricall Motion; which is but an absurd speech: for though Words may be called metaphoricall; Bodies and Motions cannot" (Leviathan, 38).

While Descartes accepts the possibility of the existence of mental motion and its effects in either impacting or being impacted on by the body, Hobbes does not find such a possibility intelligible. In opposition to Descartes or Malebranche, who saw thoughts as the soul's response to bodily changes, Hobbes argues that thoughts are bodily motions[109]. In order to have thoughts, a being must be capable of sensing. Sense is a "*seeming*, or *fancy*", i.e. a reaction, "resistance, or counter-pressure" of the heart against the movement provoked in the organs of sense, nerves, brain and heart by an external object" (Leviathan, 3). A body that is capable of thought will possess the capacity to have phantasms[110]. This means it will be able to receive and react to external motions and will have the capacity to compare phantasms (pictures), which implies the ability to retain the motion imprinted on it[111] (James 1997, p. 128). In spite of the above, it has been argued that Hobbes is not a fully-fledged materialist[112]. Watkins describes him as being an epiphenomenalist and claims that Hobbes really regards thoughts as shadows and overtones of movements in the brain. This move is facilitated by the use of ambiguous terms on the border between physiology and psychology: compulsion, disturbance, tranquillity, celerity, dullness, agitation, stirrings, phantasm, and most importantly endeavour[113] (Watkins 1955, p. 136).

109 Hobbes attempts to provide a causal explanation of human nature, an explanation compatible with mechanism. (Watkins 1955, p. 138).

110 "Thought consists in a succession of phantasms, that is, pictures" (Gert 2006, p. 158).

111 Watkins shows that the idea of motion permeates all of Hobbes' thought: "geometry studies motion; thought is motion, imagination and memory are made possible by the law of inertia; 'life itself is but motion'" (Watkins 1955, p. 129).

112 For the view that Hobbes is "clearly and explicitly a materialist" (Gert 2006, p. 157). The claim made there is that the mind consists of motions in the body, but that Hobbes did not know the nature of these motions.

113 Endeavour is: "These small beginnings of Motion, within the body of Man, before they appear in walking, speaking, striking, and other visible actions" (Leviathan, 23).

Hobbes does not admit a radical difference between perceptions and volitions: both are motions. The only difference between them is their position in the sequence of thoughts, which translates into a sequence of motions. Passions incorporate traits usually associated with both the phenomena of perception and of volition. Similarly to perceptions, they are ideas that represent things as good or bad to us, i.e. as useful or detrimental, but, like volitions, they can move us to actions. Perceptions, volitions and passions are never self-caused and we are never "free" in the sense of uncaused (James 1997, p. 135). The passions have the role of helping the body in its striving for preservation: they help us desire what is good and avoid what is bad[114]. For Hobbes, this amounts to Endeavor: the translation of the Latin *conatus,* which is called *appetite* when it drives us towards something we desire or *aversion* when it drives us away from something harmful (Leviathan, 23). In other words, endeavour refers to the capacity of a body to preserve its integrity and its functioning (James 1997, p. 130) Appetite and aversion are our conscious awareness of the body endeavouring to maintain itself and to follow what is good and shun what is bad for it[115] (James 1997, p. 131). For Hobbes all motivation is egocentric and striving is determined by efficient, not final causes. This means that moral considerations cannot explain behaviour (Watkins 1955, pp. 136-7). From Hobbes' nominalism it follows that there are no universal notions of good and evil. However, God has made us similar in certain respects[116], and one of these similarities is that we all fear death. It is therefore possible, even if we do not have the same nature, to be akin to other humans in our endeavour for self-preservation (Watkins 1955, pp. 141-2).

In conclusion, we can argue that the following points are important in order to understand Hobbes as a precursor to Spinoza's discussion of affects: the attempt to overcome the mind-body dualism and offer an account of human beings in naturalistic terms; the description of mental and affective life without recourse

114 A view similar to Descartes'.

115 Hobbes wants to argue that we are capable of influencing and modifying our thoughts. However, it is not clear how this reflexive capacity translates into a physical account of motion (James 1997, p. 131).

116 All men are engines of a similar design (Leviathan, 1) and the differences stem from the speed at which these engines operate (Watkins 1955, p. 143).

to final causes; and the explanation of human behaviour without an appeal to moral notions. The differences between Hobbes and Spinoza are, nevertheless, significant. Hobbes understands God as a transcendent power that imprints motion on matter and that designs human beings as machines i.e. teleologically[117]. As a consequence of this view, humans can be set in motion only by external causes and so possess no endogenous power (Watkins 1955, p. 136). Another important difference is the emphasis (shared by Descartes) on the striving for self-preservation. While Spinoza's conatus has often been understood as the striving for self-preservation (among others by Nietzsche), I will argue that self-preservation is only a special case of the expression of power that defines the fundamentally dynamic nature of human beings for Spinoza. Hobbes understands the world as a hostile environment in which power means the power to resist others and is understood within the context of a lack of security (Patton 1993, pp. 146-8). As we will see later, this stands in direct opposition to both Spinoza's and Nietzsche's active and affirming accounts of power.

b) The question of method is crucial to understanding Hobbes's philosophy. Watkins argues that it is the bridge connecting his (natural) philosophy and his political doctrines. The importance of the notion of method is by no means singular to Hobbes among early modern philosophers. What is distinctive is that he is not influenced by Bacon or Descartes, but that he takes his method from science: from Galileo and Harvey (Watkins 1955, p. 129). The resolutive-compositive method used by Hobbes was profoundly influenced by Harvey's method of investigation into the workings of the blood system. Since this system was not directly observable in its workings, Harvey started out by dissecting and inspecting its constitutive elements. From there, he made a hypothetical reconstruction of the whole system and how it works. The resulting hypotheses were tested and confirmed by observing the effects of amputations, ligatures, infections, etc. This dissection-reconstruction method was inspired by the distinction we find in Aristotle between the order of discovery, in which we merely perceive the effects confusedly, and the underlying order of nature, governed by simple, universal principles. The

117 Man is made by Nature, which is "the Art whereby God hath made and governs the World" (Leviathan, 1).

natural philosopher has the task of finding the underlying causes behind the effects we observe. In other words, the researcher must resolve the effects into their constitutive principles, or causes, and then re-assemble it (Watkins 1955, pp. 129-130). The constitutive principles can be understood in two ways: the physical parts that form the system (as did Harvey) or as the universal principles governing it (Galileo). Watkins argues that Hobbes combines the two meanings (Watkins 1955, p. 132). The goal of the philosopher is 1) to start from and understand an effect using hypothesis about its generative causes and 2) deduce effects from generative causes[118]. This method can be applied to the investigation of natural science, geometry or civil society. An important consequence of this method is that the natural laws governing humans are no longer understood as transcendent (in the Platonic tradition) or as immanent to legal systems (in Aristotelian fashion). They can be deduced from the nature of human beings in the course of Hobbes' psychological investigation. The reconstruction of the civil state is not purely descriptive: this rational reconstruction shows us what the state ought to be, in order to conform to our nature. Natural laws function as a hypothetical imperative: they dictate duties directed at our own preservation (Watkins 1955, pp. 133-4).

For the purposes of this thesis it is important to highlight three important points of contact between the philosophies of Hobbes and Spinoza[119]. First, Hobbes shows how the same method of inquiry can be applied to both discussions about the nature of reality and human beings and on the constitution of civil society. The unity of method is a key element to understanding Spinoza's thinking as a whole and the continuities between the *Ethic*s and the political works. Second, the emphasis on the process of generation of the state, on its composition, is crucial to Spinoza's analysis of the body politic as a multiplicity of powers, generated according to natural, immanent laws. Third, Hobbes' treatment of the state shows how a naturalistic understanding of civil society includes not only a descriptive, but also a normative account of what the state ought to be and how that can be achieved. The normative account depends and builds on the descriptive work.

118 Hobbes writes in the Preface to *De Cive* (9) that everything is best understood by its constitutive causes.

119 For Spinoza's views on the difference between him and Hobbes on politics, see letter 50 to Jarig Jelles.

Spinoza strives to show how an adequate understanding of nature and of human beings is indispensible to the empowerment of the body politic, and consequently, of its constitutive elements. It must be noted that these elements are of particular importance to Spinoza's last work on politics, the *Tractatus Politicus*[120], where Spinoza tries to offer a scientific account of the generation, nature and goals of civil society (Balibar 1998, p. 50)[121]. We can now turn to some of the limits of mechanism apparent to the scientists of the time.

Early modern natural philosophers, while crediting mechanism with great explanatory power, soon came to realize its limits. The core of mechanistic principles was the postulation of particles that compose the objects under investigation. The problem with this was identifying these particles and accounting for their nature and constitution. If science was to overcome scholastic natural philosophy, then it had to make good on its promise of experimental verification. However, these small particles were not available for observation[122]. Some eminent scientists such as Boyle or Leeuwenhoek hoped that the particles might become visible under a microscope, but even they were sceptical about this ever being possible (Shapin 1996, p. 50). Another important aspect of mechanism was the thesis that movement could only be explained through contact. Motion could not be explained as self-movement, but only as the effect of an external cause, and action at a distance was condemned as a scholastic fancy. However, in spite of their best efforts, 17th Century natural philosophers could not satisfactorily explain gravitational pull without appealing to the possibility of action at a distance. Even Descartes' explanation of gravity[123] did not manage to persuade the scientific community. It is perhaps ironic that the scientist who is most often depicted as the

120 Hobbes is still highly relevant despite the fact that Spinoza stops using the language of the social contract in this work .

121 The earlier *TTP* is much more polemical in nature and is aimed at a number of contemporary issues of the Dutch Republic of Spinoza's time.

122 Descartes was aware of this issue, but did not seem to be affected by it too much as long as the mechanistic model had explanatory power (Clarke 1992, p. 267).

123 Descartes' vortex theory of planetary motion is the basis for his account of gravity cf. Principles of Philosophy IV: 21-27.

culmination of the scientific revolution, namely Newton, provided an explanation for the law of universal attraction that depends on action at a distance.

To these two concerns that were general throughout early modern science, Spinoza adds criticisms of his own. Nevertheless, before considering them, we should outline the ways in which he was influenced by mechanism. I will do so by considering each of the traits of mechanism mentioned above in turn.

1) The use of mechanistic "metaphors": Anyone reading the so-called Physical Interlude from Book II of the Ethics will no doubt recognize the reference to some key mechanistic principles. While a more detailed discussion is reserved for section II.2, some salient features of this account need to be mentioned here. Bodies, no matter how complex, can be broken down into simple bodies that are characterized only by their certain determinate[124] ratio of movement and rest, quickness or slowness. The movement of these bodies is conceived as the result of the impulse that one body communicates to another. Yet it must be noted that a very important element of the mechanistic set of metaphors, i.e. the clock, is not at all used by Spinoza here and barely used throughout his entire corpus. The word clock appears only two times (Buyse 2013, p. 62). This already seems to indicate a certain dissatisfaction Spinoza felt with regard to mechanistic metaphors. A machine, such as the clock, requires a maker. In other words, it requires an intelligent creator or designer who arranges the elements that make up the clock so that it performs a certain function. Given Spinoza's critique of final causes and of intelligent design, most famously in EIapp, we cannot be surprised that he did not employ the metaphor of the clock in his writings.

2) The mechanisation of knowledge: The principle of the mechanisation of knowledge seems ubiquitous throughout Spinoza's oeuvre. Recalling Shapin's definition, this principle displays two aspects: a) the formulation of a method of investigation and b) the elimination of the passions from knowledge.

a) The formulation of method: There is no question that the use of a method is

124 The latin *certa quadam ratione* has been translated as certain fixed ratio. However, in the section dedicated to the Physical Interlude, I will argue that this translation can be misleading.

absolutely crucial to Spinoza's philosophy. No other early modern philosopher (including Descartes and Hobbes) has been so adamant about the importance of method or used it so consistently. Spinoza's most important work, the *Ethics*, was written in the geometrical order and this form is shared by three other texts: an enclosure to Letter 2 to Oldenburg, the first of the two appendices to the *Short Treatise* and *The Principles of Descartes' Philosophy.* Other works might not be written in the same form, but that does not mean they forego the notion of method. The treatise on the *Emendation of the Intellect* is not written in a geometrical form, but is dedicated to the elaboration of a method that can later on be used in the investigation of nature. The *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* is not written in the geometrical form either, but its major premise is that Scripture can be studied methodically, just like nature (Chaui 1999, p. 20). It is true that Spinoza experimented with other forms of philosophical writing: among others, he wrote a good many letters and used them to elaborate and present his thinking and he even composed philosophical dialogues in his early *Short Treatise*. Nevertheless, the centrality of the geometrical method cannot be doubted, together with Spinoza's belief that it is the best way of demonstrating truths clearly (see Letter 2 to Oldenburg; cf. Nadler 2006, p. 37)

So far, I have used the expressions geometrical order, geometrical form and geometrical method without drawing any explicit distinctions between them. There is an on-going debate on whether the geometrical order in which the Ethics was written refers to a method of demonstration (form of exposition) or to a method of discovery[125]. Wolfson has claimed that Spinoza's preference for the Euclidean geometrical form cannot be traced to the substance of Spinoza's philosophy and that there is no intrinsic relation between the content of the book and its appearance (Wolfson 1983, vol. 1, p. 55). Recent commentators, however, have moved away from this interpretation and have argued in favour of a closer link between the form and the content of the *Ethics.* The elements of the

125 This distinction must be placed in the context of the Cartesian distinction between analysis: "shows the true way by means of which the thing in question was discovered methodically and as it were a priori" and synthesis which "employs a directly opposite method where the search is, as it were, *a posteriori*. It demonstrates the conclusion clearly and employs a long series of definitions, postulates, axioms, theorems, and problems." (AT 156).

geometrical order of the *Ethics* are: definitions, axioms, propositions, corollaries or postulates. These elements, connected through demonstrations, form a tightly knit order. Geometrical demonstrations cannot skip any steps in the argumentation and Spinoza describes them as "cumbersome" (*prolixo* in EIVp18s) because they require careful elaboration of all the details of the arguments made. The *Ethics* also contains scholia (commentaries), prefaces or appendixes which have a more discursive form. The definitions are the bedrock of the system. They stand at the beginning of the *Ethics,* formulate the fundamental elements of Spinoza's ontology, epistemology, psychology and ethics. They delineate the essence of the thing they are defining and thus allow the philosopher to deduce all the properties that follow from the nature of the thing. They are used by Spinoza not only in the beginning of each book, but on numerous occasions during his demonstrations (Nadler 2006, pp. 44-5)[126]. Much of the debate about the geometrical order revolves around the status of definitions. It is by no means immediately evident that definitions are true, nor is it clear why readers should accept them, in spite of Spinoza's claim that adequate ideas are self-evidently true[127]. One way to account for this is to say that they constitute arbitrary starting points and that Spinoza wants only to demonstrate what follows from a purely arbitrary set of principles. This interpretation is not very appealing, nor does it do justice to Spinoza's avowed belief in the truth of his philosophy (Letter 76 to A. de Burgh). A more refined version of this interpretation is to claim that the Ethics has a "hypothetico-deductive status". Spinoza does not prove the truth of his definitions because they can be judged only together with the consequences that follow from them (Bennett 1984, pp. 18-9). In order to substantiate his thesis, Bennett refers to EIIp11cs in which Spinoza asks his readers to suspend judgement until they have read the entirety of his demonstrations. However, there does not seem to be any reason why this plea on Spinoza's part should be taken to refer to the *Ethics* as a whole: it is offered in the context of the claim that the human mind is a part of the infinite intellect of God, and Spinoza might have thought that his readers

126 The logical sequence of arguments in the *Ethics* is supposed to mirror the necessary flow of things from God. (Nadler 2006, p. 41).

127 "He who has a true idea at the same time knows that he has a true idea, and cannot doubt the truth of the thing" (EIIp43).

will find this specific doctrine particularly disturbing. Furthermore, if Spinoza's demonstrations throughout the Ethics do have a hypothetical character, there would be no reason for him to claim that philosophy is true (not simply probable) and that it is superior to the knowledge derived from experiments, as I will argue he does in his correspondence with Boyle. An alternative interpretation is that the geometrical order stands for a geometrical method that somehow shows the truth of the definitions[128]and so is both the order of discovery and the order of demonstration. In order to better understand Spinoza's method, we can look at the way he describes it in the *TIE:*

> the true Method is the way that truth itself […] should be sought in the proper order […] it is understanding what a true idea is by distinguishing it from the rest of the perceptions; by investigating its nature, so that from that we may come to know our power of understanding and so restrain the mind that it understands, according to that standard, everything that is to be understood; and finally by teaching and constructing certain rules as aids, so that the mind does not weary itself in useless things.[129]

Spinoza makes no distinction here between the truth of the definitions and the truth of what follows from them: all is discoverable by the use of the proper method, which is a method of discovery, not just demonstration. How exactly this works in the case of the *Ethics* has been the subject of fascinating studies[130], but what is pertinent to the present line of argumentation is that Spinoza is committed to: 1) the use of definitions to refer to what "expicates a thing as it exists outside the intellect - and then it should be a true definition" (letter 9 to De Vries, March 1663). Already in the early *TIE*, Spinoza gives three criteria for a good definition: it expresses the essence of a thing, it gives us its immediate proximate cause

128 This would imply that the geometrical method includes both analysis and synthesis, if we are to use Descartes's language (Steenbakkers 2009, p. 49).

129 This is reminiscent of Descartes' definition of method in the *Rules for the Direction of the Mind:* "reliable rules which are easy to apply, and such that if one follows them exactly, one will never take what is false to be true or fruitlessly expend one's mental efforts, but will gradually and constantly increase one's knowledge till one arrives at a true understanding of everything within one's capacity" (Rule 4, AT X, 371-2)".

130 See, for instance, Barbaras (2007), Garrett (2003) or Gueroult (1968).

and from it all properties of a the thing must follow (TIE 51; cf. Jaquet 2004, p. 87) and 2) the use of a method of discovery that produces true (or adequate) knowledge and that produces results that are more certain than those of natural sciences, as his correspondence with Boyle shows.

It is important to notice in this context that the mechanistic picture of the world does not necessarily imply a mathematical conception of nature. The belief in the explanatory power of mechanism does not depend on the ability to represent physical laws mathematically, even if most natural philosophers insisted on the role of mathematics in understanding nature (Shapin 1996, pp. 57-8). Bacon and Boyle had their doubts regarding the force of mathematical explanation, but Spinoza was sufficiently impressed by the spirit of mathematics (Barbaras 2007, p. 22) to disagree with them.

b) The elimination of passions: Perhaps even more ubiquitous than Spinoza's reliance on method is his famous rejection of passions as heteronomous and harmful to pure knowledge. It does not take long to find, throughout his writings, testimonies of his belief in the virtues of this detachment[131]. This has not failed to make an impression on subsequent thinkers and, as we will see in the comparative section of this thesis, Nietzsche is no exception in his engagement with this aspect of Spinoza's thinking. What is worth mentioning here, and will be pursued in section II.1 is that, despite appearances, Spinoza does not wish to divorce reason and knowledge from affects. This argument depends on Spinoza's distinction between passive and active affects. While there is no question that Spinoza does wish to transform passive affects (passions), he believes it impossible to exclude active affects from intellectual pursuits. It will therefore be argued that Spinoza's engagement with the principle of the mechanisation of knowledge is much more complex than appears at first.

3) The depersonalisation of knowledge: An important component of Spinoza's epistemology is dedicated to the critique of the confusion between inadequate and adequate knowledge. By inadequate knowledge, Spinoza means confused knowledge: sensation, imagination, knowledge through signs rather than

131 The Preface to Book III of the *Ethics* or the first chapter of the *Tractatus Politicus.*

knowledge of common notions or of essences (EIIp40s2)[132]. Nature or substance is not as it first appears to human beings and its true nature can become known only to a subject that abandons its prejudices and understands substance in a non-anthropomorphic manner. We can therefore see the connection between Spinoza's ideal of adequate knowledge and the depersonalisation of knowledge that characterizes early modern attempts to break with scholasticism and establish a new understanding of nature. It must nevertheless be said that due to Spinoza's emphasis on the importance of knowing one's own body, his epistemology is not simply an attempt to depersonalise knowledge, but rather to expose the passionate, disempowering epistemological factors.

4) The practical applications of scientific knowledge: Spinoza definitely intends to use the results of his investigation of nature in order to promote practical goals. This is clear both in his political treatises, in which he tries to expound the best political constitution in accordance with human nature, and in the *Ethics*, where knowledge is employed for the sake of obtaining freedom, joy or blessedness.

2b. The Critique

Spinoza's critique of scientific developments stems from the way he understands adequate knowledge. In order for something to be known adequately[133], we need to know its place in the order and connection of things. According to the geometrical method, this implies knowing its causes, the process by which it was generated, and its effects. The importance of the last aspect of adequate knowledge becomes evident once we remember that the reality or essence of a mode is nothing other than power to act. If we are to understand a mode, we must know what it can do. The appeal to a method in order to ensure the adequacy of our knowledge is, as has been mentioned, an integral part of what has been called the scientific revolution. What is specific about Spinoza is that the knowledge obtained by science does not live up to the exigencies of his method. Perhaps the most striking example of this inadequacy is Spinoza's evaluation of scientific experiments (Buyse 2013, p. 62).

132 A more detailed discussion of adequate and inadequate ideas will be presented in section II.1.

133 For more on adequate knowledge see section II.1.

Pierre-François Moreau, in his excellent study on the problem of experience in Spinoza (Moreau, 1994) has argued that there is a distinction between experience in the everyday sense of the word and scientific experiment. Scientific experiment is one kind of experience. Moreau has also argued that for Spinoza scientific experiment is not always simply superior to everyday experience, but has its limitations, and that experience is, in certain cases, to be preferred. We can find examples of the latter in the field of politics. It is impossible to set up rigorous, controlled experiments in the field of politics. The object of study is far too complex for all the variables to be monitored carefully and therefore we would not know adequately any of the elements in play[134]. Scientific experiment can hope to achieve certainty only in simple cases in which it is easy to observe all the elements in play. However, even here, Spinoza has his doubts. Scientific experiment features as a philosophical problem in Spinoza starting with the *TIE.* There, Spinoza raises the following problem: We may have multiple laws of nature that we know to be true. Understanding which one of these natural laws is applicable in a concrete example cannot be determined by experiments alone (Moreau 1994, p. 266-7). In order to better understand this argument, the best place to search for clues is Spinoza's correspondence with the English scientist Robert Boyle. The letters referred to here are: 6, 11, 13 and 16[135].

The experiment discussed in letters 6,11,13 and 16 concerns the decomposition and re-composition (redintegration) of nitre. Boyle's conclusion is that nitre is composed of fixed and volatile parts. Spinoza's response is that Boyle's experiments do not warrant the explanation he supplies for the phenomena observed. In order to substantiate his claim, Spinoza offers an alternative explanation that is capable of accounting for the same phenomena: the nitre is composed of a single kind of parts, and the observable differences are due to causes other than the composition of nitre (letter 6). As Spinoza succinctly puts it in letter 13, Boyle claims nitre is a heterogeneous body, while he holds it is homogenous. The problem Spinoza is getting at here is of great importance to the scientific revolution: if an observed

134 Perhaps this also explains Hobbes' skepticism concerning experiments.

135 These are not direct exchanges between Spinoza and Boyle, but Oldenburg acts as Boyle's mouthpiece.

phenomenon can be explained equally well by two or perhaps more hypothesis then what guarantees that the mechanistic principles are better than the old scholastic philosophy of nature? We can find Spinoza's answer to this problem in letter 13. He takes issue with Boyle's justification for his experiments, i.e. that they prove that a mechanistic, quantitative explanation is better than the scholastic qualitative one. Spinoza believes that the superiority of mechanism has already been shown and, crucially, that this superiority does not rest on empirical grounds, but rather on adequate a priori reasoning.

To summarise, scientific thought does not satisfy Spinoza's demands for philosophical adequacy because a) scientific experiments cannot offer certainty and b) scientific principles are not established by science, but by a priori philosophy. We cannot have scientific certainty until we possess adequate philosophical ideas. After we have considered the salient features of the philosophical and scientific contexts for the turn to the body, we must turn to the central question of what is the nature of the turn to the body in Spinoza.

II. The nature of the turn to the body.

What is the nature of Spinoza's turn to the body? In order to answer this question, three sub-questions need to be raised. The first is: What is Spinoza's theory of knowledge, insofar as it connects to his turn to the body? The answer to this question plays a double role. First, it highlights the importance of the turn to the body for Spinoza's epistemology: we have inadequate knowledge because we misunderstand our body and, if we want adequate knowledge, we must have an adequate understanding of our body. Second, it provides the criteria necessary in order to understand what an adequate knowledge of the body is and therefore to evaluate the various ways of knowing the body Spinoza suggests in the *Ethics*. The second sub-question is: How does Spinoza understand the body? In my view there are three ways Spinoza does this throughout the *Ethics* 1) In a manner close to mechanism, in the Physical Interlude, 2) As a multiplicity of affects, in books III, IV and the first half of book V and 3) as an essence, in the second half of book

V. Using the answer to the first sub-question, I will argue that the mechanistically inspired understanding of the body is inadequate, and that viewing the body as an essence, while consisting of adequate knowledge, fails to offer a fully sufficient grasp of how to achieve empowerment. My thesis is that focusing on the second way of understanding the body is the best way to grasp the complexity of Spinoza's thinking on the body and its capacity for empowerment. The third sub-question is: How does Spinoza's normative account of ethics and politics follow from his understanding of the body? This question will be dealt with in detail in the comparative section of this thesis, but it is important to highlight here the features of Spinoza' account of the body that will play a crucial role in his normative thinking. The notions I will focus on are: empowerment, desire and conatus.

1. Spinoza's theory of knowledge and its relation to the body

The key passages for understanding Spinoza's theory of knowledge are EIIp40s2 and EIIp41. According to EIIp41, the only cause of falsity is knowledge of the first kind. What Spinoza understands by knowledge of the first kind is explained under EIIp40s2 and falls under two headings: 1) knowledge of things presented to the senses. This knowledge is mutilated, confused and without order for the intellect. Spinoza calls this random experience. 2) knowledge from signs, e.g. from hearing or reading certain words we recollect things and form certain ideas of them, like those through which we imagine things. Knowledge of the first kind is called by Spinoza "opinion" or "imagination". There are two kinds of knowledge that are necessarily true or adequate according to EIIp41[136]. These two kinds of knowledge, described under EIIp40s2 are: 1) knowledge that comes from having common notions and adequate ideas of the properties of things (second kind of knowledge) and 2) intuitive knowledge, which proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things (third kind of knowledge). We can speak of knowledge solely under the attribute of thought and the causes of an idea can only be other ideas, or modes conceived under the attribute of thought. Nevertheless, given that the

136 For an account of how Spinoza changed his views on truth in the works preceding the *Ethics*, see Curley (1994).

object of the mind is the body and that, with the exception of ideas of ideas, the object of our ideas are modes conceived under the attribute of extension, it is both important and useful to understand the bodily correlates of the various types of knowledge Spinoza discusses.

The bodily correlate of inadequate knowledge

Knowledge of the first kind, the only type of knowledge that is inadequate, can be understood in two ways: 1) lack of correlation between what an idea purports to present and what it actually corresponds to, and 2) the lack of knowledge of the causes that produce the idea in our minds (Nadler 2006, pp. 161-2). The lack of correlation between an idea and its ideatum is characteristic of a false idea, but it does not explain how a false idea comes to be formed in our minds. For this purpose, the second manner of understanding inadequate ideas is crucial. For the purpose of this thesis, we must analyse the bodily correlates of the nature and origins of the first kind of knowledge[137].

Spinoza explains the first meaning of knowledge of the first kind in EIIp29c. The argument he makes there is that the human mind will always have inadequate knowledge as long as it perceives things from the common order of Nature. The knowledge Spinoza refers to here is knowledge of the mind itself, of the body and of external bodies. The mind knows these three only through its knowledge of the affections of the body (EIIp23, EIIp19 and EIIp26 respectively) and it has a mutilated and confused knowledge of the affections of the body (EIIp28 and its scholium). The reason is that an affection of the body involves the nature of the human body together with the nature of external bodies (EIIp16). In order to have adequate knowledge we would need adequate knowledge of both causes (the human body and the external body) of the affections, knowledge not available to the human mind. There is, however, a further dimension to this account of the origin of inadequate ideas in the affections of the body. This dimension is indicated by the use of the expression "common order of Nature" in EIIp29s, which resonates with

137 Spinoza's theory of knowledge has received much attention in the secondary literature; see for instance Della Rocca (1996); Gueroult (1974); Marshall (2008); Radner (1971); Wilson (1999). It is not the prupose of this thesis, however, to engage with the nuances of this discussion.

Spinoza's reference to "random experience" in EIIp40s2. This expression refers to the fact that our body is determined "from fortuitous encounters with things". The order in which we become acquainted with things is at odds with the causal order and connection in which they feature in the infinite intellect of God. The way we grasp the agreements, differences and oppositions of things is determined by chance. Spinoza explains this at greater length in EIIp40s1. There he wants to show how universal concepts like "Man, Horse, Dog" or Transcendentals like "Beings, Things and Something" are formed[138]. These two types of terms arise from similar causes: the body has only a limited capacity to form distinct images[139]. Once that capacity is surpassed, images will become confused and so the mind will imagine all the bodies it has perceived confusedly. The mind will lose sight of the differences between the various impressions it has received and will focus solely on the elements on which they agree. These elements differ, of course, from person to person, and so the transcendental and universal terms will have different meanings for each individual. This physiological account of the source of errors in the human mind is a representative case of Spinoza's recourse to the body in describing how falsity appears. Another example can be found in EIIp17. The mind, once affected by an external object, will regard it as actually existing or present, until it is affected in a contrary manner. This, of course, does not mean that the external body itself will continue to be present. Therefore, the human mind can be mistaken. These physiological processes that describe the origins of falsity cannot be taken to offer an exhaustive description of the causes of all kinds of errors. What they offer are examples of how the affections of the body translate into inadequate knowledge: because they are the result of random experience and because they are not understood within their causal nexus.

In order to explain the second meaning of the first kind of knowledge, Spinoza refers to EIIp18s. The scholium is dedicated to an explanation of what memory is. Memory consists in a certain connection of ideas involving the nature of things

138 The terms are inadequate and contrasted with the adequate common notions.

139 An image, according to EIIp17s is not a mental or psychological terms, but a physiological concept, referring to a thing under the attribute of extension. It is an affection of the human body. Spinoza's use of the term is not subject to the same ambiguity that Hobbes' use of "phantasm" is guilty of.

outside the human body. It depends on the order and connection of the affections of the human body. As Spinoza explains in the demonstration to EIIp18, associations in the mind are created when the body is affected by two or more bodies at the same time. In the future, when the mind imagines one body, it will recollect the other. The connections established here do not reflect the order of the intellect, but rather the random order in which the human body is affected. The example Spinoza uses to make his point is that of the Latin word *pomum* which has no similarity to the thing it describes and is associated with it arbitrarily. Language employs the associations we have formed arbitrarily, and, due to its use of signs, can be misleading when trying to adequately understand nature. We should note that the source of this kind of error is again understood physiologically and traced back to the confused or mutilated knowledge provided by the body's affections. The difficulty involved in our perception of the world is amplified by the fact that, when perceiving something, we very often focus more on the pleasure or displeasure that a thing produces, rather than on the logical ordering of causes that has brought about the event we are experiencing. We therefore have a fragmentary awareness of both the nature of the external object and of our own body. (Nadler 2006, pp. 167-8) Instead of being the product of our intellect, ideas are formed as a result of our highly selective experiences[140]. A similar argument will be made by Nietzsche, who will emphasize the importance of the sensations of pleasure and unpleasure in the way in which we understand the world (see for instance MA 18 2.39). Laurent Bove, in his work on Spinoza (Bove 1996), has uncovered another crucial dimension of the first kind of knowledge. His argument is that the first kind of knowledge is useful for the survival of the individual and that it expresses the power of the body to structure experiences according to its needs. An important way in which reality is construed in a useful manner is by simplifying it: knowledge of the full nature of the causal nexuses that structure

140 Imagination does not always necessarily contain false ideas. If, as Spinoza argues in the EIIp17s, the mind imagines a non-existent thing and at the same time is conscious of the fact that the thing does not exist, then this is not a proof of the weakness of the mind but of the efficacy of its nature. As several commentators have argued, imagination is not a defect, but a virtue. Imagination only affirms an idea and error appears when we correlate this affirmation with reality, i.e. we assume that the idea we have affirmed stands for an objective essence of a thing (Allison 1987, p. 109; Severac 2011, pp. 398-406).

reality is sacrificed in order to obtain practical guidelines that allow the individual to navigate obstacles successfully and survive (Bove 1996, p. 56). This process of active simplification will also be discussed by Nietzsche, who will also emphasize its benefits for survival while pointing out the epistemic distortions it generates.

The corporeal correlate of adequate knowledge

Spinoza writes that knowledge of the body[141] is the key to understanding ourselves and yet no one has, so far, understood what a body is and can do (EIIIp2s). Spinoza believes that adequate knowledge is of the utmost importance because it translates into an increase in freedom or joy and leads to the state of blessedness, discussed in book V of the *Ethics*. It is therefore of the greatest significance and urgency for a human being to find the best philosophy that contains such adequate understanding. In order to understand adequate knowledge we must start with what Spinoza calls the second type of knowledge or knowledge of common notions. Spinoza explains the term "common notions" in propositions 38-40 of the EII. These notions are ideas of properties "common to, and peculiar to, the human body and certain external bodies" and are "equally in the part and in the whole" (EIIp39). Things conceived under the attribute of Extension, for instance, share the same basic nature (being extended) and undergo the same kinds of modification. Because things have common properties the ideas corresponding to these bodies will also have common features (Nadler 2006, p. 175). Spinoza's example in EIIp38c, which is supposed to make clear what he means by common notions, is taken from the Physical Interlude, namely Lemma II, and points out that all bodies, insofar as they are understood under the same attribute (that of extension) agree insofar as they "can move now more slowly, now more quickly, and absolutely, that now they move, now they are at rest". Following Spinoza's indications, we can infer that under knowledge of common notions he understands cognition of infinite modes (immediate or mediated), as well as knowledge of properties common to a group of objects[142]. Gueroult argues that knowledge of

141 The body is a mode expressing God's essence under the attribute of extension (EIID1).

142 Spinoza is not forthcoming in providing examples of common notions, but they are presumably things like: possessing shape (no matter the specific shape), size, divisibility, mobility (Nadler 2006, p. 175). To use Wilson's example, when I perceive a stain on the carpet, I may not

common notions does not include knowledge of the attributes because attributes are the causes of things, not their properties. Therefore attributes are not included in perceptions of things, as properties are (Gueroult 1974, p. 424). The human mind will have adequate ideas of these common notions because the adequate ideas are in God "both insofar as he has the idea of the human body and insofar as he has ideas of its affections" (EIIp38). The affections of the body are incapable of supplying adequate knowledge of the human body and of external bodies because, by necessity, they present the mind with a partial acquaintance of things. The common notions, however, due to their presence in full in bodies, as well as in their parts, cannot be known in a partial or mutilated manner.

The third kind of knowledge has been considered notoriously problematic by many exegetes. Curley writes that "This is ground on which the prudent commentator will hesitate to tread" (Curley 1969, p. 137) and Yovel believes that it is "one of the most difficult and controversial aspects of Spinoza's system" (Yovel 1989, p. 154)[143]. While this warning must be heeded, Spinoza's discussion of the eternal essence of the body known under the third type of knowledge contains important clues for better understanding Spinoza's turn to the body, even if his arguments about eternity have sometimes been considered problematic. According to the definition of the third type of knowledge it is knowledge of the essence of things and it proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God (EIIp40s2). Spinoza speaks of things here insofar as they follow from the necessity of divine nature (EVp29s). It is under the third type of knowledge that we best see how individual essences express God's nature, i.e. his power. In EIIp40s2, Spinoza uses the example of the ratio between the numbers 1 and 2, on the one hand, and 3 and 6, on the other hand, in order to illustrate his theory of knowledge. Having the third kind of knowledge, or intuitive[144] knowledge, means

understand the cause of the stain, I may not know its nature nor the composition of the carpet, but I am certain that the stain is an extended thing and so falls under the attribute of extension (Wilson 1999, p. 148).This example follows Spinoza's cue in focusing on extended bodies.

143 The third kind of knowledge has given risen to numerous responses, ranging from Novalis' description of Spinoza as a "God-intoxicated man" to Bennett's claims that this doctrine is "an unmitigated and seemingly unmotivated disaster" (Bennett 1984, p. 357) and that "Spinoza is talking nonsense and that there is no reason for us to put up with it" (Bennett 1984, p. 373).

144 The term intuitive refers to a) an inferential demonstration that could be grasped at

that we can immediately see that the ratio between the two pairs of numbers is the same[145]. We are told in EIIp42 that this kind of knowledge is always true and in EIIp47s that from knowing God we can deduce and know many things adequately under the third kind of knowledge, but more on this matter is reserved for book V[146]. In EVp20s Spinoza argues that the third kind of knowledge has power over affects, and later that intuitive knowledge is much more powerful than the second kind of knowledge (EVp36s) because the desire for it constitutes the greatest striving of the mind (EVp25)[147]. Therefore, obtaining it gives rise to the greatest satisfaction (*acquiescentia*) of mind (EVp27) or its greatest joy (*summa Laetitia*) (EVp27). This is the greatest virtue the mind can have (EVp25) and therefore the more it obtains it, the more it will strive to conceive even more things under this kind of knowledge (EVp26). The third kind of knowledge presupposes the second kind, but it offers an important advantage: it presents in an intuitive, synoptic manner what the second kind of knowledge presented in a discursive, fragmentary way (Yovel 1989, p. 154). We do not gain any new, additional information through the third kind of knowledge, but we do have a synthesized version of what we already know: this condensed version is called by Spinoza the essence of a thing (Yovel 1989, p. 156). The privileged object of knowledge of the third kind is the philosopher herself, i.e. her body and her mind (Yovel 1989, p. 164). This way of knowing the body will be explored later, in the section dedicated to considering the body as an essence. In the comparative section I will argue that Nietzsche is interested in Spinoza's third kind of knowledge, but that his (problematic) criticism is based on the unwarranted assumption that intuitive knowledge is purely intellectual and so divorced from the affects[148].

once rather than a protracted demonstration whose conclusion we do not immediately see and b) knowledge of particulars as opposed to knowledge of universals. Spinoza understands intuition to be knowledge of the complete nature of a thing (Bennett 1984, pp. 364-7).

145 Yovel is critical of this example because it makes the third kind of knowledge appear banal and easily accessible to everyone (Yovel 1989, p. 154). This cannot be Spinoza's point.

146 Gueroult argues that there is no contradiction between the intuitive, i.e immediate, nature of the third kind of knwoledge and the fact that it is the result of a deduction from Gods essence (Gueroult 1974, pp. 448-450).

147 Spinoza does not fully explain why exactly the mind is affected more by knowledge of essences than by universal cognition embodied in knowledge of common notions (Bennett 1984, p. 369).

148 Spinoza writes that "we feel and know by experience that we are eternal" (EVp23s).

We must note that Spinoza's strategy in discussing both kinds of adequate knowledge is to argue that God and the attributes are ontologically "simple". From this we can infer that their concepts are as well (Gueroult 1974, p. 420). God and the attributes do not have parts, and therefore cannot be grasped in a mutilated manner. God's essence is power and so the simple idea of God is the idea of power, of activity (Marshall 2008, p. 70).

In light of the preceding discussion of the theory of knowledge in Spinoza, we are now in a position to ask why he grants so much importance to the body in understanding both the essence of human beings and the origin and nature of adequate and inadequate knowledge[149]. Adequate knowledge of nature and of human beings always consists in ideas. Nevertheless, the object of these ideas can be understood starting from the attribute of thought, in which case we have ideas of ideas, or starting from the attribute of extension. While adequate knowledge of our minds and of other ideas starting from the attribute of thought is possible and Spinoza spends much time discussing it, obtaining it has been rendered extremely difficult by the accumulation of the metaphysical illusions Spinoza criticizes (illusions considered under section I.1). Knowledge of the body, while not free of difficulties, does not have to face the same deeply-rooted difficulties. This argument entails that focusing on the body has certain strategic advantages[150] and brings Spinoza close to Nietzsche. In addition, as Spinoza argues in EIIp13s, in order to understand the mind one must first understand its object, which is the body[151]. We understand the power of the mind and the difference between the human mind and others by grasping the complexity and power to act of the human body (EIIIp13s). Spinoza situates himself against the philosophical tradition

149 Curley claims that Spinoza tells us more about extension and less about thought (Curley 1969, p. 144).

150 Spinoza's doctrine of attributes does not exclude asymmetry: it allows for focus on one attribute or another, depending on circumstances. This is one reason why using the term "parallelism" in order to refer to Spinoza's philosophy can be misleading (Jaquet 2004, pp. 32-4, 144-5, 226-8).

151 The same move is present in Spinoza's analysis of affects: one must first understand the physical aspect of an affect (Jaquet 2004, p. 146).

which claims that the body is the source of evil, ignorance and at best a necessary inconvenience that we may, with sufficient effort, subdue and use in our search for truth and virtue. We must note that Spinoza does not argue that he (or any other thinker) has given a satisfactory answer to the question of what a body is or can do. His point is rather to emphasize that no question regarding human beings and nature is complete without an explanation of corporeal nature. Furthermore, an answer that avoids any such reference is likely to be tainted by metaphysical errors because it does not understand how knowledge is obtained and by which criteria its validity can be evaluated. We can see how the turn to the body gains a normative aspect, by constituting the standard according to which philosophical doctrines can be evaluated. Later on, in the context of Spinoza's theory of affects, I will argue that the turn to the body is used by Spinoza in order to set up a normative account of morality[152]. Understanding the body opens up the possibility of increasing one's power and therefore the joy and freedom one possesses. In order to better understand the turn to the body in Spinoza's philosophy, we must ask what adequate knowledge of the body is and what role it plays in the economy of the *Ethics*.

2. Spinoza's understanding of the body

The body in the Physical Interlude (EIIp13s to EIIp14)

One of the goals of Book II of the *Ethics* is to argue against the Cartesian notion of mind-body dualism. Key to this argumentation is Spinoza's monism, which implies that mind and body are one and the same thing understood under two different attributes. To be more precise, the body is the object of the idea that constitutes the mind (EIIp13). The difference between humans and other finite modes of substance is the complexity of their minds and bodies: the human body is capable of acting and being affected in a great number of ways, greater than in the case of other modes (EIIp13s). Spinoza writes that "no one will be able

152 Curley writes that the moral convictions that underlie Spinoza's metaphysics are what mattered most to him (Curley 1969, p. 155) and this is a point that will be considered in the comparative study given its importance for a comparison with Nietzsche.

to understand it[153] adequately, or distinctly, unless he first knows adequately the nature of our body". Further down he writes that "to determine what is the difference between the human mind and the others, and how it surpasses them, it is necessary for us, as we have said, to know the nature of its object, that is, of the human body". Against much of the tradition, Spinoza explains bodies starting from extensions alone: not only is there no need for an immaterial principle, but minds are now explained starting from the distinction between bodies (Jaquet 2005, pp. 220-1). Spinoza ends EIIp13s by writing that he wants to "premise" (*praemittere*)[154] a few things regarding the nature of bodies.

The Physical interlude can be divided into three sections. The first one, dealing with the simplest bodies (*corporibus simplicissimis)*, ends before the definition. The second part, containing an account of complex bodies ends with the scholium to lemma 7. The third part, beginning with the scholium, deals with the human body[155]. In the first section, Spinoza starts by showing how bodies differ from each other. They are all modes of extension, so they cannot differ with regard to substance (Lemma1), nor can they differ with regard to the infinite immediate mode of extension, namely motion and rest (A1). With regard to the simplest bodies, the only possible criterion for distinguishing them is their ratio of movement and rest, speed and slowness (Lemma1)[156]. In the rest of the section, Spinoza is busy showing the nature of the ratio of movement and rest: he discusses the origin of motion or of rest, which can be imprinted on a body only by another body, and so on to infinity (Lemma 3), establishing the law of inertia (no body changes its state unless it is impacted on from outside – Lemma 3, Corollary), and in axioms 1 and 2 shows that the manner of movement is determined both by the nature of the

153 Curley's translation implies that "it" refers to the union of mind and body. However, the French translation by Pautrat makes "it" refer to the mind. Given the rest of the scholium, it is this second option that seems the most plausible (Beyssade 1999, note 25).

154 According to letter 83 to Tschirnhaus from 15 July 1676 (one of his last surviving letters), Spinoza never managed to put definitive order into his thoughts on physics.

155 What Spinoza says about the human body could, in principle, also apply to very complex animals (Jaquet 2005, p. 217).

156 For the difficulties of distinguishing between the simplest bodies on the basis of their ratio of motion and rest alone, as well as for a possible solution to these problems, see Gueroult (1974, pp. 155-165).

affected body as well as by the nature of the affecting body[157]. The second section deals with individuals or composite bodies which are created when a number of simple bodies are determined to move together according to the same determinate ratio of movement and rest. As opposed to the simplest bodies, the composite ones are distinguished from others by the specific union of bodies that constitutes them (Definition)[158]. Depending on the way the composite bodies connect, they can be solid, soft of fluid and therefore the difficulty in altering their shape can be greater or smaller (A3). The following four lemmas deal with metabolism, growth and movement of limbs and locomotion respectively. Lemma 4 is key and has been taken by Jonas (Jonas 1965, p. 47) to describe the process of metabolism. The lemma shows how a body, more specifically an organism[159], can have its parts replaced continually and yet maintain its structure and nature. This lemma allows us to understand another reason for Spinoza's dissatisfaction with mechanistic metaphors besides the implicit teleological connotations. A machine is a self-sufficient whole with fixed parts that once put in motion, functions until one of the parts breaks down. This is an inadequate simile for an organism, because the organism possesses a certain ability to regenerate itself[160]. The third section starts with a consideration of what it means to have an individual formed out of the complex bodies presented in section 2. Such an individual is characterized not only by its greater size, but most importantly by its capacity to be affected in an even greater number of ways without changing its form. Spinoza argues that if we were to continue this process to infinity we would reach an Individual composed out of all the modes of extension. It would be infinite and thus could be affected in an infinite number of ways[161]. In the six postulates[162] that complete the Physical

157 Everything contained in the first section and that applies to the simplest bodies also applies to the composite bodies of sections II and III. (Gueroult 1974, pp. 153-4).

158 Bodies can be distinguished by size, shape or other properties but the basis for these distinctions is the specific ratio of movement and rest. (Gueroult 1974, p. 164).

159 All bodies are animated to different degrees (Gueroult 1974, p. 143), but not all qualify as organisms and have a metabolism. Animated means only that they have a corresponding idea under the attribute of thought.

160 The organism preserves itself and its unity due to, and not in spite of, metabolic changes (Allison 1987, p. 99).

161 Presumably this is the mediated infinite mode of the attribute of extension, the *facies totius universi*.

162 Postulates are, according to EIIP17s, only empirical observations. This means that Spi-

Interlude Spinoza applies the insights already acquired to the human body. In the subsequent propositions from Book II, the complexity and excellence of the human mind will turn out to be a function of the complexity and excellence of the human body.

In Spinoza's account of the body the emphasis lies on the notions of form or structure, continuity and relation. The relation of a body with the outside depends on the form or structure it has and is determined by the environment (Jonas 1965, p. 48). It is important to notice that the composite bodies are formed as a result of outside pressure, exercised by other bodies (Definition). The ratio of movement and rest of a body is given to it by another body, and so on to infinity (Lemma 3). There is no mention here of conatus, the essence or power of a thing, and we have to wait until Book III for this notion to be introduced. This explains why, in the scholium to lemma 7, Spinoza writes that composite bodies can be affected in many ways, and does not distinguish between being able to act and being acted upon in a great number of ways, as he will do in other contexts. The specific difference that characterizes a body is only its ratio of movement and rest, speed or slowness, and not any amount of power explained by the singular essence of a thing.

In order to assess the role played by the Physical Interlude in the economy of the *Ethics* we must return to the formulation Spinoza uses to introduce it: he speaks of "premising" a few things about the nature of the body. Does this mean that the content of the Physical Interlude does not enjoy the same certainty that the rest of the Ethics is supposed to manifest? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to distinguish between two elements used in the argumentation: the common notions and the simplest bodies. We have already seen that common notions are necessarily adequate and so there is no reason to doubt that bodies are determined by their ratio of movement and rest. We are, however, entitled to ask what justification Spinoza has for speaking of the simplest bodies. Their existence is not demonstrated in the *Ethics* and, given Spinoza's critique of Boyle presented in section 1 of this chapter, we can ask whether they only serve as

noza's theory of the human body is established by "experience" which we cannot doubt" (EIIP17s) see Gueroult (1974, p. 170).

reasonable hypotheses that supply a plausible, but not necessarily the true physical explanation of bodies.

The lack of epistemic certainty, together with the absence of the notion of conatus, raises a further difficulty: understanding the ratio of movement and rest characteristic of bodies. First, we need to mention an issue of translation: the most common way of translating the latin *certa quadam ratione,* used by Spinoza to refer to the specific ratio of movement and rest characteristic of bodies, is "a certain fixed ratio" (used in the Definition after A2). It seems this choice is justified by the first meaning of *certus*[163]: "determined, fixed". However, a second definition reads: *certus* is said "of things the certainty of whose existence is given, but whose nature is not more definitely designated, or comes not into consideration" (Lewis & Short 1958, p. 320). If indeed the nature of the simplest bodies, the building blocks of Spinoza's physics, is hypothetical[164], then there is no absurdity in assuming that the ratio characteristic of bodies cannot be known precisely and adequately through the kind of physical account Spinoza offers here[165]. The existence of this ratio is certain, due to the fact that motion and rest belong to an infinite mode, but not the precise nature of the ratio[166]. To translate *certus* as fixed would also be problematic because Spinoza's account of the body must be able to explain the existence of variations in the constitution of the body that do not amount to its destruction. We will see in the next section how these variations can be accommodated by an account of the body centred on the notion of power and affects. On account of these difficulties, the Physical Interlude cannot be said to offer a fully adequate and satisfactory account of the body. We must therefore turn to the explanation of human nature given in Books III and IV.

163 According to Lewis & Short (1958).

164 In section I.2a I have argued that Spinoza's geometrical method is not hypothetico-deductive and so, if his demonstrations are to be adequate, they must be based on premises that are certain.

165 Curley argues that we can, according to Spinoza, deduce the laws of motion of bodies from the nature of the attribute of extension. Curley, nevertheless, stops short of writing that we could know bodies adequately if we only know these general laws of motion (Curley 1969, p. 60) He writes that knowing that bodies are either in motion or in rest does not mean we know anything about bodies (Curley 1969, p. 108).

166 This resonates with Bennett's claim that the ratio of motion and rest is a formula serving as placeholder for a detailed analysis which Spinoza had not worked out (Bennett 1984, p. 232).

Before moving on to consider the body as a multiplicity of affects, we must raise the following question: How can Spinoza speak of a body as a stable composite body if it is not characterized by a fixed proportion of motion and rest? How can we make sense of the stability that human bodies display diachronically if they do not possess a fixed structure? In my view this question finds an answer in Spinoza's thinking only if we understand stability as a dynamic concept. The human body is preserved in a constantly changing environment and it mirrors the nature of its environment by being in a state of constant change itself: growing, changing the bodies which compose it or undergoing metabolic changes and processes. The human body remains dynamically and relatively stable because its parts communicate their specific ratio of motion and rest to one another. The concept of communication or transmission of motion is crucial and it is important to underline that as long as the process of communication of motion occurs, human bodies will persevere in existence regardless of any changes in the nature, size or shape of their parts. We must note that, because Spinoza does not speak of conatus here, he cannot account for this dynamic stability in terms of an endogenous force. The stability of the body is the result of outside pressure. The forces that preserve the stability of the human body are exogenous to it and we must wait for the next section in order to consider Spinoza's account of endogenous processes of self-organization in the body.

The body as a multiplicity of affects

Spinoza's thinking on the body is shaped by the premise that we do not know the essence of the body adequately. We do not have the same adequate knowledge of the body that God has and, instead, we must be satisfied with knowledge of the affections of our body i.e. the interactions between our body and surrounding bodies. Given that this is the starting point, we must ask how Spinoza believes we can come to have any adequate knowledge of the body. His answer is that we come to know the nature of the body by understanding the nature and logic of our affects. His argument can be reconstructed as following. When we are affected, we do not have adequate knowledge of the bodies causing the affect (our body and the external causes), but we do have adequate knowledge of the properties that our body and other bodies have in common. Knowledge of these properties

is labeled, as we have seen, knowledge of common notions. Regardless of the characteristics of a thing, or even regardless of the attribute under which they are conceived (in the case considered here it is the attribute of extension), the one thing they all have in common is that they are expressions of substance, i.e. of God's essence or power. If we were to somehow gain an adequate understanding of the dynamics of power expressed through our body, we would gain the most crucial insight possible into what we are. It is precisely this that Spinoza believes he can deliver in the discussion of affects in books III, IV and V of the Ethics. The crux of the matter is, of course, to understand power in its very specific manifestation in and through our own body, hence the emphasis on our affective structure (Bove 1996, p. 13).

The context of Spinoza's investigation into the nature of affects has two dimensions. The first, internal to Spinoza's philosophy, is his commitment to treat of man as a part of nature. This means that affects follow the laws and rules of nature just as bodies do under the attribute of extension (EIIIpref). The second dimension is extraneous to Spinoza's system and consists in the influence of other philosophers on his treatment of affects. The main source here is Descartes and his importance is highlighted by the fact that the references to Descartes in the Prefaces to books III and V are among the very rare instances in which anyone is mentioned by name in the *Ethics*[167]. Spinoza is critical of Descartes for not understanding affects properly and believing that the mind has absolute power over them. Spinoza points out, however, that Descartes, to his merit, did attempt to explain the first causes of affects, and so did more than those who merely attempt to bewail or laugh at human nature (EIIIpref)[168]. We can find a similar project in Hobbes. While in both Descartes and Hobbes the emphasis was on explaining passions starting from a mechanistic understanding of the body, they did not offer a purely materialist explanation of the passions. Descartes acknowledged the role of the soul in his treatise on the passions, even if he encountered difficulties in explaining how the soul and the body might interact and how the body might affect the soul or the

167 In the EVpref Spinoza goes so far as to offer precise references to the text of Descartes' *Passions of the Soul.*

168 The striving to offer a naturalised understanding of human beings, free from moral illusions, is of course a project shared by Spinoza and Nietzsche.

mind master the body. Hobbes has been read as more dedicated to a reductionist account of affects, but, as we have seen, he has trouble giving full explanations of affects in mechanistic terms and he does preserve epiphenomenalist vocabulary. Spinoza steers clear of any proximity to reductionism by virtue of his doctrine of parallelism (Allison 1987, p. 85). However, due precisely to his parallelism, he must explain the passions, or rather their extended correlates, under the attribute of extension, without any recourse to the notion of soul. Descartes or Hobbes have attempted this by using purely mechanistic principles, but Spinoza will take a different route that distinguishes his account both from theirs and from the Physical Interlude we have previously considered. The major difference is Spinoza's use of the notion of conatus, introduced in EIIIp6.

Before exploring this notion, it is important to acknowledge that Spinoza engages in a project similar to that of Descartes and Hobbes and tries to explain all affects starting from a small number of basic or primary affects. The building blocks for Spinoza's theory of affects are: *laetitia* (joy or pleasure), *tristitia* (sadness or unpleasure) and *appetitus* or *cupiditas (*appetite or desire) (EIIIp11s). Joy and sadness refer to contrasting processes in the mind and in the body and joy is defined as "a man's passage from a lesser to a greater perfection", while sadness is "a man's passage from a greater to a lesser perfection" (EIIIp11s and Def. of Affects 2 and 3)[169]. Other kinds of affects are subspecies or compounds of these three (EIIIp59s). Desire is the essence or nature of each individual and joy and sadness seem to "be swallowed up in desire" (Bennett 1984, p. 261). Spinoza argues that an individual's desire is directed towards an increase in power, of which self-preservation is a special case. (EIVp15)[170]. This exposition has not elucidated yet the manner in which Spinoza understands the concept of desire or appetite. They constitute the "very essence of man" (EIIIp9s) and are identical with the famous notion of conatus, to which we must now turn[171].

169 Bennett agrees that pleasure and unpleasure are the movements themselves, but mentions that in EIVp59 Spinoza seems to imply that they are the causes of movements. Given that this is an isolated occurrence he does not dwell on this point and neither shall I (Bennett 1984, p. 254).

170 In EIVp24 Spinoza writes that preserving our being, acting and living signify the same thing. This should not be confused with simply continuing to exist.

171 Spinoza's normative thinking revolves around the elaboration of the best strategies for

Conatus

Conatus, the essence of the human body, is an expression of God's power, an actual and productive singular essence (Bove 1996, p. 9), and is described as the power by which each thing "strives to persevere in its being" (EIIIp6) or "does anything, or strives to do anything" (EIIIp7dem).

The much debated proposition 6 of book III, in which Spinoza introduces the notion of conatus, is key to understanding the differences between this account of the body, as a multiplicity of affects, and the earlier account of the body in the Physical Interlude. The proposition, in Curley's translation, reads: "Each thing, as far as it can by its own power[172], strives to persevere in its being". We have already mentioned in section 1 of this chapter Bennett's critique of Spinoza's deduction of conatus[173]. For our present purposes, it is useful to focus on one inconsistency Bennett claims in Spinoza's deduction. In the demonstration to EIIIp6 Spinoza uses EIIIp4 and 5 to show that any single thing (*res*) strives, insofar as it can, to persevere in its being. Proposition 4 reads: "No thing can be destroyed except through an external cause" and proposition 5 is "Things are of a contrary nature, that is, cannot be in the same subject[174], insofar as one can destroy the other". Bennett's point is that propositions 4 and 5 only allow Spinoza to say that the destruction of a thing can solely come from outside, from an external cause (Bennett 1984, pp. 244-5; Manning 2002, p. 185). Spinoza is not justified,

the empowerment of the conatus, as will be discussed in the comparative section.

172 The word power is not found in the Latin, as Garrett points out (Garrett 2002, p. 135). Nevertheless, there are very good reasons to believe that conatus must be understood as a manifestation of a thing's power, as will be argued later.

173 Bennett believes Spinoza is an anti-teleological thinker and argues that the instances where he does offer teleological explanations are inconsistencies that should be interpreted in light of his overall project (Bennett 1984, p. 219). While Spinoza's commitment to the claim that God as a whole does not act teleologically is clear, a number of commentators have pointed out that this does not exclude thoughtful or unthoughtful teleology in the case of finite modes (Garrett 1999, p. 314; Lin 2006, p. 319).

174 The seemingly effortless transition from a logical concept (subject) to a physical notion (thing) has not escaped the attention of various commentators. This move can only be justified in virtue of the "ontological transposition of the cognitive" (Matheron 1988, p. 16) in Spinoza. For the contrast between Spinoza's position and Kant's distinction between logical and real opposition in the *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy* see Viljanen (2008, p. 98).

however, in writing that a thing strives to persevere in its being, insofar as striving is taken to imply any kind of activity i.e. active pursuit of what helps a thing persevere in its being. This understanding of the nature of a thing as a passive or reactive ratio of motion and rest can be traced back to the Physical Interlude (Manning 2002, p. 195), where the parts of complex bodies were compelled by other bodies to remain in contact and be moved at the same or at different speeds (EII, Def. after AII). Bennett's critique, however, does not do justice to the first part of Spinoza's demonstration[175]. There, Spinoza reminds us that modes express God's power in a certain and determinate way and invokes EIP25c and IP34. Proposition 34 is "God's power is his essence itself" and the corollary to EIP25 claims that "particular things are nothing but affections of God's attributes, or modes by which God's attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way". God's power is that by virtue of which he acts, and insofar as things express this power in a finite manner, they also act (EIp34dem)[176]. The Physics of Book II is not sufficient to explain the power that things possess (Viljanen 2008, pp. 104-5). Instead of the demonstration to EIIIP6 being a weakness, it opens up a new dimension to Spinoza's account of the body and shows why it is crucial to consider the body as the expression of endogenous power: it is the only way to adequately understand the body's actual essence.

The reading of conatus as a passive resistance to outside influences, a striving for mere self-preservation, is unproblematic for the explanation of conatus found in chapter XVI: "each thing strives to persist in its present state" (TTP 16 2). The description found in the *Ethics* however replaces "persist in its present state *(in suo statu)*" with "persist in its being *(in se)*" and this makes all the difference (Viljanen 2008, p. 105)[177]. This difference between the *TTP* and the *Ethics* can also

175 Bennett does not mention the essential element of power or force in Spinoza's discussion of conatus, and he refers to cognitions where Spinoza makes no reference to consciousness (Schrijvers 1999, p. 71).

176 Gueroult, in an interesting analysis, has shown how in EIp34, 35 and 36, God's *potestas*, the capacity to produce things, is identified with *potentia*, the force to actually produce them (Gueroult 1968, pp. 387-9). This eliminates the concept of possibility and forms the basis for Spinoza's rejection of a God imagined as king or as a law-giver acting arbitrarily (Balibar 1998, p. 14; Negri 1991, pp. 191-2).

177 In the early CM (II, 11) thigns have, from themselves, no power to act. In the *KV* (I.5), which is close to the *TTP* on this, the essence of things is a power to persist in the same state, in

be brought out using the preceding analysis of Hobbes. Starting from the crucial distinction between Hobbes' and Spinoza's notions of power[178], we can start to understand the dynamics behind the transition in the analysis of affects from the *TTP* to the *Ethics.* At first, it might seem that there is a marked difference between Hobbes's list of primary affects in *De Cive* (fear, glory and desire, with fear being primary) and Spinoza's list in *TTP 1* (desire (*cupiditas*) is fundamental, fear and pride follow from it). Closer analysis, however, shows that Hobbes places desire for a certain good as first, while Spinoza thinks fear as the most powerful affect (Jaquet 2004, pp. 91-3). In order to understand the deep reasons why the Hobbesian moment of the *TTP* is overcome in the *Ethics*, we must see that the whole category of active affects is not present in the *TTP*. In the *TTP* Spinoza is close to Hobbes in his understanding of affects because he understands them as purely passive or reactive. As soon as Spinoza comes to understand power as the active affirmation of the properties that follow from the essence of a thing, not just as resistance or reproduction of existing affects, he moves beyond the Hobbesian framework (Jaquet 2004, pp. 113, 115). The modifications in Spinoza's understanding of power and conatus bring with it crucial differences in his analysis of the dynamics of affects.

How must we understand the endogenous power[179] that Spinoza describes using the term "conatus"? We can do this by comparing the power of finite modes and the power of God. In both cases power can be spoken of in the same way (univocally[180]) and it consists in the production of effects. Power is understood as affirmative, active expression of itself (Negri 1991, p. 47). Being is power, which constitutes itself as an open totality (Negri 1991, p. 52). The differences surface when we consider the contrast between absolute and determinate power.

virtue of divine providence. It is only in the Ethics that the conatus as a dynamic power to act appears (Jaquet 2005, pp. 270-1).

178 Hobbes thinks power as power to resist others within a hostile universe, while for Spinoza power is affirmative, active, and constitutive and does not necessarily involve a lack of security in the face of an external threat.

179 Negri argues that letter 37 to Bouwmeester (June 1666) marks the moment when Spinoza's "conception of being has changed: It is now given as power" (Negri 1991, p. 39).

180 The notion of analogical being is negated, together with the concepts of possibility (Negri 1991, p. 43), abstraction and mediation (Negri 1991, p. 62).

A mode has power, i.e. is the cause of an effect, insofar as the effect is understood solely from the nature of the mode. In other words, a mode is cause insofar as its effects are produced by God as it is expressed through the individual essence of that mode alone. The finite power of a mode is the affirmation of that mode, i.e. the actualization of that mode's capacity to "act and be acted on in a great number of ways". The power of a mode is its power to know, since power is the capacity to form "clear and distinct ideas", deduce "some from others", and order and connect "the affections of the body according to the order of the intellect" (EVp10 and dem). While the second type of knowledge is essential in order to understand the dynamic of finite modes engaged in power relations, the third type of knowledge shows us how the power of a mode is an expression of the immanent power of God. In connection to Nietzsche, it is essential to see that the power to produce effects is conceived by Spinoza according to the logic of expression. This means that the effects generated manifest the power of their cause, in this case the finite mode, without exhausting it. For Spinoza, exhaustion generated by action is impossible, since power always expresses the essence of a mode and there is nothing in the essence or definition of the mode that can lead to its disempowerment and eventual demise. When the decomposition of modes occurs, it is an infringement on the mode's power from an outside, more powerful thing. Spinoza does not think that when a mode acts it expends, or exhausts, its power.

The introduction of conatus, an intrinsic power constituting the essence of a singular thing, comes at a price. Spinoza must reject the Cartesian explanation of organisms in purely mechanistic terms (Garrett 1999, p. 330). This confirms that Spinoza was aware of the shortcomings of mechanism and saw the insufficiencies already discussed in section 1, but it also explains how teleology resurfaces in his philosophy. There are occasions where Spinoza speaks of conatus or appetite as a striving determined only by efficient causes and which dispose the body to do something and determine one's goals or valuations[181]. Nevertheless, there are

181 Perhaps most famously in EIIIp9s, where he writes that "we neither strive for, nor will, neither want, nor desire anything because we judge it to be good; on the contrary we judge something to be good because we strive for it, will it, want it, desire it" (see also EIIIp39s).

instances when he reverts to a more common-sense notion of striving[182]. The debate on this point revolves around the causal power of representations in determining our behavior. If the content of our representations is causally inert then any goals we might have will play no role in determining our behavior. This argument implies that there is a dichotomy between intrinsic and extrinsic features of an idea and has been championed by Bennett (Bennett 1984, p. 224). The intrinsic feature of an idea is its structure and the multiplicity of impulses and efficient causes that generate it. To talk of the intrinsic feature of an idea is to explain it as an impulse, without any reference to the future or to any object of desire. Extrinsic features, in Bennett's reading, are the representational features of thought, the objects of desire and the beliefs we may hold about them. Bennett argues that explanations using only efficient causes are to be preferred due to their adequacy, but that teleological explanations are kept by Spinoza because they make it easier to account for human behaviour. Recent commentators, however, have argued that Spinoza does allow for representations to play a causal role (Garrett 1999; Garrett 2002; Lin 2006; Manning 2002). Garrett argues that Spinoza would reject the distinction between the causal efficiency of a thing (its intrinsic features) and the causal efficiency of a representation (extrinsic features), even if modern philosophers might not (Garrett 1999, pp. 319-320). Representational properties are, in this, way, integrated into the efficient chain of causation, into the explanation of nature (Garrett 1999, p. 325). The beliefs we hold about good and evil and about what our behaviour should be are part of our mental constitution and therefore, in virtue of their existence, have a determinate power to act and influence us. This reading does away with the problematic distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic features[183], while demanding less exegetic effort in explaining away uncomfortable passages in which Spinoza is speaking teleologically[184]. If this

182 EIIIp28, EIIIp29 or EIIIp31c, EIVp19.

183 According to Bennett the intrinsic properties, i.e. the causally efficient ones, are motion, rest, shape, size, etc., in other words the notions used in the Physical Interlude (Bennett 1984, p. 219). These, nevertheless, do not exhaust Spinoza's conceptual apparatus in explaining the essence of modes.

184 Spinoza writes that "men commonly suppose that all natural things act, as men do, on account of an end" (EIapp II/78). While the Appendix may be written for those who will not follow the "cumbersome" geometrical order of Spinoza's demonstrations, it is hard to believe that Spinoza would want to compromise and speak inadequately. We must therefore acknowledge that

interpretation of teleology is correct, then the reader would be right to ask whether this does not signal an inconsistency in Spinoza's thinking between the rejection of the validity of teleological thinking about God and its affirmation in the case of humans[185]. It is important to underline that the discrepancy is due to the fact that Spinoza considers teleology to be a legitimate way of speaking of humans only because human beings are finite. According to EIIIp6 only singular or finite things have conatus and it is only conatus that can be spoken of teleologically. God, being infinite, cannot be thought of in the same manner. This interpretation shows how Spinoza can maintain his commitment to naturalism by integrating goal-directed behavior and thinking into causal nexuses and also shows how teleological descriptions are not merely useful tools for describing behavior, but also have explanatory power[186] (EIVd7). The power of finite modes is directed towards more power, but this "more" does not impose a teleological structure on desire: expansion or empowerment simply means that a thing succeeds in "doing what it is internally determined to do" (Schrijvers 1999, p. 69). On this reading, there is no need to accuse Spinoza of inconsistency simply due to the fact that he believes that different discourses are adequate when speaking of infinite and finite things.

We can summarize Spinoza's account of the body as a multiplicity of affects and the role played by the notion of power in this account by emphasizing that its crucial feature is an endogenous account of motion and of the capacity of the body to act and be acted upon. The mechanistic account in the Physical Interlude explained motion and the body exogenously, as the result of outside pressure. In his account of affects, however, Spinoza explores the possibility that we can understand the body starting from its essence, i.e. power. This line of thought has

for Spinoza humans do act on account of ends.

185 Nietzsche criticizes Spinoza's "inconsistency" in JGB 13 5.28 and we will come back to this in chapter III.

186 In the Preface to Book IV Spinoza writes that in the case of human beings what we call a final cause "is nothing but a human appetite insofar as it is considered as a principle, *or* primary cause, of some thing". In the same Preface, Spinoza clarifies what he means by primary or first cause: "it is really an efficient cause". Spinoza's example is that of a man who desires to build a house: he has an appetite to build the house which can be explained by the imagined conveniences of domestic life (EIVpref II/207).

important consequences for grasping the way Spinoza understands subjectivity and, in the comparative section, will prove to be an important point of contact with Nietzsche's philosophy.

The body as an eternal essence

Spinoza writes at the end EVp20s that he will now pass to discuss "those things which pertain to the mind's duration without relation to the body". At first glance, this appears to mean that Spinoza wishes to stop thinking about the body and contemplate purely intellectual essences for the remainder of book V. This reading, however, is not the one that Spinoza wants to suggest. After writing that we must leave our body behind, he goes on, in book V, to speak of the eternal essence of the body, which the mind knows. Spinoza does not wish to do away with the concept of the body, but to understand the body itself under the aspect of eternity (Gueroult 1974, p. 423)[187]. This allows Spinoza to argue that we can have knowledge of the third kind while maintaining that the mind is the idea of the body[188]. Whereas so far the body has been considered in duration, we now consider it as an eternal essence.

We must consider the question of what Spinoza understands by eternity and by essence. Eternity should not be understood as immortality, as indefinite existence in time. What it refers to is a manner of considering things apart from space and time[189]. The essence of a thing is its productive power understood synoptically, in its fullness, as God does. Knowing essences lays "bare the internal design of nature and its occupants" (Yovel 1989, p. 163). In the case of the body, this implies knowing the power that it has insofar as it is "capable of doing a great many things"

187 Negri argues that there is an ascetic tendency (abstraction from affects, from things and from time) in book V of the *Ethics*, but that it is tempered by constant references to the body (Negri 1991, p. 172). Perhaps this is reminiscent of the ascetic tendency in Maimonides.

188 In Evp40s Spinoza writes that he has considered things "without relation to the body's existence". The essence of the body outside duration is clearly part of his arguments. This goes against the argument that the doctrine of eternal essences is a remnant of what seems to be Spinoza's early inclination to follow the Stoic path and make reason self-sufficient and detachable from the body (Huenemann 2008, p. 104).

189 Whether Spinoza is successful in his arguments concerning essence is not discussed here.

(EVp39dem). There is no doubt that Spinoza holds that this way of understanding the body is adequate. This manner of understanding things synoptically, apart from duration, is the intuitive, i.e. non-discursive, kind of knowledge considered in section II.1. This shows that the essence of the body (or of any other mode) understood under the third type of knowledge is not different from the essence understood under the second type of knowledge. They are the same thing, namely power, understood in two different, but adequate manners. The difference lies in the fact that the third type of knowledge allows us to connect our knowledge of the body with our knowledge of God in an immediate manner.

Knowledge of the body, must, in virtue of being adequate, be knowledge of its power. More precisely, it must be knowledge of the dynamics of power that the body is part of. Here, we encounter the following difficulty: how can we reconcile the thesis that the power of a thing is invariable in eternity, known synthetically under the third kind of knowledge, with the claim that it is nevertheless variable in actuality (Curley 1969, p. 163; Schrijvers 1999, p. 69)? The focus on the dynamic aspects of power brings out two fundamental dimensions of Spinoza's understanding of the eternal essence of the body. First, we have seen in the case of the second kind of knowledge that Spinoza provided the conceptual tools necessary to conceive both the empowerment and the disempowerment that the body can undergo. Under the third type of knowledge, however, it is difficult to see how we could understand disempowerment and passive affects. This is because the eternal part of our mind is the intellect, through which we can only act. Imagination, through which alone we are acted on, perishes in the third type of knowledge (EVp40cor.). The mind can conceive affections of the body only insofar as it conceives the body in duration. Under the third type of knowledge, it does not (EVp21dem). We must therefore conclude that under the third type of knowledge the dynamics of power that we can grasp are, asymmetrically, limited to an understanding of the increase in power[190]. Second, it appears that even the

190 The following objection can be raised: knowledge of evil is always inadequate because it depends on inadequate ideas, i.e. passions (EIVp64). Therefore, also under the second kind of knowledge it is only natural that we would not know evil and disempowerment since this kind of knowledge is correlated only with empowerment. We must, however, remember that this argument is presented in the context of Spinoza's discussion of the hypothetical model of a "free man"

possibility of knowing the mechanisms of empowerment are threatened by the tension between Spinoza's concepts of joy (*Laetitia*) and blessedness (*Beatitudo*). Joy, as we have seen, is understood by Spinoza as a transition from a smaller to a greater perfection. In the case of the third type of knowledge, this transition translates into understanding more and more things by the third kind of knowledge. The more we understand singular things in this way, the more we understand God (EVp24) and the more we have this knowledge, the greater is our desire to know things by this knowledge (EVp26). The more knowledge of this kind that we have, the more we are conscious of both God and ourselves (EVp31s)[191]. This straightforward account is complicated, however, by the use of the notion of blessedness. Contrary to joy, blessedness is not a passage to a greater perfection, but consists "in the fact that the mind is endowed with perfection itself" and the mind "has had eternally the same perfections" (EVp33s). In EVp33s Spinoza argues that joy and blessedness are the same thing ("there is no difference here"), but that there is a distinction between them insofar as the notion of joy must be seen as a passage to a greater perfection, while blessedness must not[192].

A critic may object that the enumerated above are unfounded precisely due to the direct link Spinoza establishes between blessedness and the body. Spinoza speaks of the intellectual love of God in connection to the mind alone, but when he treats of the mind together with the body he speaks only of "love towards God" (*amor erga Deum*; cf. EVp42dem). This love towards God is clearly presented by

(which will be discussed in the comparative section). This hypothetical situation is contrasted by Spinoza with the reality of finite modes, which are always subject to passions, and which calls for knowledge of "both out nature's power and its lack of power, so that we can determine what reason can do in moderating the affects and what it cannot do" (EIVp17s).

191 The idea that our mind is eternal due to the knowledge it has is reminiscent of arguments found in Maimonides or Gersonides: the human mind becomes one with the Agent Intellect by knowing the eternal forms the Agent Intellect contains. It is also worth noting that Spinoza's argument resembles Gersonides' insofar as the eternity of the mind depends on the specific eternal forms it knows. Not all minds are identical, even if they are eternal. Mason argues that eternity does not involve a loss of identity for Spinoza, even if memory is lost (Mason 1997, p. 240). It seems that the only way to argue that for Spinoza blessedness still involves a transition is to argue that it is a transition to having a greater number of adequate ideas (Schrijvers 1999, p. 77).

192 The issue is particularly vexing since Spinoza, while using both joy/love and beatitude in order to describe the third kind of knowledge, argues in EVp35 that God loves himself with an infinite intellectual love. It is very difficult to see how God could pass from a smaller to a greater perfection.

Spinoza as an affect, in fact "the most constant of all the affects" (EVp20s), by which he means the most powerful. As opposed to the more problematic case of the intellectual love of God, the love of God would, by being an affect, admit of a transition to greater power that is proportional to bodily aptitudes and the part of the mind that is eternal. This increase in power would result in a greater power over the affects, i.e. in "restraining lusts" (EVp42dem; cf. Jaquet 2004, pp. 170-1). The difficulty with this claim is that, in the demonstration to EVp42, Spinoza builds his argument by claiming that blessedness arises from the third kind of knowledge, which in turn gives rise to power over the affects. This means that, if the concept of "beatitude" is problematic, it is not at all clear how something that follows from it can escape these difficulties, in other words to be susceptible of transitions in power. The fact that Spinoza speaks of the love of God as the "most constant of all affects" in EVp20s does not make it any clearer how the third kind of knowledge can map out a processes of empowerment related to both mind and body. In light of these difficulties in Spinoza's account of the dynamic of power of the body under the third kind of knowledge, we can appreciate the advantages of the second kind of knowledge in discussing that ability of the body to act and be acted on in a great number of ways.

This last manner of knowing the body, I have argued, is problematic because it makes it difficult to understand the dynamic of power. Nevertheless, it is helpful in allowing us to understand the nature and logic of Spinoza's notion of power and its expressions. Under the third type of knowledge, Spinoza argues, we can perceive intuitively how the essence of the body follows from God, and therefore gain privileged access to the nature of particular things. This privileged knowledge of individuals, which goes beyond what the second type can offer us, has special connections with love that go beyond the general ones between reason and affectivity. It therefore opens up a new dimension for self-knowledge (Lloyd 1994, p. 108). We must also notice that to understand conatus as a singular thing expressing the power of God is to present indivisibility as a mark of the conatus (Lloyd 1994, p. 128).

Nietzsche's Turn to the Body

In order to understand why and how Nietzsche turns to the body, we need to tackle three sub-questions. 1) What is Nietzsche responding to by turning to the body? The answer to this question will help us situate the turn to the body within the context of Nietzsche's philosophical project of overcoming nihilism and décadence and re-evaluating all values. This will allow us to identify the key elements that motivate Nietzsche's project of naturalization and, consequently, his turn to the body: his critique of Christian-Platonic values and their deleterious effects. 2) What is the nature of Nietzsche's turn to the body? In order to answer this question we need to clarify what the functions of Nietzsche's turn to the body are. I will argue that Nietzsche's philosophical physiology has three functions: descriptive, diagnostic and normative. We also need to outline the conceptual vocabulary of Nietzsche's philosophical physiology and, finally, explore some of the key domains to which Nietzsche applies the method of philosophical physiology. 3) Does the turn to the body imply abandoning philosophy for science? After outlining the accusation of biologism that can be brought against Nietzsche, I will argue that this charge is not justified. In order to understand why this is so, we need to come to grips with Nietzsche's critique of science and to better understand the philosophical value of Nietzsche's turn to the body, i.e. his philosophical physiology. This chapter will serve as a platform for discussing a further question, which will be addressed in the comparative section: What role does the turn to the body play in the normative component (the ethics and politics) of Nietzsche's philosophy? In order to set out the basis for this discussion, it is important to highlight a number of key notions that inform Nietzsche's normative project: the undermining of transcendent values and their translation onto the plane of immanence, his power ontology, uncovering the multiplicity behind apparent unities and the focus on the notions of enhancement and affirmation of life.

I. The context of Nietzsche's turn to the body

In order to understand the context in which Nietzsche turns to the body and clarify the problems he is reacting to, it is important to identify some of the main concerns and impulses in his thought. My focus in this thesis is on Nietzsche's work from 1880 onwards, the period when the turn to the body becomes a project central to Nietzsche's philosophy. The period between 1880 and the moment of Nietzsche's collapse in 1889 is marked by his concern with the problems of nihilism (*Nihilismus*)[193] and décadence (*Entartung*, *Dekadenz* or *Décadence*) (Hermens, cat.2), together with an increasing focus on the critique and transvaluation of all values in the context of an attempt to develop an ontology of becoming against the metaphysics of being. Nietzsche's understanding of the notion of décadence is informed by his extensive readings in medicine and the life sciences[194] (Brobjer 2004, p. 21) and comes to be closely related to the physiological notion of degeneration (Hermens, cat. 2). While I will argue in greater depth in section III that this should not be seen as the abandonment of philosophy for science, it is important now to highlight the fact that both Nietzsche's understanding of nihilism and décadence and the decline of transcendent values provide an impetus to his project of naturalization. This section will therefore proceed by asking the following three questions: 1) How should the project of naturalization be understood? 2) How does Nietzsche's discussion of nihilism and décadence relate to naturalization and, more specifically, to his turn to the body? and 3) What are the nihilistic, life-denying values Nietzsche criticizes?

1. The project of naturalization

Nietzsche's project of naturalization is encapsulated in the following passage from *Beyond Good and Evil*:

> To translate the human back into nature; to gain control of the many vain and fanciful interpretations and incidental meanings that have been

193 The first occurrences of the word "*Nihilism*" date from 1881, more precisely from the letter to Heinrich Köselitz on 13.03.1881 *(Nihilismus*; KGB III/1, 88*)* and 12[57] 9.586 (*Nihilism)*.

194 Moore traces Nietzsche's understanding of décadence as degeneration to his reading of Charles Féré's 1888 work *Dégénérescence et criminalité* (Moore 2002, p. 127).

> scribbled and drawn over that eternal basic text of homo natura so far; to make sure that, from now on, the human being will stand before the human being, just as he already stands before the *rest* of nature today, hardened by the discipline of science, – with courageous Oedipus eyes and sealed up Odysseus ears, deaf to the lures of the old metaphysical bird catchers who have been whistling to him for far too long: "You are more! You are higher! You have a different origin!" – This may be a strange and insane task, but it is a *task* – who would deny it! Why do we choose it, this insane task?[195] (modified translation; JGB 230 5.169)

How we should understand the "many vain and fanciful interpretations and incidental meanings" that have been "drawn over the eternal basic text of *homo natura*"? How can we conceive of the connection between the naturalised understanding of humans as *homo natura* and values? Finally, what is the nature of the science (*Wissenschaft*) that hardens us and that Nietzsche believes enables us to see human beings as we see the rest of nature. All of the inquiries formulated above must be situated within the framework provided by our answer to the essential question of how to understand the project of translating "the human back into nature". Understanding this task, a project to which sections I and II of this chapter will be dedicated, will provide us with clues to how the translation of the human back into nature can help us "gain control" over the "vain and fanciful interpretations" projected onto humanity. This will provide the basis for the discussion of Nietzsche's normative thought in the comparative section.

The project of translating the human back into nature is a constant throughout Nietzsche's works and is twofold in nature. On the one hand it involves the attempt to translate moral, but also artistic, religious or political terms back into

195 "Den Menschen nämlich zurückübersetzen in die Natur; über die vielen eitlen und schwärmerischen Deutungen und Nebensinne Herr werden, welche bisher über jenen ewigen Grundtext homo natura gekritzelt und gemalt wurden; machen, dass der Mensch fürderhin vor dem Menschen steht, wie er heute schon, hart geworden in der Zucht der Wissenschaft, vor der anderen Natur steht, mit unerschrocknen Oedipus-Augen und verklebten Odysseus-Ohren, taub gegen die Lockweisen alter metaphysischer Vogelfänger, welche ihm allzulange zugeflötet haben: „du bist mehr! Du bist höher! du bist anderer Herkunft!" – das mag eine seltsame und tolle Aufgabe sein, aber es ist eine Aufgabe – wer wollte das leugnen! Warum wir sie wählten, diese tolle Aufgabe?".

the body, using the vocabulary of drives and focusing on our individual and collective *Lebensbedingungen*. Through naturalization, Nietzsche aims to reject the autonomy of moral, artistic or religious spheres and rethink them as radically immanent features of nature: "My task is to translate the apparently emancipated moral values that have become nature-less back into their nature"[196] (9[86] 12.380). On the other hand, it involves a rethinking of practical or normative questions in terms that affirm and enhance life (Siemens [Unpublished manuscript], pp. 2-3).

According to Schacht, Nietzsche's naturalism is best understood as the "Guiding Idea" that "everything that goes on and comes to be in this world is the outcome of developments occurring within it that are owing entirely to its internal dynamics" (Schacht 2012, p. 170). Nietzsche's naturalism should not be seen as a doctrine, but rather considered in view of the fact that he "was an avowedly experimental thinker and writer" (Schacht 2012, p. 169) who placed great emphasis on the value of having a multiplicity of perspectives (GM III 12 5.364f). Not all perspectives are of equal value, of course, and Nietzsche takes great care to distinguish qualitatively between the various perspectives available[197]. Naturalism is the only platform for reinterpreting and revaluating values in a non-metaphysical (JGB 230 5.169) and de-deified[198] manner. Both the descriptive and the normative components of Nietzsche's naturalism must be understood in the context of his rejection of the notions of immaterial soul, free will, self-transparent pure intellect, and of the stress he places on the body, drives, instincts and affects (Janaway 2007, p. 34).

Leiter distinguishes between Substantive Naturalism (S-Naturalism) and Methodological Naturalism (M-Naturalism). S-Naturalism is either the view that "the only things that exist are natural (or perhaps simply *physical*) things" or that philosophy should show how any concept is "amenable to empirical inquiry" (Leiter 2002, p. 5). While Nietzsche does argue that super-natural or transcendent causes should play no role in our accounts of the world, this is not the kind of naturalism

196 "Meine Aufgabe ist, die scheinbar emancipirten und naturlos gewordenen Moralwerthe in ihre Natur zurückzuübersetzen".

197 More on this in the subsequent analysis of philosophical physiology.

198 "Wann werden uns alle diese Schatten Gottes nicht mehr verdunkeln? Wann werden wir die Natur ganz entgöttlicht haben! Wann werden wir anfangen dürfen, uns Menschen mit der reinen, neu gefundenen, neu erlösten Natur zu vernatürlichen!" (FW 109 3.468f).

most important to Nietzsche[199]. Leiter argues for methodological naturalism as Nietzsche's view: "a 'speculative' theory of human nature – modelled on the most influential paradigm of the day" (Leiter 2002, p. 4), a theory continuous with the sciences, dependent on their results and trying to emulate[200] the distinctively scientific ways of looking at things, i.e. especially determinism (Leiter 2002, p. 5). This concept of naturalisation is problematic because it is too narrow (Lopes 2012, p. 116): it emphasizes the notions of determinism and cause and effect of which Nietzsche is very critical[201] (Schacht 2012, p. 171; Lopes 2012, p. 113); it reconstructs Nietzsche's way of thinking as based on just another metaphysical "wahre Welt"[202] (Schacht 2012, p. 173)[203]; and it makes it unclear how Nietzsche's descriptive naturalism can be made compatible with his normative program, insofar as the revaluation of values cannot be generated by a descriptive account of the deterministic laws of nature (Brusotti 2012a, pp. 107-9)[204].

Two of Nietzsche's key concerns in the 1880's, in the context of his commitment to naturalism, are the problems of décadence and nihilism.

199 Here Leiter is in agreement with a number of other scholars, including Schacht (2012, p.165).

200 My arguments in section III will be directed againsst such a view.

201 More on this in section III of this chapter.

202 The world of natural or physical things, that are "*really* real" (Schacht 2012, p. 173).

203 Even if we were to consider exclusively the "continuities" between Nietzsche's naturalism and his interest in science, it would be misguiding to focus solely on natural sciences. The German term *Wissenschaft* is much broader (Higgins 2006, p. 406).

204 For the purposes of this thesis it is worth mentioning that Leiter references Spinoza as a representative of M-naturalism. Leiter quotes EIIIpref "the way of understanding the nature of anything, of whatever kind, must also be the same, viz. through the universal laws and rules of nature". This is problematic on three counts: 1) by the universal laws and rules of nature Spinoza understands the "virtue and power of acting" of nature, as he writes in the same preface. As we have seen in chapter I, Spinoza considered the scientific method of his time inadequate for an account of nature and its power to act, and hence needed to develop a new way of doing philosophy in order to understand nature 2) Spinoza did not see philosophy and science as necessarily going hand in hand: he believed the philosophy he developed in the Ethics was accurate, while never claiming he or anyone else had yet developed a proper scientific understanding of nature and 3) EIIIpref ends with Spinoza's explanation of what he understands by adequate method: to "consider human actions and desires in exactly the same manner, as though I were concerned with lines, planes and solids". Spinoza's method here is geometrical and it is a contentious claim to argue that this makes his method scientistic in any way.

2. Naturalization, décadence and nihilism

We can distinguish at least two main meanings of the concept of nihilism: 1) The constellation of life-denying values and ideals grounded in the metaphysics of being and transcendence; 2) The process by which these values necessarily undermine themselves. The history of European nihilism can be summarised in three stages: "(in an inverted chronological order) (3) the corrosion of (2) the protective structure that was built to hide (1) the absurdity of life and world" (van Tongeren 2015, p. 1). Referring to the Lenzer Heide Note (5[71] 12.211), Van Tongeren argues that "Greek Pessimism" is the starting point for Nietzsche's understanding of nihilism. This "Pessimism" consists in seeing "the absurdity of life and world"[205].

Nihilism arises when "we"[206] look for a meaning or purpose to life. Failure to find one, either because we cannot find any moral world order or harmony in life or because we cannot identify any unity or systematicity in the world, creates a psychological state of anxiety, of "shame before oneself", that inclines one to posit a "true world" beyond the world of appearances which matches the desire for meaning and order. This form of nihilism means:

205 "Der Nihilism als psychologischer Zustand wird eintreten müssen erstens wenn wir einen „Sinn" in allem Geschehen gesucht haben, der nicht darin ist: so daß der Sucher endlich den Muth verliert. *Nihilismus* ist da das Bewußtwerden der langen Vergeudung von Kraft, die Qual des „Umsonst", die Unsicherheit, der Mangel an Gelegenheit, sich irgendwie zu erholen, irgendworüber noch zu beruhigen – die Scham vor sich selbst, als habe man sich allzulange betrogen … Jener Sinn könnte gewesen sein: die „Erfüllung" eines sittlichen höchsten Kanons in allem Geschehen, die sittliche Weltordnung; oder die Zunahme der Liebe und Harmonie im Verkehr der Wesen; oder die Annäherung an einen allgemeinen Glücks-Zustand; oder selbst das Losgehn auf einen allgemeinen Nichts-Zustand – ein Ziel ist immer noch ein Sinn. [...]) Der Nihilismus als psychologischer Zustand tritt zweitens ein, wenn man eine Ganzheit, eine Systematisirung, selbst eine Organisirung in allem Geschehn und unter allem Geschehn angesetzt hat. (11[99] 13.46)".

206 What does Nietzsche means by "we"? Perhaps we can take our cue from the *Vorrede* to the *Genealogy*: "We are unknown to ourselves, we knowers" ("Wir sind uns unbekannt, wir Erkennenden"). Nietzsche refers to those who strive to understand themselves even if they fail to do so (GM Vorrede 1 5.247), maybe the "philosophers and scholars" ("Philosophen und Gelehrten") of the third essay (GM III 1 5.339).

> to denounce this entire world of becoming as illusion and to contrive a world, which lies beyond it, as a true world.[207] (11[99] 13.47)

This stage corresponds to the second historical phase identified above. "We" need truth and a "true" world because we cannot live without meaning, and so we postulate a world defined by being, not becoming. The metaphysics of being, together with the associated life-denying values, will be discussed in section of I.3 this chapter.

The third historical stage of European nihilism, sometimes labelled as "the death of God" (van Tongeren 2015, p. 1) consists in the process of corrosion or self-undermining of the transcendent values referred to in the second stage. The third essay of the *Genealogy* contains Nietzsche's analysis of the "ascetic ideal" (*das asketische Ideal*) and its "remnant" (*Rest*), or rather "kernel" (*Kern*) and "last phase of development" (*letzten Entwicklungsphase*), the "will to truth" (*Wille zur Wahrheit*) (GM III 27 5.409). Given that "all great things bring about their own demise through an act of self-sublimation"[208] "Christianity *as a morality*"[209] is no exception. It "perishes" (*zu Grunde gehn*) because of the will to truth which is able to see through the illusory world that has been postulated by Christian-Platonic morality as the "true" one (GM III 27 5.410). The offshoot is that this process may lead to "the 'last will' of man, his will to nothingness, nihilism"[210] (GM III 14 5.368). Without dwelling on the nature of the 'will to truth' which is beyond the scope of this section, we must notice that the development of European culture leading to nihilism is characterised by Nietzsche as mankind "looking back wearily, turning its will *against* life, and the onset of the final sickness"[211] (GM Vorrede 5 5.252). This indicates that in order to better understand nihilism Nietzsche believes we need to give a physiological diagnosis of the phenomenon

207 "diese ganze Welt des Werdens als Täuschung zu verurtheilen und eine Welt zu erfinden, welche jenseits derselben liegt, als wahre Welt".

208 "Alle grossen Dinge gehen durch sich selbst zu Grunde, durch einen Akt der Selbstaufhebung".

209 "das Christenthum als Moral"

210 "der „letzte Wille" des Menschen, sein Wille zum Nichts, der Nihilismus".

211 "die zurückblickende Müdigkeit, den Willen gegen das Leben sich wendend, die letzte [...] ankündigend"

of a form of existence turning against itself, against life.

In a note "On the history of *nihilism*"[212] (17[6] 12.527) Nietzsche analyses the "*most common types of décadence*"[213]: 1) the choice of a remedy, such as faith, that accelerates exhaustion; 2) the incapacity to resist stimuli; 3) not understanding décadence physiologically; 4) the desire for a state in which one no longer suffers. All these various manifestation of décadence, a phenomenon inherent in nihilism, will be discussed in this thesis, but we must first try to elucidate the meaning of the core notion of décadence. This will be done, for the purposes of this thesis, with particular emphasis on its connection to physiology.

In order to understand the notion of décadence, I will take my cue from the following text:

> The preponderance of feelings of displeasure over feelings of pleasure is the *cause* of that fictitious morality and religion: but such preponderance provides the *formula* for décadence … [214] (AC 15 6.182)

We can immediately detect the importance of physiology and affects for Nietzsche's notion of décadence. Nevertheless, this does not explain how we should understand these feelings and why they are detrimental. This physiological analysis refers not merely to the existence of feelings of displeasure, but to the incapacity to react to the suffering caused by feelings of displeasure without postulating a "fictitious morality and religion". Décadence, diagnosed physiologically, is a condition that leads to or expresses the "hatred of the natural (– of reality!)" and the creation of a "*fictitious* world" that "falsifies, devalues, and negates reality". This fictitious world consists in "imaginary *causes* ("God", "soul", "I", "spirit", "free will" – or even an 'unfree' one)", "imaginary *effects* ('sin', 'redemption' 'grace', 'punishment', 'forgiveness of sins')", "imaginary *natural* science (anthropocentric)", "imaginary *psychology*" and "imaginary *teleology*

212 "Zur Geschichte des Nihilismus".
213 "Allgemeinste Typen der décadence".
214 "Das Übergewicht der Unlustgefühle über die Lustgefühle ist die Ursache jener fiktiven Moral und Religion: ein solches Übergewicht giebt aber die Formel ab für décadence …".

('the kingdom of God, 'the Last Judgment', 'eternal life')"[215].

More light is thrown on the notion of décadence from the perspective of physiology, i.e. as degeneration, in the following text:

> We know today how to think moral degeneration as no longer separate from the physiological [degeneration]: it is merely a symptom-complex of the latter; <one> is necessarily bad, as one is necessarily sick … bad: the word expresses here certain *incapacities* that are connected physiologically to the degenerate type. [216] (14[113] 13.290)

How are we to understand the connection between moral degeneration and physiological degeneration? In other words, what does it mean to say that a moral phenomenon is a "symptom" of a physiological process? In order to give this question its sharpest possible formulation, we must add that besides morality, Nietzsche connects a number of other phenomena to physiological processes: Christianity (14[13] 13.223), the ascetic ideal (GM III 13 5.365) and art (WA 7 6.26f). The difficult connection between physiological processes and cultural phenomena appears less problematic if we situate it in the context of the 19th Century, in which the distinction between the biological and the cultural was less sharp than it is today (Schank 2000, pp. 29-30). Nevertheless, this does not

215 The complete text is: "Lauter imaginäre Ursachen ('Gott', 'Seele', 'Ich', 'Geist', 'der freie Wille' – oder auch 'der unfreie'); lauter imaginäre Wirkungen ('Sünde', 'Erlösung', 'Gnade', 'Strafe', 'Vergebung der Sünde'). Ein Verkehr zwischen imaginären Wesen ('Gott', 'Geister' 'Seelen'); eine imaginäre Naturwissenschaft (anthropocentrisch; völliger Mangel des Begriffs der natürlichen Ursachen) eine imaginäre Psychologie (lauter Selbst-Missverständnisse, Interpretationen angenehmer oder unangenehmer Allgemeingefühle, zum Beispiel der Zustände des nervus sympathicus mit Hülfe der Zeichensprache religiös-moralischer Idiosynkrasie, – 'Reue' 'Gewissensbiss', 'Versuchung des Teufels', 'die Nähe Gottes'); eine imaginäre Teleologie ('das Reich Gottes', 'das jüngste Gericht', 'das ewige Leben'). – Diese reine Fiktions-Welt unterscheidet sich dadurch sehr zu ihren Ungunsten von der Traumwelt, dass letztere die Wirklichkeit wiederspiegelt, während sie die Wirklichkeit fälscht, entwerthet, verneint. Nachdem erst der Begriff 'Natur als Gegenbegriff zu 'Gott' erfunden war, musste 'natürlich' das Wort sein für 'verwerflich', – jene ganze Fiktions-Welt hat ihre Wurzel im Hass gegen das gegen das Natürliche (– die Wirklichkeit! –), sie ist der Ausdruck eines tiefen Missbehagens am Wirklichen" (AC 15 6.181f).

216 "Wir wissen heute die moralische Degenerescenz nicht mehr abgetrennt von der physiologischen zu denken: sie ist ein bloßer Symptom-Complex der letzteren; <man> ist nothwendig schlecht, wie man nothwendig krank ist… Schlecht: das Wort drückt hier gewisse Unvermögen aus, die physiologisch mit dem Typus der Degenerescenz verbunden sind".

elcudiate what Nietzsche understood by physiology and what it means for moral or artistic phenomena to be the "symptom", "sign" or even "cause"[217] of physiological processes. What must be highlighted at this point in the argumentation is that Nietzsche strives to understand a variety of cultural phenomena that falludner the rubric of nihilism or décadence in naturalistic terms, and that he uses physiology and the turn to the body to do so.

Nietzsche's assessment is that nihilism is a manifestation of drives turning against their own expression (Gemes 2008, p. 461). Physiological degeneration is the ground (*Boden)* of nihilism:

> What does it mean now to "have turned out badly"? Above all physiologically: no longer politically. The *unhealthiest* kind of human in Europe (in all classes) is the ground of nihilism[218] (5[71] 12.216)

Closely related to this is the fact that on many occasions Nietzsche advocates a medical[219] remedy for the décadence (*Niedergang*) characteristic of modernity (Müller-Lauter 1999a, p. 16). Whether or not Nietzsche is successful in finding the cure he is looking for, it is clear that he thinks nihilism and moral or cultural décadence have their ground or source in, and sometimes cause, physiological degeneration and that, in order to better understand his thesis, we must turn to the question of how Nietzsche understands degeneration in physiological terms.

2.1. Nihilism as an expression of degeneration

In GD Sokrates 9 (6.71) Nietzsche writes that degeneration (*Degenerescenz*) consists in anarchy among the instincts or drives[220]. To be more precise, degeneration describes people who "stopped being masters of themselves" and whose "instincts turned against each other"[221]. If we are to answer the main question of this section

217 The meaning of these terms will be discussed in section II.

218 "Was heißt jetzt „schlechtweggekommen"? Vor Allem physiologisch: nicht mehr politisch. Die ungesundeste Art Mensch in Europa (in allen Ständen) ist der Boden dieses Nihilismus"

219 How we should understand the term "medical" on the scale between biological and cultural practices can become clearer only in the course of section III.

220 Writing about Athens in the time of Socrates, Nietzsche writes that "Überall waren die Instinkte in Anarchie […] 'Die Triebe wollen den Tyrannen machen'" (GD Sokrates 9 6.71).

221 "dass Niemand mehr über sich Herr war, dass die Instinkte sich gegen einander wendeten".

we must first understand what instincts or drives are and then gain an adequate understanding of what Nietzsche understands by anarchy of instincts or drives[222].

JGB 200 (5.120) reads: "the human being [...] has the legacy of multiple lineages in his body, which means opposing (and often not merely opposing) drives and value standards"[223]. I will postpone the question of how we should understand the opposition between drives and focus now on the nature of drives themselves. The text quoted shows us that drives are inherited, according to Nietzsche, and so form relatively enduring elements. According to JGB 36 (5.54) the only reality we can conceive of is the 'reality' of our drives[224]. Drives are not under the full rational or conscious control of the agent possessing the drives (Janaway 2012, p. 187) and they structure our thinking. When drives are strong, they can "subdue not only our reason but our conscience as well"[225] (JGB 158 5.100). Drives interpret the world and have an evaluative function[226] i.e drives explain "the particular manner in which an organism's perceptions are partial and evaluatively loaded" (Katsafanas 2012, p. 9). Nietzsche speaks of a great number of drives, some of which are innate or basic (Janaway 2012, p. 191). Drives are found in heterogeneous bundless teeming with diversity, and are held together by conflict, but not blended together (Assoun 2000, p. 54). Drives are "indefinitely multiple and deeply interconnected" (Katsafanas 2012, p. 8) However, the constitution and nature of drives is not immutable, and Janaway has suggested that drives

222 Assoun believes that we can distinguish between "Instinct" (*Instinkt*): a deep, calm, continuous force or fundamental energy, and "drive" (*Triebe*): a dynamic eruption while Katsafanas believes Nietzsche treats them "merely as terminological variants" (Katsafanas 2012, note 7). Deciding the issue goes beyond the ambit of this section, and I will treat the two notions as equivalent insofar as they refer to constitutive elements of the self.

223 "Der Mensch [...] die Erbschaft einer vielfältigen Herkunft im Leibe hat, das heisst gegensätzliche und oft nicht einmal nur gegensätzliche Triebe und Werthmaasse".

224 "Gesetzt, dass nichts Anderes als real 'gegeben' ist als unsre Welt der Begierden und Leidenschaften, dass wir zu keiner anderen „Realität" hinab oder hinauf können als gerade zur Realität unsrer Triebe – denn Denken ist nur ein Verhalten dieser Triebe zu einander –".

225 "Unserm stärksten Triebe, dem Tyrannen in uns, unterwirft sich nicht nur unsre Vernunft, sondern auch unser Gewissen".

226 "Ich glaube demgemäss nicht, dass ein 'Trieb zur Erkenntniss' der Vater der Philosophie ist, sondern dass sich ein andrer Trieb, hier wie sonst, der Erkenntniss (und der Verkenntniss!) nur wie eines Werkzeugs bedient hat." (JGB 6 5.20) or "Unsre Bedürfnisse sind es, die die Welt auslegen: unsre Triebe und deren Für und Wider. Jeder Trieb ist eine Art Herrschsucht, jeder hat seine Perspektive, welche er als Norm allen übrigen Trieben aufzwingen möchte." (7[60] 12.315).

may come into existence and wither away, or perhaps die completely (Janaway 2012, p. 190). While the temporal processes that drives undergo are no doubt very important to Nietzsche, there is another dimension of the drives' mutable nature that it is crucial to emphasize here. This dimension is brought out well by the following issue raised by Lanier Anderson. Nietzsche, it is universally agreed, rejects an atomistic understanding of the self, viewing it instead as an irreducible multiplicity. However, when arguing that drives constitute the self, does Nietzsche reinstate the atomistic metaphysical illusion, only on a different level (Lanier Anderson 2012, p. 215)? Lanier Anderson's answer is that drives are not fundamental entities. The idea of a multiplicity of drives is useful to Nietzsche in his project to present a perspective that is not subject to the illusions of being, but not as a dogmatic assertion about the nature of reality. If this understanding of drives as concepts standing for irreducible but not fundamental multiplicities is correct, then we must ask, in the comparative section, how this relates to Spinoza's appeal to the concept of multiplicity in understanding our bodies.

When considering Nietzsche's take on the organization of drives that constitute the self, two crucial elements need to be considered: the number or variety of drives and the kind of organization they display. With regard to the first point, it is important to emphasize that a feature of the modern human, in Nietzsche's opinion, is the possession of a great number of drives. Nietzsche explicitly mentions 50 drives (M 422 3.527), but Katsafanas has counted over one hundred (Kastafanas 2012, p. 8). This multiplicity, however, is not sufficient by itself to explain the differences Nietzsche speaks of between various human beings or types. As Ciano Aydin has argued, we need to consider the nature and quality of the organization of drives. Nietzsche ranks human types according to the coherence or unity (inclusive of conflict) of their drives. This unity should not be confused with a pre-existing, essential unity. Nietzsche conceives the self as the sum of a great number of drives whose order is fluid. The difference between humans does not stem from a pre-established metaphysical order, but from the contingency according to which drives organize themselves. In the comparative section, I will ask how we should understand Nietzsche's claims about the quality of the organisation of drives and how it relates to his claim that a great human

being is capable of displaying a coherent organization of drives that incorporates the greatest amount of struggle possible. In order to set the stage for this inquiry, we must understand the concepts of inner struggle and hierarchy (the subject of section II, where I will consider Nietzsche's reading of Roux), as well as formulate Nietzsche's account of décadence or degeneration in terms of drives (the topic of the following sub-sections). The organization of drives, according to Nietzsche, can be disempowering and therefore decadent in two cases: either it is too loose and there is no organizing force, or the hierarchy is too rigid and there is one drive that tyrannizes the pulsional economy in such a way that it inhibits the expression of other drives (Aydin 2008, p. 39). In the next section we will consider the *umgekehrte Kruppel* (inverse cripple) in *Von der Erlösung* (Z II Erlösung) in order to understand these two physiological conditions as forms of degeneration.

Tyrannical hierarchy

Our best clue is given by Zarathustra's description of the "inverse cripple" (*umgekehrte Krüppel*). Zarathustra argues that, contrary to cripples who are characterized by the lack of something, an inverse cripple is someone who has too much of one thing and too little of everything else. Zarathustra then goes on to describe this element that the inverse cripple has in abundance using physiological metaphors: a giant eye, a giant mouth or a giant belly. We can gain a better insight into what Nietzsche means by these metaphors if we look at an unpublished fragment from 1884, in which Nietzsche describes what he means by "inverse cripple" – the isolation or separation of a force (*Vereinzelung einer Kraft*):

> Multiplicity of properties and their connection – *my* point of view. The double-twin-forces, e.g. for Wagner poetry and music, for the French poetry and painting, for Plato poetry and dialectics, etc. The isolation of one force is a *barbarism* – "inverse cripple"[227] (25[196] 11.66)

227 "Vielheit der Eigenschaften und deren Band – mein Gesichtspunkt. Die Doppel-Zwillings-Kräfte z.B. bei Wagner Poesie und Musik; bei den Franzosen Poesie und Malerei; bei Plato Poesie und Dialektik usw. Die Vereinzelung einer Kraft ist eine Barbarei – 'umgekehrte Krüppel'".

The inverse cripple suffers from a chronic lack of dynamic balance between the forces or drives that animate it. The dominating force has managed to establish its dominance to such an extent that no flexibility or change in the hierarchy is possible. The inverse cripple has "too little of everything and too much of one thing"[228] (Z II Erlösung 4.178). But why does Nietzsche claim that there is something wrong with this organisation of drives? First, we must emphasize that Nietzsche is adamant that this structure of drives is problematic: in the fragment quoted above he calls the physiological structure of the inverse cripple barbaric (*eine Barbarei*). Zarathustra describes the inverse cripple as "hideous" (*Abscheuliches*). Behind the apparently aesthetic judgement of the pulsional economy manifest in the inverse cripple, there is arguably a deeper point about the inhibition of human flourishing that the inverse cripple displays. The great multiplicity of drives that compose the individual does not find expression and the potential present in an inverse cripple is lost. The inverse cripples represent an impoverished form of unity, the result of the incapacity of the multiplicity to organise itself into a whole. The unity or completeness that the inverse cripples display is not a rich unity, the expression of plurality that has been united in a flexible structure. The point Zarathustra makes here goes beyond a critique of the pulsional organization and also touches on the deleterious influence that these supposed great men have on the people. In a note from 1883 Nietzsche writes: "I would rather live among cripples than among these supposed whole [complete] beings"[229]. The inverse cripples present themselves as great men or geniuses and the people treat them as such, even if they are not. This raises the question of how the inverse cripples manage to persuade the people that they are great and why they harm others. The issue of the disempowering effects of degeneration, and the connections with Spinoza's critique of theologians, will be discussed in greater detail in chapter III, sections III.2 and IV.2.d[230].

228 "an Allem zu wenig und an Einem zu viel habe".

229 Und leben will ich noch unter Krüppeln lieber als unter diesen vermeintlichen Ganzen." (13[19] 10.467)

230 Together with some of Nietzsche's later pronouncements on this issue.

Disorganization of drives

The speech from *Von der Erlösung* that contains the diagnosis considered above is addressed by Zarathustra to the inverse cripples. In the second section of the chapter Zarathustra addresses his disciples. His speech contains a number of complex arguments, but my focus in this section will be on Zarathustra's claim that he lives among human beings as among fragments and limbs, and that he has yet to meet a complete human being[231]. This complaint complements his critique of the inverse cripples that we have looked at above. There is nevertheless a change of emphasis: instead of the focus being on the "inverse cripple" who has too much of one thing, the emphasis here is on the lack of unity in humans. The words used by Nietzsche (*Bruchstücken, Gliedmaassen*) make the lack of cohesion in humans stand out. Even a perfunctory look through the *Nachlass* of the time shows that "Menschen-Bruchstücke" is consistently contrasted with "vollständige" or "ganze Menschen" and the "Menschen-Bruchstücke" are labelled slaves (7[45] 10.257; 35[74] 11.542; 25[242] 11.75). The lack of unity displayed by humans is disempowering. The existence of unity, in Nietzsche's sense, presupposes the capacity for self-organisation in the struggle and interplay of drives (2[87] 12.104, cf. Aydin 2008, p. 30). The continuous process of self-organisation is characterised by relations of command and obedience between drives. The weak are a multiplicity no longer capable of organizing themselves through struggle. The drives, instead of being integreated in this dynamic, self-organizing structure, detach themselves from the whole (Aydin 2008, p. 40). The danger is particularly great in the case of the modern human, because the great multiplicity of drives it contains implies the need for greater struggle, and so a greater chance of failure in the task of self-organisation (Aydin 2008, p. 41). If the capacity for self-organisation is lacking, then the self will be nothing but an anarchic collection of weak drives or instincts. This, Nietzsche believes, is characteristic of modernity, a symptom of physiological exhaustion that manifests itself in the preference for equality, understood as sameness[232]. Nietzsche interprets this preference for

231 "Bruchstücke und Gliedmaassen und grause Zufälle – aber keine Menschen!" (ZA II Erlösung 4.179).

232 The question of how the ontological categories of struggle, equality and inequality surface in Nietzsche's normative thought and how they relate to Spinoza will be considered in the

equality and equality of rights as a sign of degeneration, i.e. disorganization of instincts, and exhaustion (GT Vorrede 1 1.12; GM III 25 5.403). In order to better understand the reasons for Nietzsche's critique of degeneration, we must now ask how degeneration manifests itself in the domain of culture through the intermediary of nihilistic values.

3. Nietzsche's Critique of Nihilistic Values

Nietzsche identifies a number of key values as conducive to nihilism. These values have shaped metaphysics, epistemology, morality or politics and their pervasive, long-lasting influence prompts Nietzsche to characterize them, in the Preface to *GD*, as "*eternal* idols" (*ewige* Götzen) (GD Vorrede 6.58). Discussing these decadent values has the added benefit of uncovering important analogies between Spinoza and Nietzsche, to be discussed in chapter III. This is hardly surprising, since Nietzsche himself classed teleology, free will, the moral world order, the existence of altruism and evil as errors they both argue against (KGB III/1, 135). As is the case with Spinoza, Nietzsche's critique of these errors is best understood in the context of his engagement with the concept of substance. In Nietzsche, this is part of his critique of being in the name of becoming. Contrary to Spinoza, Nietzsche does not wish to offer a new understanding of substance, but to criticize and think against it[233] from the standpoint of becoming and to diagnose its underlying assumptions as life-negating. This does not mean that the illusions of substance cannot be useful to life, but that they come at a cost and they have important detrimental consequences.

Nietzsche's critique of substance

Developing a convincing account of change and becoming is a matter of vital interest to Nietzsche. Traditionally, change has been explained against the background of something that changes. Substance is that which persists, always remains the same and its quantum can neither be increased nor diminished. It is the substratum, or immutable subject, of all change and all temporal appearances

comparative chapter.

233 Even if we cannot think without the concept of susbtance (Aydin 2003, p. 107).

can be determined only in relation to it (KrV A181 / B225). Substance ontology, which strives to explain reality and change starting from a fixed order of being, defines substance using three fundamental categories: identity (over time), unity and independence or self-causation (Aydin 2003, p. 47). The salient feature of substance, according to Aristotle, is its independence (Categories al2-2al7; Metaphysics 1017b). Substance is a substratum in which properties or accidents inhere and its "independence is cashed out in terms of predication […] A is a (primary) substance *iff* it is a subject of predication and it is not predicated of anything else" (Melamed 2009, p. 28). Descartes adds a further dimension to Aristotle's discussion by stipulating that substances must also be causally independent (Melamed 2009, p. 29), an idea best summarised by Spinoza's understanding of substance as *causa sui* (Russell 1996, p. 48). Leibniz argues that the logical relation of subject and predicate is more fundamental to an adequate understanding of substance than the claim to independent existence (Russell 1996, p. 50).

For reasons that will be discussed below, Nietzsche does not find the postulation of substances to be theoretically sound, nor does he believe that substance ontology possesses sufficient explanatory power to account for the dynamic character of reality. Given its emphasis on stability, substance ontology denies the primacy of becoming, multiplicity and change, but seeks to derive them from being (Aydin 2003, p. 52). Nietzsche positions himself against this tradition, and argues that the "true world" of being is an obsolete, superfluous idea, which has no use (GD Fabel 5 6.81)[234].

Nietzsche's analysis of the concept of substance is best summarized in an unpublished note from 1885:

> In a world of becoming, in which all is conditioned, the exception of the unconditioned, of *substance*, of being, of a thing, etc., can only be an error.

234 Nietzsche also argues that, if we do away with the true world, than the concept of apparent world no longer serves any purpose and must also be abandoned (GD Fabel 6). Becoming should therefore not be conflated with the concept of „illusory world" or appearance.

But how is error possible?"[235] (35[51] 11.536)

Nietzsche understands substance to be an "originary ancient error, committed by everything organic"[236] (MA 18 2.40). It is conceived as something identical with itself, always the same and unchanging. Nietzsche strives to understand reality outside the horizon of being and of the notion of substance, since he believes that nothing real corresponds to the concept of substance (FW 111 3.472). Nietzsche's emphasis on "becoming" should not be seen as a commitment to a different type of metaphysical doctrine; it is a negative result of his critique of susbtance that aims to offer a better understanding of change, motion and dynamism by not deriving them from the metaphysics of being and moral errors and without claiming adequate knowledge of reality. Arguably the most interesting aspect of Nietzsche's critique of substance, however, is his attempt to expose the sources of this error. Throughout his writings we can distinguish at least four different, but compatible, attempts to do so.

1. In MA 18 Nietzsche argues that the ground for the belief in substances (belief in identical things) is something humans have inherited from "the period of the lower organisms". The belief in substance is therefore not optional or arbitrary (Aydin 2003, p. 93). All that matters to organic life, Nietzsche argues here, are the sensations of pleasure and pain. Lower, or rather simpler organisms do not distinguish between various sensations of pleasure or unpleasure and therefore believe there is only "one and unmoving" thing or substance in the world, responsible for producing those sensations. As the capacity for sensation develops, animals start distinguishing between various kinds of sensations and therefore the hypothesis of multiple substances develops. Nietzsche argues that only highly developed knowledge can go beyond the hypothesis of identical things, and therefore consider reality beyond the sensations they cause in the knowing subject (MA 18 2.39f).

235 "In einer Welt des Werdens, in der Alles bedingt ist, kann die Annahme des Unbedingten, der *Substanz*, des Seins, eines Dinges usw. nur ein Irrthum sein. Aber wie ist Irrthum möglich?",

236 "ein ursprünglicher, ebenso alter Irrthum alles Organischen."

2. A second argument of Nietzsche's is that the concept of substance plays an indispensible role in our survival (FW 111 3.471). Those who did not perceive everything in flux and who could abstract from the changing nature of things have had a better chance to survive than those "who saw everything 'in flux'"[237]. The capacities to abstract and simplify, characteristic of logic, are only a useful tool for humankind.

3. Another approach to the generation and perpetuation of the erroneous concept of substance is to trace it back to language (GD Vernunft 5 6.77). We are deceived by language into believing that the grammatical categories of subject and predicate reflect the structure of the world, consisting of doers and deeds. We employ the language of substance, permanence, unity or identity and project these categories into the world.

4. A fourth type of argument is that we project what we consider the primary unity of the I or of our will onto the world and so invent the concept of substance (10[19] 12.465). Notions like 'thing' or 'atom' are a consequence of the concept of subject (1[32] 12.18). Nietzsche argues that this projection only tells us something about our constitution and not about the world as it is (MA 15 2.35f). Furthermore, Nietzsche believes that the unity of the subject is only an appearance (Aydin 2003, p. 82)[238]. Nietzsche's critique of the belief in isolated, self-subsisting, and unchanging entities of any kind is crucial to his overall project of the affirmation of life. Many of the values constitutive of the denial of life are based on the belief in substance (as we shall see below) and so exposing these false assumptions is key to the task of transvaluating all values[239]. This does not entail that Nietzsche denies the existence of relatively stable structures or unities, only that they need to be thought as dynamic and derived unities.

This critique of the origins and nature of the erroneous belief in substance raises a number of questions germane to a comparison with Spinoza. We need to ask, in

237 "welche Alles 'im Flusse' sahen".

238 There is a multiplicity of drives and affects behind the apparent unity of the I.

239 In FW 109 3.468f Nietzsche writes that the concept of substance is a way to deify nature and that his project is to redeem it and to naturalise humanity.

section III of the comparative chapter, to what extent and why they share the belief that there are no self-identical things, and, consequently, what the similarities and differences are in the various accounts they offer of the origin of this error.

Nietzsche's critique of the concept of "subject" is closely linked to his critique of substance and shows clearly the nature and importance of Nietzsche's turn to the body. In the context of 19th Century German philosophy, the notion of the subject plays an important role, shaped by Kant's critical philosophy. For Kant substance is a category[240], and has its ground in the transcendental unity of the subject. Kant argues against the belief that the subject is a soul, i.e. an immortal substance. Instead, he speaks of the 'transcendental unity of apperception' (in his theoretical philosophy) and of an autonomous moral subject (in his practical philosophy). The transcendental ego, or subject, understood as "I think", is the basic condition of knowing, the "condition of the possibility of categories in general" and of their combination by the understanding (Heidegger 1988, pp. 128-9). The subject is the ground of all its determinations, of its unity in the multiplicity of its comportments, "the ground of the selfsameness of its own self" and accompanies all its representations (Heidegger 1988, p. 127). The notion of subject as the "determinant ego of apperception" is consequently fundamental to Fichte in his *Wissenschaftlehre* (Heidegger 1988, p. 130) and to Hegel, who argues that the true substance is the subject (Heidegger 1988, p. 127). In his practical philosophy Kant completes his description of the person as a moral subject. Next to the theoretical characterisation of the subject as self-consicousness, Kant now envisages the subject as a feeling and acting being (Heidegger 1988, pp. 131-2). In subjecting itself to itself as pure reason, the subject discloses itself as a "free, self-determining being" (Heidegger 1988, p. 135), an "individual factical ego" who acts (Heidegger 1988, p. 137).

What these Kantian incarnations of the notion of subject share is the assumption that the subject is a primary, non-derivative ground of unity. The subject or self,

240 Nietzsche wants to offer a naturalised understanding of what Kant called the transcendental conditions for the possibility of experience. He strives to offer a genetic account of our way of thinking. This is why he argues that the concept of substance has been developed (pre-) historically: because it proved useful (Aydin 2003, p. 49).

in Kant's moral philosophy, is capable of standing back from its inclinations and choosing on the basis of reason alone (Lanier Anderson 2012, p. 204). Nietzsche takes issue with the assumptions of unity and autonomy, as well as with the belief that consciousness is the most important (or indeed the only) element composing the subject, and that the agent can act freely, in the sense of possessing free will (more on this in the section on free will below). Nietzsche's understanding of the subject is not substance-oriented, but is instead focused on the plurality of pre-conscious drives and affects that constitute the self as a plurality[241]. We must now consider the nihilistic values or "eternal idols" Nietzsche criticizes in order to open up the question of how we should understand the points of contact with Spinoza's philosophy.

Teleology

For Nietzsche's critical engagement with the notion of purposiveness, we can look at his arguments in GD Irrthümer 8 6.96:

> *Nobody* is responsible for himself existing in the first place, that he is so and so conditioned, that he exists under these circumstances, in this environment. The fatality of his being cannot be extricated from the fatality of everything that was and will be. He is *not* the product of some special design, will, or purpose, he does not represent an attempt to achieve an 'ideal of humanity', 'ideal of happiness', or 'ideal of morality', – it is absurd to want to *devolve* his being onto some purpose or another. *We* have invented the concept of 'purpose': there *are no* purposes in reality …[242] (modified translation)

241 For an account of various possible readings of the notion of subject in Nietzsche, see Lanier Anderson (2012).

242 "*Niemand* ist dafür verantwortlich, dass er überhaupt da ist, dass er so und so beschaffen ist, dass er unter
diesen Umständen, in dieser Umgebung ist. Die Fatalität seines Wesens ist nicht herauszulösen aus der Fatalität alles dessen, was war und was sein wird. Er ist *nicht* die Folge einer eignen Absicht, eines Willens, eines Zwecks, mit ihm wird *nicht* der Versuch gemacht, ein „Ideal von Mensch" oder ein „Ideal von Glück" oder ein „Ideal von Moralität" zu erreichen, – es ist absurd, sein Wesen in irgend einen Zweck hin *abwälzen* zu wollen. *Wir* haben den Begriff 'Zweck' *erfunden*: in der Realität *fehlt* der Zweck …".

1) What clues can we get for unpacking how Nietzsche understands teleology? 2) What are the deleterious effects of the belief in purposiveness? and 3) How should we understand the notion of fatality (*Fatalität*), which Nietzsche opposes to design?

1) In this text purposiveness consists in the belief that human existence is the product of some special design and that people are designed in order to achieve a given ideal. This resonates with a Platonic, rather than an Aristotelian idea of final causes. Aristotle's understanding of teleology[243] does not require an intelligent creator or a purpose outside nature (Physics 199b27-32). Instead, his emphasis is on principles of change internal to living beings, principles that are distinct from those that originate in thought (Physics 198a2-5). Still, Nietzsche's philosophy is opposed to Aristotle's on this point because Nietzsche is not commited to any pre-existing (metaphysical) nature or substance that determines what a living being can do. To understand[244] living beings starting from a given goal contained within a (primary) substance impoverishes or simplifies our knowledge of the complex capacity to act of (living) bodies. The engagement with and critique of the Platonic understanding of teleology prompts the question of who could be responsible for design. The pronoun "nobody" (*Niemand*) seems to imply that teleology is based on the belief in some form of person or agent directing human existence. Nevertheless, Nietzsche includes under this rubric not only God, but also "society, parents or ancestors, not even *himself*"[245](GD Irrthümer 8 6.96). This formulation of teleology also implies the belief that human existence is somehow different from the rest of nature. As part of his project of naturalisation,

243 Aristotle speaks of three kinds of final causes: "a) completed natural substances or artifacts as the end results of processes of generation; b) functions performed by (parts of) natural substances, artifacts, or tools; and c) objects of desire as the aims of (deliberative) actions" (Leunissen 2010, p. 12).

244 It is important to situate this discussion in an epistemological context: final causses function as answers to the question "why?" (Leunissen 2010, p. 12).

245 "noch die Gesellschaft, noch seine Eltern und Vorfahren, noch er selbst". We may perhaps go further and say that Nietzsche's claim that humans are not the products of "a will" (*eines Willens*) can be read as the rejection of the notion of teleology characteristic of Schopenhauer's metaphysics: the world has no purpose, but the world as representation is given meaning by the fact that it is an expression of a single, unified underlying reality, the Will (Aydin 2003, p. 134). Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics can only lead to a dismissal of such a possibility.

Nietzsche is careful to emphasize that we must think human existence under the same category as the rest of nature, that of "fatality" (*Fatalität*). Since the notion of "purpose" cannot be applied to nature – "there *are* no purposes in reality"[246]– there is no reason to apply it to human existence either. A further question is why the notion of purpose has been invented. In FW 1 3.372 Nietzsche argues that the invention of teloi stems from an acquired need to believe that there is a reason or meaning of existence[247]. We fail to see the illusory nature of purposes because we need illusions in order to give meaning to our existence and thus fail to understand adequately the nature of humans and their place in the world (MA 2 2.15).

2) Nietzsche criticizes not only the idea that we are designed in view of a moral purpose, but also the nature of that ideal. While the nature of this moral ideal will be considered more fully in section II, we must notice here that Nietzsche argues that it has detrimental effects on our self-understanding. To think human existence teleologically is to impoverish our understanding of it. Life is a far richer phenomenon than a teleological outlook can describe and an appeal to transcendent values such as "God" or "purpose" is the "biggest objection to existence so far"[248] and an attack on the "*innocence* of becoming"[249]. The thesis that Nietzsche develops is that the absence of a creator also implies the absence of moral responsibility and therefore of blame, "immeasurable punishment and guilt"[250] (GM II 22 5.332). We see here how Nietzsche's critique of teleology is not aimed solely at exposing the fallacy of certain doctrines, but also at affirming existence: "this is how we begin to redeem the world"[251] (GD Irrthümer 8 6.97).

3) The opposition between "fatality" and teleology can be understood starting from Nietzsche's claim about how we should understand people and nature: "A person is necessary, a person is a piece of fate, a person belongs to the whole, a

246 Perhaps a critique of the way the theory of evolution had been interpreted by some scientists, who claimed that changes in nature were driven by an immanent law of progress (more on this in section III).

247 A claim central to Nietzsche's take on nihilism.

248 "der grösste Einwand gegen das Dasein".

249 "die Unschuld des Werdens".

250 "Unausmessbarkeit von Strafe und von Schuld".

251 "damit erst erlösen wir die Welt".

person only *is* in the whole" (GD Irrthümer 8 6.96)[252]. This claim indicates that for Nietzsche we can understand human beings only if we consider them as a part of nature, and not as *causa sui*, or, in Spinoza's words, "as a dominion within a dominion" (*imperium in imperio* EIIIpref II/137). It does not however show how Nietzsche understands necessity, other than that it is not the necessity of a final cause. According to FW 112 3.472f Nietzsche does not understand necessity as causal determinism either. His argument is that "cause" and "effect" give a description of the world, but do not explain it[253]. The question of how we should understand the concept of necessity will be explored in chapter III.

This critique also raises a number of questions with regard to the comparison with Spinoza. We must ask if the concepts of teleology they employ are similar and whether the harmful effects of this doctrine, as they see them, are the same. Both claim that teleology is an illusion and that we should understand the world as necessary. However we must ask whether the notions of "necessity" they use are identical or not.

Free will

The critique of the doctrine of free will[254] is a constant throughout Nietzsche's writings. He calls it a fundamental error (*Grundirrthum* - WS 12 2.547), an illusion (*Illusion* - MA 106 2.103) or a lie (*Lüge* - AC 38 6.210). Nietzsche employs at least two strategies in his critique of free will: the first is to show that the concept of free will itself is an absurdity and that it rests on faulty assumptions, while the second is to expose the origins of the concept, together with the purpose for which it is used, and to argue that this shows the notion of free will to be a life-negating value, i.e. a vengeful feeling (*Rach-gefühl* – EH weise 6 6.273).

252 "Man ist nothwendig, man ist ein Stück Verhängniss, man gehört zum Ganzen, man ist im Ganzen"

253 Regardless of Nietzsche's critique of mechanism, which will be investigated in section III, he believes it is nonetheless an improvement on a teleological world-view.

254 Contra Schopenhauer, Nietzsche argues that the belief in a will that is simple, immediately given, underivable and intelligible is already an illusion: FW127 3.482f. See also Aydin 2003, pp. 131-3.

The first strategy can be exemplified by two lines of argumentation. First, Nietzsche argues that the notion of free will rests on the assumption of the existence of an independent agent, possessing the absolute freedom to do good or evil. He associates this understanding of free will with Kant's and Schopenhauer's notions of intelligible freedom (MA 39 2.62ff). Nietzsche's point is that there is no independent, isolated agent disconnected from the world (MA 18 2.40; GM I 13 5.279), that there is no doer behind and distinct from the deed. This goes back to his critique of substance and the denial of the existence of a substantial subject as well as of subject-predicate grammar as an adequate explanation of reality. It also leads us to Nietzsche's second line of argumentation, in which he stresses the necessity governing the world. There can be no free will or free actions because everything is necessary and things could not have happened otherwise (MA 39 2.63). Because humans are a part of nature, it is an error to distinguish between nature, acting out of necessity, and humans, acting out of a supposed free will (MA 102 2.99). The manner in which Nietzsche understands necessity can be said to vary throughout his writings[255], but the one thing that is clear is that he believes freedom of the will to be an illusion.

The second strategy employed by Nietzsche in his attack on free will is to expose its origins and to argue that free will is a doctrine harmful to life. Nietzsche's sustained denial of free will confronts him with the task of explaining why human beings believe they posses it. He argues that we are deceived by language into believing we are free, independent agents. The "philosophical mythology" of isolated substantial agents that grounds the doctrine of free will is a lie concealed within language. Through our mistaken assumption that "through words we grasp the true in things" we are misled into thinking that things are simpler than they are and that they are independent of the context that conditions them. Nietzsche writes that "Belief in freedom of will […] has in language its constant evangelist

255 In MA 18 Nietzsche argues that we think we have free will because we do not accept the idea that things have causes. In *JGB* he is still committed to the notion of necessity but warns us not to objectify cause and effect: they are concepts used in order to describe reality, not in order to explain it. In GD Irrthümer 8 6.96f he writes that free will is nonsense because everything is fatality. For a full grasp of these arguments and why they differ, it is of course important to understand the targets of Nietzsche's attacks in each of these works.

and advocate"[256] (WS 11 2.547). This belief becomes detrimental when it is used by the priest in order to make humans sick, to bring about the "physiological ruin of humanity"[257] (EH M 2 6.331). The priests develop the notions of blame and responsibility, used by powerless agents against the strong. Actions are no longer innocent, but are judged to be morally bad. Nietzsche argues that in doing so the priest strips becoming of its innocence (GD Irrthümer 7 6.95). Free will stands for a lingering vengeful feeling directed against life (EH weise 6 6.273).

We will examine in chapter III the question of how this relates to Spinoza's critique of free will. In addressing this relation, we have to deal with two fundamental questions. 1) What are the consequences of this critique for the notions of subject and agency? and 2) How do they understand freedom, a notion they both still use, given that it cannot consist in the exercise of the faculty of free will?

The moral world order

Nietzsche understands the concept of a moral world order[258] to be the belief in the existence of an eternal and immutable will (belonging to God) which decrees that every human act must be rewarded or punished according to the degree to which it has obeyed the divine commandments (M 563 3.328; FW 357 3.597ff; GM III 27 408ff or AC 25 and 26 6.193ff). To believe in a moral world order is to look "at nature as if it were proof of the goodness and care of a god"[259] and to interpret history as the unfolding of "some divine reason"[260] aiming at the realization of "ultimate moral purposes"[261] (FW 357 3.600). The concept of a moral world order is a delusion, since there is no eternal necessity which decrees that every guilt will be atoned or paid for (M 563 3.328). Moral categories are an interpretation of the world (in the Christian case a particularly deleterious interpretation), and it is absurd to believe that they are embedded in the structure of reality.

256 "Der Glaube an die Freiheit des Willens [...] hat in der Sprache seinen beständigen Evangelisten und Anwalt".
257 "die Menschheit physiologisch zu ruiniren".
258 "eine sittliche Weltordnung".
259 "Die Natur ansehn, als ob sie ein Beweis für die Güte und Obhut eines Gottes sei".
260 "einer göttlichen Vernunft".
261 "sittlicher Schlussabsichten".

The problems Nietzsche considers to be associated with the notion of moral world order, closely related to Spinoza's worries in EIapp, are threefold: it is demonstrably false, it is a deliberate attempt to undermine a naturalistic understanding of the world, and it promotes the negation of life.

This doctrine is problematic not only because the concepts it employs are questionable, but also because, as Nietzsche argues, "the history of the world is the experimental refutation of the principle of the so-called moral world order"[262] (EH Schicksal 3 6.367). The fact that the doctrine of the moral world order can be criticized by reason or experience is what led Kant, in Nietzsche's estimation, to posit an indemonstrable world, beyond the possibility of criticism, in which morality rules. Kant believed in morality *in spite of* the fact that nature and history contradict it (M Vorrede 3 3.14). The concept of a moral world order is contrary to naturalism because it attempts to undermine an accurate understanding of cause and effect through the introduction of spurious causes it presents as effective. The notion of sin, presented as an efficient cause, is used to explain events that have purely natural causes (AC 25 6.194; AC 49 6.228). The priest argues for the necessity of a saviour instead of a doctor for those who are sick[263], hereby misunderstanding the nature of sickness and making it impossible to diagnose and overcome it. The doctrine of a moral world order is therefore employed at the expense of the healthy developments of life (AC 26 6.195), it is aimed at devaluing nature and natural values (AC 38 6.210) and at contaminating becoming with the notions of punishment or guilt (GD Irrtümer 7 7.95). The disempowering effects of the belief in a moral world order, and of other nihilistic values, will be discussed further in the comparative section.

In relation to Spinoza, we must ask whether their respective critiques of the moral world order and of divine providence contribute to the formulation of similar accounts of reality and how these critiques promote the process of empowerment.

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262 "die ganze Geschichte ist ja die Experimental-Widerlegung vom Satz der sogenannten „sittlichen Weltordnung" .

263 For how Nietzsche understands sickness, see section II.

Altruism

Nietzsche's critique of altruism, coupled with his frequent positive discussions of egoism, can appear surprising in light of his critique of the concept of an enduring subject. If there is no immutable essence of living beings (humans included) then who or what is being egoistic or selfish? Nietzsche's answer is the self, i.e. a dynamic multiplicity of drives and affects, an entity that can be understood only in the context of its synchronic and diachronic relations to its environment. Nietzsche does not deny the unity or existence of the self, but strives to re-shape our understanding of the processes through which the self is constituted. This constellation of drives seeks growth and acquisition, but is oftentimes misled as to how growth and empowerment can be pursued.

What are altruism and egoism? In 1881, Nietzsche argues that we have so far been misled in our understanding of these concepts. We have so far been oriented towards the well-being of society, not of ourselves as specific individuals, and so we have failed to see how best to cultivate ourselves given our specific nature and body. A similar critique of altruism and egoism is present later in Nietzsche, but it is now conducted in the context of his diagnosis of humans as the "sick animal"[264]. Nietzsche argues in *GM* and *GD* that, while egoism and altruism might seem opposed superficially, they are only different manifestations of the same desire for power. Nietzsche's analysis of morality aims to unmask the will to power hidden behind the apparently innocuous claims to self-sacrifice and love for our neighbour characteristic of altruism (Richardson 1996, p. 152). The priest uses altruism because he seeks to obtain mastery over the strong, but cannot obtain it through direct means. The priest must therefore enfeeble the strong (by making the strong less capable of pursuing and expressing their power, i.e. making them sick and driving them to hate "the drive for life"[265], and by imposing his own values on them: domesticating them (*Zähmung*), making them ill (*Krankmachen*) (GD Verbesserer 2 6.99). Altruism is the expression of a "merely physiological valuation"[266] characterized by "the feeling of impotence, the lack of the great

264 Both accounts will be consdiered in more detail in chapter III, section IV.II.d.
265 "die Antriebe zum Leben".
266 "ein bloß physiologisches Werthurtheil".

affirming feelings of power"[267] (14[29] 13.231)[268].

Nietzsche's assessment of altruism is twofold: he criticizes it as an inadequate interpretation of a phenomenon that consists in the striving for power rather than self-sacrifice; and, perhaps most importantly, he criticizes this inadequate interpretation as disempowering, either directly causing enfeeblement or by masking the existing state of décadence. Spinoza[269] and Nietzsche argue that both altruism and a naïve understanding of egoism must be replaced by "thoughtful egoism". The question of how we should understand this important point of contact will be investigated further in chapter III.

Evil

Evil is last of the values I will consider. In MA 96 2.92f Nietzsche argues that evil is whatever goes against custom, whatever is not in accordance with it. Later, in JGB 201 5.121ff, he argues that people perceive as evil what is exceptional, whatever raises the individual above the herd and frightens the neighbours. In both cases, evil characterizes the actions of a person who is stronger, and also more profound (*stärker, tiefer* - JGB 295 5.239) than those around her. Nietzsche argues that not only is evil a sign of strength, but that it is either just as useful for the enhancement of humanity as what we consider good (JGB 44 5.61), or indeed has an even higher value than the good for the enhancement of all life (JGB 2 5.16). Given that evil is a manifestation of strength, Nietzsche asks why we have come to consider it morally reprehensible. Nietzsche's answer to this question of the genealogy of moral values is the well-known "slave revolt in morality" (JGB 195 5.116f).

267 "das Gefühl der Ohnmacht, der Mangel der großen bejahenden Gefühle der Macht".

268 The full passage reads: "Das Übergewicht einer altruistischen Werthungsweise ist die Folge eines Instinktes für Mißrathen-sein. Das Werthurtheil auf unterstem Grunde sagt hier: 'ich bin nicht viel werth': ein bloß physiologisches Werthurtheil, noch deutlicher: das Gefühl der Ohnmacht, der Mangel der großen bejahenden Gefühle der Macht (in Muskeln, Nerven, Bewegungscentren). Dies Werthurtheil übersetzt sich, je nach der Cultur dieser Schichten, in ein moralisches oder religiöses Urtheil".

269 Nietzsche's claim that Spinoza fails to formulate an adequate account of "thoughtful egoism" will be discussed in chapter III.

Nietzsche's investigation into the origins of the notion of evil is guided by the principle that the source for values should not be looked for beyond this world (GM Vorrede 3 5.249). The question of origins needs to be answered by giving the conditions under which the concept of evil was invented. Even if philosophers have placed more value on good than on evil (GM Vorrede 6 5.253), Nietzsche believes the two are not opposed in nature, they do not stand for an essential, irreconcilable duality (JGB 2 5.16). In *JGB* and later in *GM*, Nietzsche argues that good and evil are values produced by the ascetic priest, values born out of and suited to weakness and exhaustion (JGB 260 5.211). The good/evil opposition is contrasted to the good/bad values of master morality. Master morality is self-affirmative, it is not bound up with the doctrine of free will, and good is the primary value, while bad is defined only in relation to the good. Good refers to "elevated, proud states of soul"[270] and to the "noble type of person"[271] who "creates values"[272] while bad means "despicable" (*verächtlich*) and refers to "people who are cowardly, apprehensive, and petty"[273]. Slave morality, centred on the concepts of good and evil, is reactive. In this type of morality, predicated on the notion of free will and responsibility, the concept of evil comes first, while the good is secondary. This morality is "a morality of utility" (*Nützlichkeits-Moral*) and evil designates what "is perceived as something powerful and dangerous"[274] while good refers to people who display "pity, the obliging, helpful hand, the warm heart, patience, industriousness, humility and friendliness"[275]. The weak need the concept of evil in order to take imaginary revenge on the strong (Geuss 2011, p. 20). In order to call an action, and derivatively the doer, evil, one must assume both that there is a doer behind the deed and that the doer possesses free will (GM I 13 5.279), i.e. that she could have done otherwise. We have already seen that Nietzsche rejects both of these assumptions. He argues that evil is a value stemming from a

270 "die erhobenen stolzen Zustände der Seele" (JGB 260 5.209).
271 "Die vornehme Art Mensch" (JGB 260 5.209).
272 "ist wertheschaffend" (JGB 260 5.209).
273 "Der Feige, der Ängstliche, der Kleinliche" (JGB 260 5.209).
274 "die Macht und Gefährlichkeit hinein empfunden" (JGB 260 5.211).
275 "das Mitleiden, die gefällige hülfbereite Hand, das warme Herz, die Geduld, der Fleiss, die Demuth, die Freundlichkeit" (JGB 260 5.211).

mistaken interpretation of reality[276] and that it is fundamentally an expression of physiological weakness. Evil is not a substance, or a thing existing in the world, but an imaginary characterization used by the weak in order to devalue or deform the actions of the strong (Geuss 2011, p. 23). In the comparative section we must ask how Nietzsche's valuation of moral values compares to Spinoza's, as well as how their understanding of the origin of these values differs.

After this discussion of decadent values, we can identify three major questions that run through Nietzsche's analyses and that can help us crystallise the points of convergence and divergence with Spinoza: 1) What are the origins of these values and why have they been perpetuated? 2) Why are these values intrinsically flawed? and 3) Why do these values have a disempowering effect?

In the next section, I will tackle the question of what the nature of the turn to the body is for Nietzsche, a turn understood as a response to the diagnosis of degeneration. The importance of turn to the body is twofold. First, it plays a crucial role in Nietzsche's project of describing and diagnosing the cause or ground of décadence. Second, it provides the means for the development of a philosophical discourse that avoids the pitfalls of metaphysical illusions and forms the basis for the formulation of an account of empowerment and life-affirmation that is conducive to overcoming or resisting nihilism.

II. The nature of Nietzsche's turn to the body

In order to gain a deeper appreciation of the complexity of Nietzsche's turn to the body and why it constitutes a philosophical physiology, our inquiry will be structured under three major headings. First, we need to uncover the richness of the conceptual structure of Nietzsche's philosophical physiology. This task requires a better understanding of what he understands by 'body', by 'physiology', and then to inquire into how the body expresses itself and what the structure of Nietzsche's

276 Value created by those who "for the first time coined an insult out of the word 'world'" (JGB 195 5.117). Evil, sin and guilt are not mere misunderstandings, they are deeply rooted in us and correspond to somatic realities (Geuss 2011, p. 18).

philosophical physiology, its key concepts and its limits are. Second, we must distinguish between, and investigate the philosophical functions of physiology which, according to my reading, are the following: interpretative, diagnostic and normative. Third, we can gain a better awareness of the nature of philosophical physiology by considering its application in three key fields of interest for Nietzsche: art, morality and conscious thought.

1. The conceptual structure of the turn to the body.

1.a. The concept of "body"

In order to understand the conceptual structure of Nietzsche's turn to the body it is imperative to begin by focusing on the notion of body (*Leib).* My thesis is that there are three ways in which Nietzsche uses the concept of body: interpretative (descriptive), diagnostic and normative. In order to substantiate this claim, I will focus on two chapters from *Thus spoke Zarathustra*: *On the Hinterworldly* (*Von der Hinterweltern*) and *On the Despisers of the Body* (*Von den Verächtern des Leibes*).

We can identify the first, descriptive function in the argument leveled against those who claim that the essence of the human individual, of the subject, is not the body but the soul or the spirit:

> Body am I through and through, and nothing besides; and soul is just a word for something of the body.
>
> The body is a great reason, a multiplicity with one sense, a war and a peace, one herd and one shepherd.
>
> Your small reason, what you call "spirit" is also a tool of your body, my brother, a small work- and plaything of your great reason.[277] (Z I Verächtern 4.39)

277 "Leib bin ich ganz und gar, und Nichts ausserdem; und Seele ist nur ein Wort für ein Etwas am Leibe. / Der Leib ist eine grosse Vernunft, eine Vielheit mit Einem Sinne, ein Krieg und ein Frieden, eine Heerde und ein Hirt. / Werkzeug deines Leibes ist auch deine kleine Vernunft, mein Bruder, die du 'Geist' nennst, ein kleines Werk- und Spielzeug deiner grossen Vernunft.".

Nietzsche draws a distinction between the body (*Leib)*, or "great reason" (*grosse Vernunft*), which he will later in this chapter also refer to as the self (*das Selbst*), and the "spirit" (*Geist*) or "small reason" (*kleine Vernunft*). This relation is asymmetrical, since Nietzsche argues that the spirit is only an instrument of the body, which he understands as a creative multiplicity with one sense. It follows that, if we wish to have a better understanding of ourselves, we must strive to know the body rather than the superficial phenomenon we call the spirit[278]. With reference to the decadent values considered in section I, Nietzsche argues that we must understand their creation starting from the body. "It was the body that despaired of the body"[279] (Z I Hinterweltern 4.36) and created "the other world"[280] (Z I Hinterweltern 4.36) together with the associated life-denying values. So what kind of body has created these life-denying values? This brings us to the second, diagnostic function the body plays in Nietzsche's thinking.

> It was suffering and incapacity that created all 'hinterworlds', and that brief madness of happiness that only the most suffering person experiences
>
> Weariness that wants its ultimate with one great leap, with a death leap; a poor unknowing weariness that no longer even wants to will: that created all gods and hinterworlds.[281] (Z I Hinterweltern 4.36)

Building on the interpretative usage of the concept body, Nietzsche argues that various ideals should be diagnosed in terms of the circumstances and

278 The fact that the concept of body plays a pivotal role in Nietzsche's philosophy has been acknowledged by many commentators. An example of the privileged role this notion plays in the economy of Nietzsche's thinking can be found in Heidegger's study. Heidegger argues that Nietzsche's philosophy can be understood in the wake of Descartes' reformulation of metaphysics as metaphysics of the subject, i.e. the substance or underlying support of being. Whereas Descartes understands the subject as the spiritual ego, Nietzsche sees the subject as body. According to Heidegger, Nietzsche "fashions for the subject an absolute power to enjoy what is true and what is false" (Heidegger 1961, II, 199). This means that the subject, as body, is, according to Heidegger in a position of dominance over other beings.

279 "Der Leib war's, der am Leibe verzweifelte".

280 "jene Welt".

281 "Leiden war's und Unvermögen – das schuf alle Hinterwelten; und jener kurze Wahnsinn des Glücks, den nur der Leidendste erfährt. / Müdigkeit, die mit Einem Sprunge zum Letzten will, mit einem Todessprunge, eine arme unwissende Müdigkeit, die nicht einmal mehr wollen will: die schuf alle Götter und Hinterwelten.".

Lebensbedingungen that generate them, of the needs they satisfy, and on whether they are symptoms of ascending or declining life. In the creation of decadent values and the contempt for the body, Nietzsche detects a paradoxical process: the body turns against itself and creates values that inhibit its power of acting, its power to create. The key concepts here are "suffering", "incapacity" and "weariness": they indicate the incapacity of the body to express itself, its own power. The sick body is separated from its power to act and creates values that might give it some degree of comfort, but do nothing to alleviate the sickness and might even deepen its suffering[282]. Nevertheless, the descriptive and diagnostic roles played by the concept of "body" also offer Nietzsche a manner of thinking the process of self-overcoming, of thinking the body not only as sick, but also as potentially healthy.

> Hear my brothers, hear the voice of the healthy body: a more honest and purer voice is this. More honestly and more purely speaks the healthy body, the perfect and right-angled body, and it speaks of the meaning of the earth.[283] (Z I Hinterweltern 4.38)

What does "a more honest and purer voice" mean for Nietzsche, and why it is characteristic of the "healthy body"? What is a "healthy body" and how does it relate to Nietzsche's understanding of sickness and degeneration?

The main thrust of Nietzsche's arguments in the texts discussed here is to show that metaphysical "other-worldly" notions and values are a fiction, and that a more adequate manner of understanding ourselves is through philosophical physiology, the topic of the following sub-sections. However, the way we understand ourselves and therefore our choice of philosophical vocabulary, whether metaphysical or not, is not the result of an arbitrary decision. It is the symptom of ascending or declining life. A "more honest and purer voice" cannot be obtained unless there is a change or transition in the physiological ground that makes possible the creation of life-affirming values.

282 Possibility discussed in chapter III in relation to *GM*.

283 "Hört mir lieber, meine Brüder, auf die Stimme des gesunden Leibes: eine redlichere und reinere Stimme ist diess. / Redlicher redet und reiner der gesunde Leib, der vollkommne und rechtwinklige: und er redet vom Sinn der Erde".

This shows the importance of creating for ourselves a "healthy body", and also warns us against understanding the distinction between healthy and sick as an opposition between two states. We need to be sensitive to Nietzsche's uses of the comparative form of the adjectives "honest" (*redlichere*) and "pure" (*reinere*). The notion of health (possessing itself various meanings) is, in many cases, not opposed to, but rather incorporates "sickness" or "degeneration". The difference between health and sickness is one of degree. Nietzsche's emphasis is on the process of overcoming degeneration, the transition from sickness to health best characterised by the notion of "convalescence" (*Genesen*; cf. Z I Hinterwelten 4.36). In the comparative section we must ask to what extent this is a process similar to the transition from inadequate to adequate knowledge described by Spinoza. This is a transition which is never completed, but rather indicative of a process characterised by ineradicable and fundamental openness and incompleteness.

Nietzsche does not simply condemn or reject sickness:

> Zarathustra is gentle to the sick. Indeed, he is not angered by their ways of comfort and ingratitude. May they become convalescents and overcomers and create for themselves a higher body![284] (Z I Hinterweltern 4.37)

What is the connection between the "healthy body" and "higher body"? Important clues for this are given in Z I Von Kind und Ehe 4.90: "You should build over and beyond yourself. But first I want you to build yourselves, square in body and soul"[285]. When Nietzsche speaks of building oneself, "square in body and soul"[286], he uses the same word (*rechtwinklig*) as when he speaks of the "healthy body": "the healthy body, the perfect and right-angled body"[287] (Z I Hinterweltern 4.37). If this is indeed an indication that in Z I Von Kind und Ehe Nietzsche has in mind the "healthy body", then we can ask whether we should understand the distinction

284 "Milde ist Zarathustra den Kranken. Wahrlich, er zürnt nicht ihren Arten des Trostes und Undanks. Mögen sie Genesende werden und Überwindende und einen höheren Leib sich schaffen!".

285 "Über dich sollst du hinausbauen. Aber erst musst du mir selber gebaut sein, rechtwinklig an Leib und Seele."

286 " rechtwinklig an Leib und Seele".

287 "der gesunde Leib, der vollkommne und rechtwinklige".

between the "healthy" and the "higher" body as the distinction between "building yourselves" and building "over and beyond yourself". I submit that this holds only if we understand these two "building" activities as two complementary descriptions of the "body". In other words, the "higher body" must be understood as a capacity to continually (re-create) oneself: "You should create a higher body, a first movement, a wheel rolling out of itself – a creator you should create"[288] (Z I Von Kind und Ehe 4.90) and the capacity to create values that go beyond oneself, the capacity to shape more than one's own person[289]. This double ability to create is a consequence of the power of the "healthy body" to incorporate sickness and degeneration. This conclusion is supported by Zarathustra's claim that he is "gentle" (*Milde)* to the sick and hopes that they may "become convalescents and overcomers and create for themselves a higher body!"[290] (Z I Hinterweltern 4.37).

This thesis is problematized by Zarathustra's claim that the despisers of the body are "no longer capable of creating beyond" themselves[291] (Z I Verächtern 4.41). The fact that people have become despisers of the body is symptomatic of a physiological condition in which the body strives for its own disempowerment and destruction[292]. The difference between this text and the ones considered above is that now Nietzsche describes a different attitude towards degeneration. The despisers of the body are no longer capable of overcoming themselves and must go-under (*Untergehen*). The tension between these two perspectives on décadence is intrinsic to Nietzsche's normative thinking and will be further investigated in the comparative section. This must be situated within the broader question of what role (conscious) thinking about the body can have in a normative account aimed at uncovering the possibility of life-affirmation and enhancement.

In order to tackle the question of how Nietzsche understands the body it is helpful to look at the way Schopenhauer understood the body, given the latter's

288 "Einen höheren Leib sollst du schaffen, eine erste Bewegung, ein aus sich rollendes Rad, – einen Schaffenden sollst du schaffen".

289 A key element if Nietzsche's turn to the body is to have consequences for his politics.

290 "Genesende werden und Überwindende und einen höheren Leib sich schaffen!".

291 "Denn nicht mehr vermögt ihr über euch hinaus zu schaffen".

292 "Untergehn will euer Selbst, und darum wurdet ihr zu Verächtern des Leibes!" (Z I Verächtern 4.40f).

considerable influence on Nietzsche. We find in Schopenhauer's philosophy three ways of understanding the body: a) as the starting point for everybody's intuition of the world and as the object of the senses: the everyday perception of our body among many other bodies or objects in the world (WWV I 5 and 22); b) as the object of scientific study; and c) as "my" body (WWV I 119-120): a collection of sensations and affects which I grasp as specific to me, as my own[293]. This last point plays a central role in Schopenhauer's arguments, in Book II, volume I of *WWV*, in support of his metaphysics. There, he claims that our first-person feelings and emotions point to a fundamental reality, i.e. the will, beyond the grasp of conscious rational thought. All these three views play a role in Nietzsche's take on the body, even if Nietzsche is highly critical of Schopenhauer. Nietzsche claims that our everyday perception of our body (just like any other perception) is a simplified interpretation of reality because our perception is geared towards our practical goals. Our perception of our bodies is a simplification because it is a product of our language and of our conscious thought. Schopenhauer shares Nietzsche's distrust of the knowledge provided by language and reason[294], and, due to his metaphysics, is committed to the view that any understanding of our body as representation is incomplete and therefore insufficient. Both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are critical of the way the body is portrayed in science. While they are aware of the advances in the life sciences of their periods and are greatly interested in them, they are also sceptical of a number of scientific claims and of the scientific attitude as a whole[295]. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are interested in going beyond a simplified view of the body, but the way they formulate the overcoming of this view is where they differ fundamentally. Schopenhauer argues that "my" body points to a single underlying metaphysical reality, the will, which is the same in all existing things. He is committed to two theses: 1) an epistemological thesis: we have unproblematic and privileged access to our body and 2) a metaphysical

293 The first two meanings make the body the key to understanding the world as representation, while the last makes it key to understanding the world as will (Dörpinghaus 2000, p. 17).

294 See the section on conscious thought for more on this topic.

295 "Wie kalt und fremd sind uns bisher die Welten, welche die Wissenschaft entdeckte! Wie verschieden ist z.B. der Leib, wie wir ihn empfinden, sehen, fühlen, fürchten, bewundern und der 'Leib' wie ihn der Anatom uns lehrt!" (14[2] 9.625) or "Wie tief-fremd ist uns die durch die Wissenschaft entdeckte Welt!" (12[24] 9.580).

thesis: the access to our body gives us access to the metaphysical essence of the world. Nietzsche denies that we have privileged access to our bodies and is highly critical of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will. Nietzsche holds that our bodies are epistemologically opaque to us and yet that they drive our actions and our conscious thinking. Why, then, if we have no (or very limited) knowledge of the body, does Nietzsche claim that the body plays such an important role and how does he know this? In other words, why does the body have methodological priority if it is epistemologically opaque? Because he rejects metaphysics, Nietzsche cannot argue that the body has methodological priority due to its privileged ontological or metaphysical status, as Schopenhauer did. My thesis, following Deleuze, is that we should understand the turn to the body as the result of Nietzsche's critique and dissatisfaction with conscious thought (Deleuze 1981, p. 28). Our thought, structured according to the metaphysical illusions considered in section I, offers an insufficient, impoverished and superficial account of reality, of the richness and multiplicity of becoming (FW 354 3.593)[296]. Nietzsche strives to discover new, and more adequate, ways of thinking about change and becoming. His turn to the body is not driven by a strong epistemological thesis about the nature of the world or of the body. It is not a claim to explain the fabric of reality, but rather an attempt to think through and outside the traditional metaphysical discourse in a way that is sensitive to the context in which conscious thought arises. In order to formulate a new, life-affirming perspective, we need to understand conscious thought as an organ of the body. This means we need to view it as a sign or a symptom of unknown, pre-conscious processes. Nietzsche's claim is that we are aware only of a small part of the processes that structure our thinking (see M 119 3.113).

The turn to the body has two dimensions: it exposes the limits of the traditional, metaphysical discourse and serves as an imperative to develop a new philosophical discourse free of nihilistic values. It is important to highlight that in order for the concept of the body to do the philosophical work Nietzsche needs it to do, it must be formulated using the key notion of power, understood as the capacity to produce effects. This helps explain the shift Nietzsche announces in his thinking

296 "eine grosse gründliche Verderbniss, Fälschung, Veroberflächlichung und Generalisation".

on the body: "It [the body] does not say I, but *does I*"[297] (Z Verächtern 4.39 – my italics). He is dissatisfied with the accounts of power, spontaneity, dynamism and, more broadly, of becoming given by substance metaphysics. His focus on activity and the endogenous power of the body to act, together with an emphasis on the importance of uncovering the specific nature and power to act of each body, is similar to Spinoza's and must be investigated in the comparative section. This claim also raises the question, considered in this section, of how we should understand "activity" within Nietzsche's thought.

Before ending this section, we must note that Nietzsche does not use the concept of body in order to describe only the individual body of human beings. A society or a culture can just as well be analysed as a multiplicity of drives or instincts that can be life-enhancing or -denying. Nietzsche therefore applies physiological language and interpretations to supra-individual phenomena: the social organism, Christianity, Buddhism, Antiquity, to name just a few[298].

1.b. Philosophical physiology and its limits

Müller-Lauter has argued that we should understand the concept of physiology in Nietzsche in three manners: a) the meaning it has in the sciences of Nietzsche's time; b) the somatic: the organic functions, bodily sensations and affects that shape humans, even if they are not conscious of them; and c) a way of understanding physiological processes as the struggles between wills to power that interpret one another[299] (Müller-Lauter 1999a, p. 13; Aydin 2011, p. 108). This reading is supported by passages such as:

> Psychology (doctrine of affects) as morphology of the will to power (not "happiness" as motive) / Reduction of metaphysical values. / Physiology of the will to power[300] (13[2] 13.214)

297 "die sagt nicht Ich, aber thut Ich".

298 See 11[85] 9.473; 34[84] 11.447; 24[1] 13.615.

299 This last meaning has also been the focus of Rehberg's article: "will to power and physiology belong together as virtual synonyms for each other" (Rehberg 2002, p. 39).

300 "Psychologie (Affektenlehre) als Morphologie des Willens zur Macht. (Nicht „Glück" als Motiv) / Die metaphysischen Werthe reduzirt. / Physiologie des Willens zur Macht".

> *On the self-overcoming of nihilism*. / 7. Will to Power: psychological consideration. / 8. Will to power: physiological consideration. / 9. Will to power: historical-sociological consideration"[301] (13[4] 13.215).

If this interpretation holds, it has the advantage that it can serve as the starting point for showing how Nietzsche's physiology is philosophical, incorporating the notions of will to power and activity so important to his thought. Our task in this section is to further unpack Nietzsche's complex notion of philosophical physiology, together with the limits of this perspective.

A fundamental role of physiology is to demystify our understanding of various phenomena[302]. Nietzsche argues that metaphysical illusions have caused us to misunderstand phenomena by projecting moral and metaphysical ideals onto them[303], and that behind various phenomena there are physiological conditions or facts (*Tatsachen* / *Zustände*) that have shaped both individuals and cultures. In order to describe these physiological conditions, Nietzsche speaks of processes (*Vorgänge*), thus emphasizing the dynamic character behind apparently static realities. These processes must be considered in the context of "complex economies of forces and values, or multiplicities" (Rehberg 2002, p. 39) that Nietzsche attempts to put into philosophical discourse using the vocabulary of drives and instincts.

301 " Von der Selbstüberwindung des Nihilismus./ 7. Der Wille zur Macht: psychologische Betrachtung. / 8. Der Wille zur Macht: physiologische Betrachtung. / 9. Der Wille zur Macht: historisch-sociologische Betrachtung".

302 The list of phenomena whose physiological nature Nietzsche aims to uncover is substantial and includes art (7[2] 7.137; 19[79] 7.446), affects (16[42] 7.408; 7[87] 10.272 or 25[185] 11.64), thought (6[433] 9.309; 7[94] 10.274; 34[124] 11.462), democratic taste (GT Vorrede 1.15f), morality (6[445] 9.313; 7[125] 10.284; 7[5] 12.279), society and individuals (11[85] 9.473; 34[84] 11.447), language (34[124] 11.462), philosophy (GD Sokrates 2 6.67) or genius (M 263 3.210). In EH, Nietzsche also refers to his own physiological constitution (EH klug 1 6.278; EH klug 2 6.281).

303 "Was ist Moralität! Ein Mensch, ein Volk hat eine physiologische Veränderung erlitten, empfindet diese im Gemeingefühl und deutet sie sich in der Sprache seiner Affekte und nach dem Grade seiner Kenntnisse aus, ohne zu merken, daß der Sitz der Veränderung in der Physis ist. Wie als ob einer Hunger hat und meint, mit Begriffen und Gebräuchen, mit Lob und Tadel ihn zu beschwichtigen!" (11[103] 9.478).

The reference to physiological processes as what is essential (*wesentliche*) in things[304] begs the question of whether Nietzsche does not, through his use of physiology, reintroduce metaphysics into his philosophy. This interpretation would not, however, do justice to the context in which Nietzsche makes this claim:

> Also in a passion, a drive, we understand only the intellectual process – not the physiological, essential, but the small sensation therein.[305] (11[75] 9.470).

Nietzsche's emphasis in this text is not on the positive content of physiological knowledge which may reveal to us the essence of things, but rather on the contrast between physiology (a more empowering and life-affirming perspective, as I will argue in chapter III) and the conscious, rational understanding of our affective life. While there is an ineluctable anthropomorphic remainder in physiology, seen as an organisational (organic or organismic) model of will to power, Nietzsche's use of physiology is defined by its striving to overcome antropomorphism through emphasizing our knowledge of the relation to the unknown (to reality), rather than metaphysical knowledge of reality.

Considerations regarding the use of physiology as a form of knowledge or interpretation must situate the physiological approach in relation to the targets of Nietzsche's critiques: metaphysics and morality. Then, it must proceed by outlining the advantages of physiology over other interpretations of reality. Physiology is supposed to lead to a perspective different from that of metaphysics and morality. This is a fundamental tenet of Nietzsche's philosophy, present throughout his works:

> Here is the end of that naïve metaphysics: and the physiology of plants

304 "Auch an einer Leidenschaft, einem Triebe begreifen wir nur den intellektuellen Vorgang daran – nicht das physiologische, wesentliche, sondern das Bischen Empfindung dabei. Alles zu Willen aufzulösen – sehr naive Verdrehung! – da freilich wäre alles verständlicher! Das war aber immer die Tendenz, alles in einen intellektuellen oder empfindenden Vorgang zu reduziren – z.B. auf Zwecke usw."(11[75] 9.470.).

305 "Auch an einer Leidenschaft, einem Triebe begreifen wir nur den intellektuellen Vorgang daran – nicht das physiologische, wesentliche, sondern das Bischen Empfindung dabei.".

> and animals, geology, unorganic chemistry lead their disciples to a wholly different view of nature.[306] (BA IV 1.712)

> "Enmity will not bring an end to enmity, friendship brings an end to enmity": this is how the Buddha's teaching begins – this is *not* the voice of morality, this is the voice of physiology.[307] (EH weise 6 6.272; see also 3[10] 9.50; M 453 3.274; 7[5] 12.279 or JGB 15 5.29).

The relation between physiological and moral or metaphysical perspectives is one of conflict. The moral perspective, which is exclusive and tyrannical (van Tongeren 1984, p. 71), does not accept the physiological interpretation of events[308]. Nietzsche's reaction is to argue that physiological point of view is meant to replace[309] moral, political or aesthetic interpretations of events:

> Wagner has become impossible to me from beginning to end, because he cannot walk, let alone dance. / But these are physiological judgments, not aesthetic: now – I no longer have any aesthetics![310] (7[7] 12.285)

> What does it mean today to "turn out badly"? First of all physiologically: no longer politically.[311] (5[71] 12.216)

The replacement of metaphysical and moral perspectives with a physiological interpretation is encouraged by Nietzsche only to the extent to which physiology

306 "Hier ist es mit jener naiven Metaphysik zu Ende: und die Physiologie der Pflanzen und Thiere, die Geologie, die unorganische Chemie zwingt ihre Jünger zu einer ganz veränderten Betrachtung der Natur.".

307 "'Nicht durch Feindschaft kommt Feindschaft zu Ende, durch Freundschaft kommt Feindschaft zu Ende': das steht am Anfang der Lehre Buddha's – so redet nicht die Moral, so redet die Physiologie.".

308 "Da macht man die Ohren zu gegen alle Physiologie und decretirt für sich insgeheim 'ich will davon, dass der Mensch noch etwas Anderes ist, ausser Seele und Form, Nichts hören!' 'Der Mensch unter der Haut' ist allen Liebenden ein Greuel und Ungedanke, eine Gottes- und Liebeslästerung." (FW 59 3.423).

309 Replacing does not mean rejection or denial; otherwise physiology would replicate the exclusionary, life-denying effects of morality.

310 "Wagner vom Anfang bis zum Ende ist mir unmöglich geworden, weil er nicht gehen kann, geschweige denn tanzen. / Aber das sind physiologische Urtheile, keine aesthetische: nur – habe ich keine Aesthetik mehr!".

311 "Was heißt jetzt 'schlechtweggekommen'? Vor Allem physiologisch: nicht mehr politisch.".

is able to provide a perspective that does justice to the dynamic character of becoming and does not subordinate it to the illusions of substance ontology. Understanding the body as an originary multiplicity, Nietzsche hopes, avoids this danger and may lead to the affirmation and enhancement of life[312] by giving us a better chance to describe dynamic processes.

Nietzsche is aware of the difficulties of speaking about physiological processes. In M 119 3.113 he raises the issue of whether physiological processes are unknown to us:

> […] but do I have to add […] that our moral judgments and evaluations too are only images and fantasies based on a physiological process unknown to us, a kind of acquired language for designating certain nervous stimuli?[313]

and in 11[128] 9.487[314] he suggests that what we think we know about physiology is in fact only a form of inescapable antropomophism. We need to consider how Nietzsche strives to develop the language of philosophical physiology[315] in spite of these difficulties. What can Nietzsche hope for from his project of naturalization, i.e. translating the human back into nature, if our understanding of nature is already anthropomorphised?

We have already considered in this sub-section a number of texts in which Nietzsche doubts the prospects of philosophical physiology providing us with adequate knowledge. The following text is representative of this line of thinking:

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312 The same set of concerns will arise in Nietzsche's contrast between scientific (mechanistic) and philosophical physiologies.

313 "[…] muss ich aber ausführen […] dass auch unsere moralischen Urtheile und Werthschätzungen nur Bilder und Phantasien über einen uns unbekannten physiologischen Vorgang sind, eine Art angewöhnter Sprache, gewisse Nervenreize zu bezeichnen?".

314 "Jetzt hat man den Kampf überall wieder entdeckt und redet vom Kampfe der Zellen, Gewebe, Organe, Organismen. Aber man kann sämmtliche uns bewußte Affekte in ihnen wiederfinden – zuletzt, wenn dies geschehen ist, drehen wir die Sache um und sagen: das was wirklich vor sich geht bei der Regsamkeit unserer menschlichen Affekte sind jene physiologischen Bewegungen, und die Affekte (Kämpfe usw.) sind nur intellektuelle Ausdeutungen, dort wo der Intellekt gar nichts weiß, aber doch alles zu wissen meint.".

315 Nietzsche believes that all philosophers suffer from the lack of knowledge of physiology: "Was fehlte den Philosophen a) historischer Sinn b) Kenntniß der Physiologie" (26[100] 11.176).

> The human as a multiplicity: physiology gives only an indication of a wonderful commerce between this multiplicity and the sub- and co-ordination of parts into a whole.[316] (27[8] 11.276)

The key question is how we should understand the indication (*Andeutung*) physiology offers? First, we must emphasize that physiology should not be understood to offer an approximation of the nature of reality, of the essence (*das wesentliche*) of things (11[75] 9.470). Due to Nietzsche's critique of the metaphysics of substance, he cannot aim to provide us with an adequate explanation of things as they are in themselves, nor can he claim that there are such things. These epistemological and ontological limits constitute, arguably, the fundamental difference with Spinoza, and we will address this in the comparative section. The question we must then raise is why does Nietzsche claim that physiology is the best available language for describing organic processes, if it cannot give us an explanation of reality and if it is in danger of replicating the anthropomorphic illusions characteristic of metaphysics? My thesis is that Nietzsche thinks that the main advantage of the turn to the body lies in the capacity of physiological discourse to continuously re-shape itself, which means 1) to overcome the recurring metaphysical and teleological illusions that are the product of historical processes and 2) to continuously reformulate its conceptual language in order to provide a "purer" and "more honest"[317] understanding of the body: physiology is the best language we have to describe the dynamic multiplicity and its becoming that characterise life. My argument is that this is the best way to understand Nietzsche's use of the comparative form of adjectives and adverbs, not only when he writes that "more honestly and more purely speaks the healthy body" (Z I Hinterweltern 4.38)[318], but also when he speaks of a "higher body" that must both be created, and, in turn create[319]. Nietzsche's emphasis is on the process of constantly overcoming the illusions of conscious thought and on creating or building for oneself a higher body, which must be understood as a

316 "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.".

317 "eine redlichere und reinere Stimme ist diess" (Z I Hinterweltern 4.38).

318 "Redlicher redet und reiner der gesunde Leib".

319 "Einen höheren Leib sollst du schaffen […] einen Schaffenden sollst du schaffen".

multiplicity of dynamic processes. Physiological discourse de-moralises and de-antropomorphizes our knowledge of the world through a re-description of moral, religious and aesthetic accounts in an a-moral manner, starting from the notion of endogenous relational power.

We can observe in Nietzsche's appeal to philosophical physiology throughout his oeuvre a number of shifts in language. We will have the opportunity to observe these shifts on various occasions, whether in Nietzsche's study of art, of morality, or in his critique of Roux. In spite of important differences between these contexts, we can identify a common impulse that animates these researches, namely the desire to understand the physiological structure of certain phenomena. The difference with Spinzoa is that the primacy of philosophical physiology in this endeavour does not guarantee the procurement of adequate knowledge that escapes antromporphizing illusions completely. Nietzsche's project is a critical one, in which the turn to the body helps him uncover and overcome various moral and metaphysical illusions without the promise of an adequate discourse on the body. While the tendency towards antromporhizaiton in knowledge cannot be escaped, philosophical physiology can be refined and made aware of its own prejudices.

1.c. The expressions of the body

How does the body express itself in the various phenomena that Nietzsche studies? Nietzsche believes that our actions and our values are shaped by our physiological constitution[320] and that behind morality and logic there are certain valuations necessary for the preservation of specific forms of life. Moralities and conscious thought are "physiological requirements for the preservation of a particular type of life" (JGB 3 5.17)[321]. Moralities can have positive or negative effects, depending on whether they multiply the range of human possibilities and allow for their

320 "ein wohlgerathener Mensch, ein 'Glücklicher', muss gewisse Handlungen thun und scheut sich instinktiv vor anderen Handlungen, er trägt die Ordnung, die er physiologisch darstellt, in seine Beziehungen zu Menschen und Dingen hinein" (GD Irrthümer 2 6.89), "Der corrupte und gemischte Zustand der Werthe entspricht dem physiologischen Zustand der jetzigen Menschen: Theorie der Modernität" (14[139] 13.323).

321 "physiologische Forderungen zur Erhaltung einer bestimmten Art von Leben".

expression, or they reduce and inhibit the expression of these possibilities. Our task in this sub-section is to clarify the manner in which physiological processes and conditions express themselves through moral phenomena. In the context of raising the problem of the value of values (especially of the morality of compassion), Nietzsche writes:

> we need to know about the conditions and circumstances under which the values grew, developed and changed (morality as result, as symptom, as mask, as tartuffery, as sickness, as misunderstanding, but also morality as cause, remedy, stimulant, inhibition, poison)[322] (GM Vorrede 6 5.253)

This text offers us an important indication that we can distinguish between two main types of connections between the body and morality. The first kind is one in which the functions of interpretation and diagnosis play the central role: morality is seen as "as result, as symptom, as mask, as tartuffery, as sickness, as misunderstanding". Nietzsche often speaks of morality (especially), art, politics or ideas as the symptoms (*Symptome*) or signs (*Zeichensprachen*) of physiological processes or states[323]. Part of Nietzsche's genealogical method, next to his psychological or etymological investigations, is his attempt to decipher the physiological meaning of various phenomena (van Tongeren 1984, pp. 50-51)[324]. This endeavour is made difficult by the fact that various moral or metaphysical notions have covered up their physiological background and have led to a misinterpretation of the body:

> The unconscious disguise of physiological needs under the cloaks of the objective, ideal, purely spiritual goes frighteningly far, – and I have asked myself often enough whether, on a grand scale, philosophy has been no

322 "dazu thut eine Kenntniss der Bedingungen und Umstände noth, aus denen sie gewachsen, unter denen sie sich entwickelt und verschoben haben (Moral als Folge, als Symptom, als Maske, als Tartüfferie, als Krankheit, als Missverständniss; aber auch Moral als Ursache, als Heilmittel, als Stimulans, als Hemmung, als Gift)".

323 (7[87] 10.272; 7[125] 10.284; GT Vorrede 4 1.15; FW Vorrede 2 3.347; 2[165] 12.149; 14[13] 13.223; 16[86] 13.515; etc.).

324 "Mein Versuch, die moralischen Urtheile als Symptome und Zeichensprachen zu verstehen, in denen sich Vorgänge des physiologischen Gedeihens oder Mißrathens, ebenso das Bewußtsein von Erhaltungs- und Wachsthumsbedingungen verrathen: eine Interpretation's-Weise vom Werthe der Astrologie" (2[165] 12.147).

> more than an interpretation of the body and a *misunderstanding of the body*[325] (FW Vorrede 2 3.348)

Nietzsche's investigation of morality as a symptom is an attempt to expose what moralities do not wish to say and keep hidden (Blondel 1986, p. 255). Blondel's reading of the body in Nietzsche is focused on understanding the body as a metaphor that lends itself to interpretation. This is Blondel's answer to the problem of how we should understand the epistemological puzzles prompted by Nietzsche's recourse to physiology. Given Nietzsche's rejection of the possibility of perfectly adequate knowledge of reality, Blondel argues that we can only make sense of physiology as a hermeneutic device, a key that allows us to interpret the world as a set of signs or symbols. While this view no doubt captures the dominant aspect of Nietzsche's turn to the body, it fails to do justice to the texts in which the body is considered as part of a causal nexus.

Blondel argues that Nietzsche wants to avoid the metaphysical value of words like cause (*Ursache*) (Blondel 1986, p. 235), but this argument is an attempt to dismiss rather than come to terms with some of Nietzsche's texts. We must fully acknowledge the existence of the second kind of connection that Nietzsche envisages between the body and morality when he speaks of "morality as cause, remedy, stimulant, inhibition, poison" (GM Vorrede 6 5.253). Morality has a direct, causal and detrimental influence on the body: The growth of physiological and moral degeneration in humankind is presented as the consequence of a sick and unnatural morality (15[41] 13.433)[326], while in GM III 15 Nietzsche speaks of the "actual physiological causation of ressentiment, revenge and their ilk"[327] (GM III 15 5.374). This should not be read as an endorsement on Nietzsche's part of causal determinism[328], but rather as a new attempt to understand the difficult relation

325 "Die unbewusste Verkleidung physiologischer Bedürfnisse unter die Mäntel des Objektiven, Ideellen, Rein-Geistigen geht bis zum Erschrecken weit, – und oft genug habe ich mich gefragt, ob nicht, im Grossen gerechnet, Philosophie bisher überhaupt nur eine Auslegung des Leibes und ein Missverständniss des Leibes gewesen ist".

326 "das Wachsthum der physiologischen und moralischen Übel im menschlichen Geschlecht ist umgekehrt die Folge einer krankhaften und unnatürlichen Moral".

327 "die wirkliche physiologische Ursächlichkeit des Ressentiment, der Rache und ihrer Verwandten".

328 Nietzsche speaks of the hypothesis of a "causality of the will" (*Willens-Causalität*; JGB

between the physiological and the moral, a relation that cannot be exhaustively interpreted as symptomatology. It is important to note that Nietzsche presents certain moralities as poison. If we can understand morality's harmful effects on our physiology as the breaking of the coherence of our pulsional economy, then this is an important point of contact with Spinoza. Spinoza understands disempowerment according to the model of a poison that alters the specific ratio of motion and rest characteristic of a body (TTP 4; letter XIX to Blyenbergh; cf. Deleuze 1981, p. 75).

1.d. Structure in Nietzsche's philosophical physiology

There are a great number of concepts closely associated with Nietzsche's turn to the body and that play a role in his physiological investigations. Some of them ("Leib", "Trieb", "Symptom", "Gesundheit/Krankheit" or "Degeneration") have already been discussed independently. The list continues with notions such as: "Rasse", "Reize", "Gefühl", "Blut", "Nervensystem", "Organ", "Gehirn", "Bedürfniss", "Organisches Funktionen", inter alia. I will focus, in the following section, on a selection of key concepts: "Typus", "Kraft", "Aktivität", "Rangordnung" and "Affekt". The prominent role these play is apparent both in the number of occurrences, but also, I will argue, in the importance they have in the economy of Nietzsche's philosophy.

Type (*Typus*)

The concept of "type" plays an essential role in 19th Century life sciences in the attempt to explain the nature of animal species, particularly in Germany. This prominent role is to a large degree the result of the activity of Karl Ernst von Baer, whose work, especially in embryology, shaped much of the scientific environment in Europe (Lenoir 1982, pp. X-XI, 84). His influence extended outside the purely scientific domain, and Nietzsche refers to him as "the great naturalist von Baer"[329] (MA 265 2.219). For von Baer the "type" is the most essential aspect of the animal, because it determines the manner of its development. The type is already present

36 5.55); a point to be discussed in the last section of this chapter in the context of Nietzsche's critique of science.

329 "Der grosse Naturforscher von Baer".

in the embryo, and development is the emergence of specialised and individual characters out of the more general characteristics of the embryo (Lenoir 1982, pp. 83-5). The type itself is the "certain arrangement of a particular number of 'fundamental organs', out of which individual organs are formed through histological and morphological differentiation" (Lenoir 1982, p. 88). The type is best understood as "a scheme that can never be realised in all cases" (Lenoir 1982, p. 98). Von Baer's understanding of development is teleological in orientation, given that the yet unactualised type guides the present processes of specialisation and individuation of organs. The development of an organism is guided by the teleological striving to approximate the type, and so is not a blind mechanical unfolding of the type in space and time (Lenoir 1982, p. 97). Nevertheless, this, together with von Baer's use of expressions like 'Idea' to refer to types, should not lead us to believe that he is an idealist *Naturphilosoph*. The regulative principles of development do not exist outside, or independently of, organised matter, nor are the "Ideas" imposed on blind matter from without (Lenoir 1982, pp. 85-6). The type is not realised in all cases of animal growth because development is dependent on two sets of factors: internal and external. The external factors decide which types are viable as real animals (Lenoir 1982, pp. 96-7).

Using this analysis we are in a better position to understand why Nietzsche should not be accused of resorting to the "old Idealist concept of 'type'", as Moore (2002, p. 33) does. The concept of type Nietzsche refers to is not that of the *Naturphilosophen*, nor is it the the Schopenhauerian "Platonic Idea" as a metaphysical expression of the Will. The concept of type is used as a heuristic principle guiding Nietzsche's physiological investigations, and it has a number of salient features that undoubtedly appealed to him: the emphasis on the internal structure of the organism and the claim that more is needed in order to explain life-forms than just blind mechanical processes. It is nevertheless important to emphasize that Nietzsche rejected the teleological aspect of von Baer's understanding of types.

In 14[133] 13.315ff Nietzsche speaks of types as constant or immutable[330], but this should be understood in the context of an argument against civilisation seen as a process of domestication and radical change. He takes a position similar to von Baer's when he writes that "Each type has its limits: there is no development beyond these" (14[133] 13.316)[331]. His point is that the pasticity of types is limitied, not that types correspond to immutable essences. The appeal of the turn to physiology is precisely the possibility to describe an organism as a dynamic and relatively stable structure within a world of flux, without having to derive its unity from a metaphysical essence. In the course of the same text, Nietzsche speaks of the fragility of higher types, always threatened with reversal to the unchanging norm. Nietzsche's account of the species includes a discussion of the variety of types that constitutes it. The problem he tackles is the situation in which one type (the herd animal) is dominant and limits the possibility of expression of other types.

The notion of type is used by Nietzsche for diagnostic purposes, whether the object of investigation is the structure of society (AC 57 6.241), exceptional individuals like Schopenhauer and Wagner (14[222] 13.395) or artistic creations (WA 5 6.22). The emphasis is on the inner constitution of the objects of inquiry and whether they display the following symptoms: lack of coordination of inner desires as a consequence of decline in organising force (14[117] 13.293)[332].

Force (*Kraft*)

Starting in the beginning of the 1880's, Nietzsche was influenced by the principles of conservation and discharge of energy (*Kraftauslösung*) elaborated by J.R. Mayer (Abel 2010, p. 369). Peter Gast sent Nietzsche a copy of Mayer's *Mechanik der Wärme* in April 1881 (Bauer 1984, p. 218). Nietzsche also read Mayer's *Die organische Bewegung in ihrem Zusammenhang mit dem Stoffwechsel* in 1881 (Müller-Lauter 1999a, p. 163). Mayer formalised the hitherto unclear concept of

330 "Der Typus bleibt constant: man kann nicht „dénaturer la nature"." (14 [133] 13.315).

331 "Jeder Typus hat seine Grenze: über diese hinaus giebt es keine Entwicklung".

332 "Die Häßlichkeit bedeutet décadence eines Typus, Widerspruch und mangelnde Coordination der inneren Begehrungen / bedeutet einen Niedergang an organisirender Kraft, / an „Willen" physiologisch geredet…".

Kraft and described it as indestructible, immaterial and transformable and thus stated the principle of conservation of force (Caneva 1993, p. 25). It is important to remember that Nietzsche's interest in the concept of force comes in the context of his attempt to provide a relational understanding of reality, as a plurality of forces or centers of force. This relational concept of force is a means to formulate an account of reality without appealing to substance metaphysics[333]. As Mittasch has shown, the notion of *Kraftauslösung* was of great influence in Nietzsche's philosophy (Mittasch 1952, pp. 110, 127). It means that there is no necessary quantitative correlation between cause and effect. A small cause, such as a spark, may have an effect of an immeasurably greater magnitude i.e. an explosion[334] (Lindsay 1970, p. 14). This insight was used by Mayer to argue that the nervous system of animals can, by directly controlling a small amount of energy, release a much larger amount (Lindsay 1970, p. 41). This means that organic force can be stored up and remain latent until it is discharged. The idea that the organism is best explained using the notion of *Kraft* and that accumulation and discharge are essential to understanding the organism, is crucial for Nietzsche (Abel 2010, pp. 370-1). The emphasis on increase and growth rather than on self-preservation plays a central role in Nietzsche's polemic both with 1) Darwinists who claimed self-preservation to be the fundamental drive and 2) with Spinoza, whose notion of conatus Nietzsche reads as a teleological precursor of the notion of a drive for self-preservation.

There is, nevertheless, an aspect of Mayer's theory of *Kraft* which Nietzsche did not accept. Mayer defined *Kraft* as immaterial and set up matter as the second, but equally important, explanatory principle of the universe (Gori 2009, p. 137). Nietzsche, however, on a number of occasions, claims that there is no matter, only force. He sometimes criticizes what he calls the mechanistic atomic world-view, which he describes as attached to the notions of: atoms, cause and effect, laws

333 For a number of accounts that focus on the plurality of forces as instances of appropriation, domination and exploitation that, as activity, can only be overpowering in relation to other forces, see Abel 1984, pp. 6-27; Deleuze 1962, pp. 3-6; Mittasch 1952, pp. 102-113.

334 It would be interesting to investigate to what extent the disparity in magnitude between motive and action, the fourth manifestation of the principle of sufficient reason according to Schopenhauer, influenced Nietzsche's reception of Mayer's arguments.

of nature and entropy. To this he opposes the dynamic world-view he finds in Boscovich (Aydin 2003, p. 146) and replaces the notion of atoms with centres of force (Whitlock 2010, p. 204).

Action (*Aktivität*) and Reaction (*Reaktivität*)

In the course of developing an argument against *misarchism*, which is the "democratic idiosyncrasy of being against everything that dominates and wants to dominate"[335] (GM II 12 5.315), and its harmful effects on the sciences, Nietzsche claims that the "basic concept" (*Grundbegriff*) of the sciences is that of "actual activity" (*eigentlichen Aktivität*). The concept of activity is essential to understanding Nietzsche's notion of power in the *Genealogy of Morality* (Brusotti 2012b, p. 105)[336] together with his account of motion and change. In order to better understand the notion of "activity", we can start from the following text:

> But this is to misunderstand the essence of life, its *will to power*, we overlook the prime importance that the spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, re-interpreting, re-directing and formative forces have, which "adaptation" follows only when they have had their effect.[337] (GM II 12 5.316)

Power has two fundamental traits: 1) it is primarily an active process of expenditure and growth (Patton 1993, p. 152) and 2) it must not be understood reactively, that is, according to what it lacks, a telos (Patton 1993, p. 153). Patton argues that this constitutes a break with philosophical thinking on the notion of power. In order to illustrate the traditional view, he uses the example of Hobbes, who understands power as the power to resist others, i.e. to react to the threat of external powers, and as the power to pursue the goals of self-preservation and the attainment of the objects of desire (Patton 1993, pp. 146-8). To this we can add that power is understood by Hobbes in the context of the radical lack of a future good, i.e. of

335 "Die demokratische Idiosynkrasie gegen Alles, was herrscht und herrschen will".

336 The concept of "activity" and the opposition between active and reactive forces is of paramount importance in Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche, even though this opposition does not explicitely occur in Nietzsche.

337 "Damit ist aber das Wesen des Lebens verkannt, sein Wille zur Macht; damit ist der principielle Vorrang übersehn, den die spontanen, angreifenden, übergreifenden, neu-auslegenden, neu-richtenden und gestaltenden Kräfte haben, auf deren Wirkung erst die 'Anpassung' folgt".

security, and that it is always exercised from a position of weakness (Siemens 2013, p. 96). Nietzsche's formulation of power "is not bound to a static telos of self-preservation" and so does not "presuppose any pre-determined constraints on the forms" it can take. This leads to an understanding of struggle with other centers of power not as a threat, but as a stimulant, conducive to "qualitative self-transformation" (Siemens 2013, p. 96). In the context of this thesis, this raises three questions: 1) How does Nietzsche's formulation of power as activity relate to Spinoza's notion of power? 2) What consequence does this have for Nietzsche's normative thinking, in the context of Nietzsche's striving to elaborate a thoughtful egoism that allows for the best expression of our power to act? (both these questions will be considered in the comparative section); 3) How should we understand the disappearance of the explicit use the notion of "activity" from Nietzsche's works after the *Genealogy* (Brusotti 2012b, p. 105)?

The fact that Nietzsche does not use the vocabulary of "activity", or "acting" any longer does not mean he now has a reactive understanding of power. In GD Streifzüge 44 6.145 and 15[105] 13.468, Nietzsche criticizes *milieu-theory* because it explains genius starting from the "environment, the age, the 'Zeitgeist', 'public opinion'"[338], rather than as the "accumulation of enormous force"[339] (GD Streifzüge 44 6.145). This indicates, as we have seen in the discussion of Mayer, a new focus on formulating the notion of power in terms of excess and the explosion (*Explosion)* of accumulated immense and "out-flowing forces" (*ausströmenden Kräfte*) (GD Streifzüge 44 6.146), rather than as activity (Brusotti 2012b, p. 126). This plays a crucial role in Nietzsche's ethics, and allows him to argue that the strong are characterised by the capacity to accumulate force and not react or react slowly[340] to stimuli, while the weak cannot but respond to stimuli and react immediately[341], thus consuming and weakening themselves. This marks an important shift from the position taken by Nietzsche in the *GM*, where he argues that "when ressentiment does occur in the noble human itself, it is consumed and

338 "Umgebung, an Zeitalter, an 'Zeitgeist', an 'öffentlicher Meinung'".
339 "ungeheure Kraft aufgehäuft ist".
340 "nicht/schwer/langsam/spat reagieren" (Brusotti 2012b, p. 107).
341 "(unmittelbar, ungehemmt) reagieren" (Brusotti 2012b, p. 107).

exhausted in an immediate reaction, and therefore it does not *poison*"[342] (modified translation; GM I 10 5.273).

Hierarchy (*Rangordnung*) and struggle (*Kampf*)

Nietzsche's understanding of hierarchy and struggle was shaped to a large degree by his reading of Roux's *Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus* in 1881 and again in 1883 (Müller-Lauter 1999b, p. 101). Roux's book is an attempt to apply evolutionary thinking to the inner structure of the organism. The emergence of a number of disciplines within the life sciences, especially cytology, had revealed the rich multiplicity that constitutes any organism. Roux's thesis is that the constitution and inner harmony (*innere Harmonie)* displayed by organisms is the result of struggle between its composing parts (Roux 1881, p. 237). In other words, his claim is that "all that is beneficial can only come from struggle"[343] (Roux 1881, p. 64). The composing parts Roux considers are: molecules, cells, tissues and organs, and they are all involved in a struggle for space and nutrition. The struggle is of two kinds: 1) struggle for annihilation: the organic elements that lose out in the fight for resources die out. This describes the struggle between molecules or between cells and, because it is a fight between homogenous parts, it leads to the "selection of the better"[344], i.e. the parts that are better in acquiring space and nutrition (Roux 1881, p. 96); 2) struggle that results in equilibrium *(Gleichgewicht*): the tissues and organs that are defeated in the struggle for resources are not necessarily eliminated, but may instead survive in a (temporary) weakened and diminished state. The resulting equilibrium can be interpreted as a hierarchy (even though Roux does not use the term *Rangordnung)* that is flexible: the subordinate part does not completely lose its power to defend itself and fend off its competitors (Roux 1881, pp. 98, 104-5), and it may be the case that the subordinated, i.e. weakened, elements manage to obtain the upper hand and reverse the order of the hierarchy. The struggle resulting in annihilation occurs at the level of molecules and cells without any harmful effects for the organism as

342 "Das Ressentiment des vornehmen Menschen selbst, wenn es an ihm auftritt, vollzieht und erschöpft sich nämlich in einer sofortigen Reaktion, es vergiftet darum nicht".

343 "alles Gute nur aus dem Kampfe entspringt".

344 "Auslese des Besseren".

a whole, but if it occurs at the level of organs and tissues then it can be fatal for the organism (Roux 1881, p. 98). Roux writes that the struggle between organs leads, through "self-elimination" (*Selbstelimination*), to the preservation of the quality of organs that make equilibrium in the organism possible (Roux 1881, p. 109). While this seems to contradict the account given above, Roux qualifies this statement (1881, p. 98) when he writes that "the harmonic *unity of the entire organism* is bred through the self-elimination of the anomalous"[345]. While this may raise, for a study dedicated to Roux, the question of what we should understand by "anomalous", it does not contradict the claim that the equilibiurm without which the organism would "very quickly" die is established between heterogenous parts diverging in strength[346]. The organism can only survive if equilibrium is established between its tissues and organs. This balance is the result of purely mechanistic processes and not the outcome of any teleological developments[347].

Roux's account is best understood in the context of a 19th Century debate in the scientific community between two models for understanding the structure of the organism. This debate was focused on the organisation of cells, which is not surprising, given the huge importance of cytology in this period. The two main actors were Virchow and Haeckel, who proposed diametrically opposed models for understanding the organism as a society of cells (Moore 2002, pp. 35-6). Virchow suggested a democratic model in which cells are seen as autonomous individuals in an egalitarian society. Haeckel saw the organisation as an aristocratic, hierarchical plurality. Roux, as a student of Haeckel's, situated himself on his side of the debate. Nevertheless, there were points of disagreement between the two. Haeckel could not accept the existence of conflict entirely without purpose and believed that all organic structures, down to the cell, are endowed with spirit (Moore 2002, pp. 40-1).

345 "eine Harmonische Einheit des ganzen Organismus durch Selbstelimination des Abweichenden gezüchtet werden".

346 "Da Mangel des Gleichgewichts zwischen den verschiedenen Geweben sehr rasch zum Tode der Individuen und somit zur Elimination derselben und ihrer nachteiligen Qualität aus des Reihe des Lebenden führt" (Roux 1881, p. 98).

347 See also Ioan (2014, 392-3).

This creative force that permeates the universe, the *Bildungstrieb,* is a major factor in evolution as well. Haeckel saw evolution as an artistic process in which he downplayed the role of conflict and emphasized progress towards beautiful organic forms (Moore 2002, p. 27). Roux, however, tried to offer an explanation for organic phenomena in mechanistic terms which minimizes the importance of the idea of progress, of directed growth in evolution.

Nietzsche is influenced both by Roux's attempt to explain the nature of organisms without teleological principles and by the possible reading of the concept equilibrium as a flexible hierarchy that can incorporate a number of competing elements without losing its coherence and being destroyed. He did, however, depart from Roux on two major points. The first, as will be discussed in section III, is Nietzsche's critique of mechanism. While it is superior to an explanation based on teleological principles, mechanism fails to account for the dynamic character of life, which Nietzsche very often describes in terms of wills to power. Rather than blind mechanistic processes, Nietzsche wants to interpret nature as a multiplicity of wills to power that command and obey. The second point is that Nietzsche believes that Roux has not managed to free his account completely from hidden teleological assumptions. In Roux, the components of the organism engage in struggle because they strive to assimilate as many resources as possible: this is what Roux calls overcompensation (*Uebercompensation*). Roux's claim is that an organism that assimilates less or only as much as it uses is vulnerable to any change in the environment and will inevitably be destroyed (Roux 1881, p. 217). Nietzsche criticizes Roux's understanding of overcompensation because he reads it as the striving for "overabundant replacement" (überreichlicher Ersatz) and argues that understanding self-regulation *(Selbstrregulierung*) as "overabundant replacement" is the remnant of a teleological way of thinking (Müller-Lauter 1999b, pp. 118-9). The key text here is:

> In organic process / 1) overabundant replacement – false expression and coloured teleologically / self-regulation, that is the ability to rule over a given community presupposed, but that means the further development of the organic is not tied up with diet, but to commanding and the capacity to

rule: diet is only a result.[348] (26[272] 11.221)[349]

The motor behind organic phenomena is not the striving for self-preservation qua telos through the replacement and assimilation of resources, but rather the self-regulating and self-organizing processes of commanding and obeying that structure the community of organs and drives (Müller-Lauter 1999b, pp. 120-1). In a note from 1888, Nietzsche argues that if we understand life as will to power, then organisms strive for "an increase of power" (*ein plus von Macht*). Hunger or self-preservation are only consequences (*Folge*) of the will to power dynamics, not the "primum mobile" (14[174] 13.360f). Nietzsche opposes his understanding of life and power as expansion to the reactive notion of power as lack, a notion that is at the basis of mechanism. This raises the following question, which will be considered in section III: What is Nietzsche's description of organic processes that manages to avoid both teleological and mechanistic errors, while being able to account for the apparent purposiveness (*Zweckmässigkeit*) of organisms[350]?

Affect (*Affekt*)

For the purposes of this thesis, I will focus my discussion of affects in Nietzsche on two main topics. I will investigate the way affects or passions feature in his philosophical physiology and then I will consider some key features relevant to a comparison with Spinoza's understanding of affects.

I will use as my starting point the following text from *MA* (1878), which sets the foundation for much of what Nietzsche will have to say about passions or affects:

348 "Im organischen Prozeß / 1) überreichlicher Ersatz – falscher Ausdruck und teleologisch gefärbt / 2) Selbst-Regulirung, also die Fähigkeit der Herrschaft über ein Gemeinwesen vorausgesetzt d.h. aber, die Fortentwicklung des Organischen ist nicht an die Ernährung angeknüpft, sondern an das Befehlen und Beherrschen-können: ein Resultat nur ist Ernährung.".

349 This is written in 1884. Earlier, in 1881, Nietzsche accepts the principles of assimilation and overcompensation as primary: "Wenn wir die Eigenschaften des niedersten belebten Wesens in unsere „Vernunft" übersetzen, so werden moralische Triebe daraus. Ein solches Wesen assimilirt sich das Nächste, verwandelt es in sein Eigenthum (Eigenthum ist zuerst Nahrung und Aufspeicherung von Nahrung), es sucht möglichst viel sich einzuverleiben, nicht nur den Verlust zu compensiren – es ist habsüchtig." (11[134] 9.490f).

350 This mirrors Roux's attempt to explain the purposiveness of organisms without teleology and invoking only internal processes of self-regulation (Müller-Lauter 1999b, p. 110).

> […] a much simpler life, and more purified of affects, could arise, than the present life is: so that, though the old motives of violent desire produced by inherited habit would still possess their strength, they would gradually grow weaker under the influence of purifying knowledge. In the end one would live among humans and with oneself as in *nature*, without praising, blaming, contending, gazing contentedly, as though at a spectacle, upon many things for which one formerly felt only fear[351] (modified translation; MA 34 2.54)

In this period Nietzsche "idealizes a free spirit", whose freedom is given by knowledge rather than freedom of action, and who realizes that "all is nature and nothing more than nature" (Ansell-Pearson and Ure 2013, p. 1). But what does it mean to "live among men and with oneself as in *nature*"? What are the consequences of Nietzsche's project of naturalisation for his discussion of affects? The first consequence of Nietzsche's commitment to naturalism and immanence is the possibility of understanding the dynamics of affects. Knowledge is "purifying" first and foremost because it can grasp the nature and origins of affects without any appeal to transcendence. Second, we find Nietzsche intimating that knowledge, because it has an effect on affects, is itself deeply intertwined with them. The affective force invested in knowledge is what allows it to be transformative and overcome "violent desires" and "inherited habit". Third, affects produced by knowledge are conducive to a life of knowledge because they are reduced in strength. Knowledge can moderate or weaken violent desires. In a description reminiscent of Spinoza's imperative "not to deride, bewail, or execrate human actions, but to understand them" (TP I 4), Nietzsche advocates a life "without praising, blaming, contending". The life of knowledge is not without affects, since it is characterised by the joy that refers to the "liberation from the primeval affects we have inherited" or to the reduction of the "raptures and convulsions"

351 "[…] ein viel einfacheres, von Affecten reineres Leben entstünde, als das jetzige ist: so dass zuerst zwar die alten Motive des heftigeren Begehrens noch Kraft hätten, aus alter vererbter Gewöhnung her, allmählich aber unter dem Einflusse der reinigenden Erkenntniss schwächer würden. Man lebte zuletzt unter den Menschen und mit sich wie in der Natur, ohne Lob, Vorwürfe, Ereiferung, an Vielem sich wie an einem Schauspiel weidend, vor dem man sich bisher nur zu fürchten hatte.".

of passions to their "minimum articulation" (Ansell-Pearson and Ure 2013, p. 2).

If knowledge can moderate passions through the affective force invested in it, then how can the affects produced by knowledge, which are reduced in strength, weaken violent desires? The recognition of the spinozistic maxim that only an affect can overcome another affect (EIVp37s2 II/238) problematizes the method of weakening affects as a recipe for empowerment: we would need an affect that is at least as strong as the desires we wish to subdue if we are to be succesful. In later works, the thesis of the deep interonnection between knowledge and affects is developed by Nietzsche in the direction of seeking to combat the attempt to cool down the passions. Furthermore, the thesis that knowledge is driven by passions and is itself a passion grows in importance for Nietzsche up to 1889[352] (Ansell-Pearson and Ure 2013, p. 2). Given the usefulness of passions, Nietzsche's concern here is no longer with reducing their power, which he takes to be a sign of weakness, but on reshaping affective economy (Ansell-Pearson and Ure 2013, p. 2) with a view to the enhancement of joy and empowerment. This means that Nietzsche no longer strives for detachment from passions (e.g. fear), but on integrating their full force into our affective economy.

Much of what Nietzsche writes about passions is compatible with Spinoza's thinking. If we allow for the differences in terminology stemming from Spinoza's technical use of the notions of active or passive (passions) affects, we can observe their shared tendency towards the enhancement of the joy that follows from an increase in knowledge. Another key ingredient in Nietzsche's discussion of affects, and one that has important parallels with Spinoza, is the constitutive role affects play within communities. This, together with the physiological dimension of affects in Nietzsche, is well brought out by Faulkner in her study of "disgust" (*Ekel)*. Together with Conway, Faulkner argues that Nietzsche's theory of perspectivism is predicated on seeing truth in an embodied context and that affects colour each possible perspective (Faulkner 2013, p. 52; Conway 1991, pp. 105-6). Nietzsche criticizes Christian, reactive virtues, especially pity, as disempowering

352 Nietzsche speaks of the "passion for knowledge" ("Leidenschaft der Erkenntniss"; FW107 3.464).

affects that, by shaping the connections that make society possible, have generated the state of sickness characteristic of modernity (Faulkner 2013, pp. 53, 56-8). His alternative, Faulkner suggests, is "disgust", an affect with a double nature: it provides "the distance that constitutes social rank", but is also "suggestive of a dangerous proximity and proneness to contamination" (Faulkner 2013, p. 58). Without going into the details of this argument, we must observe that Faulkner argues that the best moments of Nietzsche's analysis of society consist in his affirmation of the ambivalence of disgust (Faulkner 2013, p. 64) rather than in attempts to flee others and not sustain a relationship with them (FW 279 3.523f; cf. Bachelard 1988, p. 136; Faulkner 2013, p. 60). This shows how the striving for affirmation must not only be mindful of the particularism of each body and its affective economy, but also that Nietzsche's philosophy involves the affirmation of the radical openness of each life-form towards its enviornment, an openness which inevitably leads to vulnerability in the face of the other. These are concerns Nietzsche and Spinoza share, regardless of the opposition between the advocacy of democracy in Spinoza and the focus on "rank" in Nietzsche.

In spite of these numerous similarities, we have yet to address the fundamental question for a comparison: Is the notion of affect for Nietzsche the bedrock of a mixed, psycho-physiological discourse, as is the case with Spinoza? In order to understand affects, for Nietzsche, we need to uncover their physiological basis:

> All inclination, friendship, love together something physiological. We all do not know, how deep and high physis reaches. (16[42] 7.408)[353]

We must see beyond the illusions of language or conscious thought:

> Courage, shame, anger have nothing to do in themselves with concepts / physiological facts, whose name and mental concept is only a symbol[354]

353 "Alle Neigung, Freundschaft, Liebe zugleich etwas Physiologisches. Wir wissen alle nicht, wie tief und hoch die Physis reicht.". See also: "Affekte als Gegenstück zu physiologischen Gruppen, die eine Art von Einheit des Werdens, einen periodischen Verlauf haben." (25[185] 11.64).

354 "Muth, Scham, Zorn haben nichts an sich mit Begriffen zu thun / physiologische Thatsachen, deren Name und seelischer Begriff nur Symbol ist".

(7[87] 10.272, see also 11[128] 9.487[355])

For affects to play the same role as in Spinoza, they would have to be, at least in principle, intelligible, and provide the same fundamental and adequate type of knowledge that philosophical physiology does. In Nietzsche's view, however, the primacy of physiology is not only a question of strategy, of the more convenient description of certain situations, as is the case with Spinoza. A physiological account of affects[356] is more revealing for Nietzsche than what Spinoza would call a description of affects under the attribute of thought. The mental description is problematized in Nietzsche in a way it is not in Spinoza.

Nevertheless, even an attempt at a physiological account of affects cannot provide fully adequate knowledge. We are in a position of ignorance because we are dependent on the impoverished perceptual and intellectual apparatus we possess:

> Also in a passion, a drive we understand only the intellectual process therein – not the physiological, essential, but the small sensation with it.[357] (11[75] 9.470)

Our best attempt is to try and elucidate the physiological nature of reality. While a discourse focused on affects falls short of providing us with an adequate account of human beings comparable to Spinoza's, we can identify in the preceding text a hint towards better approximating the ideal of a mixed discourse. In the third chapter, I wil turn to analysing Nietzsche's reference to a "physio-psychological discourse" and argue that the notion of drive (*Trieb*) is the closest he comes to Spinoza's mixed discourse.

355 "das was wirklich vor sich geht bei der Regsamkeit unserer menschlichen Affekte sind jene physiologischen Bewegungen, und die Affekte (Kämpfe usw.) sind nur intellektuelle Ausdeutungen, dort wo der Intellekt gar nichts weiß, aber doch alles zu wissen meint".

356 It is also by no means clear that affects, in Nietzsche, stand for transitions to greater or lesser power, as is the case in Spinoza.

357 "Auch an einer Leidenschaft, einem Triebe begreifen wir nur den intellektuellen Vorgang daran – nicht das physiologische, wesentliche, sondern das Bischen Empfindung dabei.".

2. The functions of Nietzsche's physiology

Taking our cue from Nietzsche's notion of body, we can distinguish three distinct, but complementary uses of the perspective of physiology in Nietzsche's work: interpretative, diagnostic and normative. In this section I will focus on the first two, while the third will be explored in the comparative chapter. In the diagnostic function performed by physiology, Nietzsche's focus is on outlining and criticizing a number of deeply rooted errors that cannot be addressed through traditional philosophical discourse. Müller-Lauter has argued that there are three kinds of errors Nietzsche discusses: 1) errors that can be eliminated through philosophical argument, 2) errors that are anchored in us and from which we must become dehabituated and 3) the *Gründirrthümer* that are most deeply rooted in us. An example from this last category is Schopenhauer's notion of immutable character, which Nietzsche opposes on a number of occasions (Müller-Lauter 1999a, p. 35). The radical nature of Nietzsche's project lies in his determination to criticize the most fundamental errors[358], and he believes physiology is in a privileged position to allow us to expose these errors and undermine them. The attempt to tackle our most deeply rooted errors explains the attention Nietzsche pays to the concept of breeding (*Züchtung*), since they are not responsive to traditional philosophical argumentation. This method has been used by the priest in order to make individuals sick (GD Verbesserer 2 6.99), but it is also the method by which it is possible to promote empowerment and life-affirmation (EH GT 4 6.313). Breeding has a moral and social meaning in Nietzsche, not just a biological one: it is used by Nietzsche to refer to the creation of the strong type (Schank 2000, p. 340). "You first need to persuade the *body*"[359] (GD Streifzüge 47 6.149), i.e. shape the drives and the pre-conscious in accordance with the insights of philosophical physiology and with a view to empowerment and affirmation. This informs Nietzsche's project to "create a higher body" and will be analysed in more detail in the section dedicated to his normative thought.

358 These are the errors that are inscribed in the structure of our thought and that, by falsifying reality, have a disempowering effect. We have considered a number of these errors in section I.

359 "man muss den Leib zuerst überreden".

Nietzsche's applications of philosophical physiology are numerous, and they range from inquiries into the nature of our affects to the religious and political convictions we display. It is nevertheless possible to group Nietzsche's physiological reflections around three foci: art, morality and conscious thought. These three attract much of Nietzsche's philosophical interest and best allow us to observe the inner workings of the physiological perspective.

2.a. Physiology of art

In order to understand the relation between the domain of art and Nietzsche's turn to the body we need to pay particular attention to the chronological development of Nietzsche's views on art. Physiological investigations into art constitute only a small part of Nietzsche's engagement with art in his early writings (*GT* and associated *Nachlass*). They return to Nietzsche's writings after 1885, and with particular vigour in 1888, when the physiology of art lies at the centre of Nietzsche's concerns, as a countermovement (*Gegenbewegung)* to nihilism. Art is understood as "essentially an affirmation, benediction, and deification of existence"[360] (14[47] 13.241).

It is important to consider Nietzsche's philosophy of art in his early writings in the context of the problem of the justification of existence[361] (Gerhardt 1984, p. 376). Nietzsche's thesis is that art, and particularly tragedy, tells us something horrible about existence and yet, in doing so, makes it bearable and enlivening (Ridley 2007, p. 9). Nietzsche's explanation for this phenomenon, strongly influenced by Schopenhauer's metaphysics and by Wagner, is that art is the means to affirm existence[362]. Schopenhauer argues that art should be understood as a disinterested, disembodied, purely intellectual contemplation, capable of temporarily negating the will and therefore releasing us from suffering. For him aesthetic pleasure requires the "liberation of cognition from service to the will", the intuition by a "will-less, timeless subject" (WWV I 234) of "things freed from their relation to the

360 "Kunst ist wesentlich Bejahung, Segnung, Vergöttlichung des Daseins…".

361 Why is it not the case that "The very best thing is utterly beyond your reach: not to have been born, not to *be,* to be *nothing.* However, the second best thing for you is: to die soon."? (GT 3 1.35).

362 A detailed investigation of this important theme is beyond the scope of the present thesis.

will" (WWV I 231). Nietzsche rejects this quietive, life-denying interpretation of aesthetic experience, and strives to understand it as an embodied phenomenon: he raises the question of the bodily foundations of artistic processes and experiences (Gerhardt 1984, p. 389)[363]. An illustration is Nietzsche's problematization of the analgesic effect associated by Schopenhauer with art:

> The Will as highest pain generates out of itself rapture, which is identical with pure contemplation and the production of the art-work. What is the physiological process? Painlessness must be generated somewhere --- but how? [364] (7[117] 7.166)

Rather than trace painlessness to a purely intellectual, disembodied contemplation, as Schopenhauer does, Nietzsche is interested in uncovering the physiological processes responsible for this state of painlessness. There seems to be little hesitation on Nietzsche's part in claiming that artistic processes must have a physiological basis: "The artistic process is, physiologically, absolutely conditioned and necessary"[365] (19[79] 7.445) or "To understand *an artistic process without the brain* is a strong antropopathie" [366] (19[79] 7.445). It must be noted, however, that at this stage there is no reason to believe that Nietzsche thought he possessed all the conceptual tools necessary to provide a physiological understanding of art. Nietzsche's attempts should rather be read as an appeal to investigate the hypothesis of physiological explanations of art further.

This imperative provides us with a clue to grasping the context of Nietzsche's subsequent[367] discussions of art, namely an attempt to understand it in a more

363 The question of the corporeal aspect of aesthetic experience had been raised before Nietzsche. We can find previous formulations of this question in, for instance, Edmund Burke (Moore 2002, p. 86). Dufour points to a number of Nietzsche's predecessors (including Kant) who tried to understand music, and especially rhythm, physiologically (Dufour 2001, p. 223).

364 "Der Wille als höchster Schmerz erzeugt aus sich eine Verzückung, die identisch ist mit dem reinen Anschauen und dem Produziren des Kunstwerks. Der physiologische Prozeß ist welcher? Eine Schmerzlosigkeit muß irgendwo erzeugt werden – aber wie?".

365 "Der künstlerische Prozeß ist physiologisch absolut bestimmt und nothwendig".

366 "Einen künstlerischen Vorgang ohne Gehirn zu denken ist eine starke Anthropopathie". The word "antropopathie" refers to the propensity to describe phenomena and their origins (in this case art) without grasping the physiological background.

367 particularly post-*Zarathustra.*

sober, positivist manner (Gerhardt 1984, p. 381)[368]. Nietzsche writes about the "physiology of art" (*Physiologie der Kunst*) as a chapter of his future great work (WA 7 6[26]; 6[26] 12.246 or 7[7] 12.284). The importance of "physiology of art" for Nietzsche must be understood in the context of the change of emphasis in his thinking from the justification of existence to "the vivisection of the will to power" as a counter-movement to nihilism (Lypp 1984, p. 356; Gerhardt 1984, p. 388). Nietzsche wants to understand the artistic phenomenon, with the help of physiology, as the most affirmative manifestation of will to power. The objects that physiology studies are: 1) the artist, and Wagner in particular (FW V 368 3.617f; WA 5 6.21ff; 7[7] 12.284; 4[90] 3.267); 2) artistic creations, e.g. music or Wagner's characters (11[323] 13.136; 15[99] 13[465]); and 3) the impact the work of art has on the spectator (15[12] 13.411; 16[75] 13.510). The physiological effects produced by aesthetic experience include not only deleterious consequences, but also the key state of "rapture".

Arguably the most important notion for Nietzsche's physiology of art is "intoxication" or "rapture" (*Rausch)* and it is central to Heidegger's interpretation of art as a configuration of wills to power. Art is seen as countermovement to nihilism and considered in a physiological key (Heidegger 1961, p. 92).

> One physiological precondition is indispensible for there to be art or any sort of aesthetic action or vision: *intoxication.* Without intoxication to intensify the excitability of the whole machine, there can be no art. There are many types of intoxication conditioned by a variety of factors, but they are all strong enough for the job. […] The essential thing about intoxication is the feeling of fullness and increasing strength.[369] (GD Streifzüge 8 6.116)

368 Nietzsche is now more focused on the values of critical thinking and scientific method (Gerhardt 1984, p. 382).

369 "Damit es Kunst giebt, damit es irgend ein ästhetisches Thun und Schauen giebt, dazu ist eine Physiologische Vorbedingung unumgänglich: der Rausch. Der Rausch muss erst die Erregbarkeit der ganzen Maschine gesteigert haben: eher kommt es zu keiner Kunst. Alle noch so verschieden bedingten Arten des Rausches".

"Rausch" is the basic aesthetic state, while the Apollonian and the Dionysian are presented in *GD* as two kinds of rapture (Heidegger 1961, pp. 97-8)[370]. Rapture is understood by Nietzsche as a "feeling of enhancement and plenitude" and as the precondition of art (Heidegger 1961, p. 98). Enhancement does not refer to an objective increase in force, but to a mood, a feeling of being "caught up in elation", while plenitude suggests a state of excess and openness to the world and of readiness "to tackle anything". They refer to enthusiasm and the appetite for risk and point to a third aspect of rapture: the interpenetration "of all enhancements of every ability to do and see, apprehend and address, communicate and achieve release" (Heidegger 1961, p. 100). For this thesis, the phenomenon of rapture, seen as a fundamental mood, has the advantage that it highlights two important aspects of Nietzsche's turn to the body: 1) we do not have a body, we are not burdened by a body, but we are a body (Heidegger 1961, pp. 98-9); and 2) the essence of rapture is ascent beyond oneself and so rapture, as a state, undermines our understanding of ourselves as a discrete subject (Heidegger 1961, pp. 116, 123). It therefore allows us to think subjectivity within the horizon of radical and immanent openness to the world, beyond traditional categories.

Aesthetic appreciation for Nietzsche always involves more than only aesthetic categories. Early on, metaphysics added a further dimension to Nietzsche's evaluation of art, whereas later physiological considerations play this role (Dufour 2001, p. 233). Nietzsche uses physiology most often in order to diagnose both the art work as well as its effects on the spectator. Art is an expression of either ascending or declining vital forces (Dufour 2001, p. 234) and of the flux of becoming (Pfotenauer 1984, p. 403). As a consequence, it can in certain cases have a physiologically debilitating effect on its audience (15[12] 13.411; 16[75] 13.510.). Nietzsche's point is that this new perspective on art, that of physiology, is part of the project of detecting and overcoming a nihilistic metaphysics and its deleterious effects (Lypp 1984, p. 357), such as the disgust for life (Gerhardt 1984,

370 I use the translation "rapture" for "Rausch", following Krell's translation of Heidegger's commentary on Nietzsche.

p. 389), because it offers a way to understand art and its potentially life-affirming effects without appealing to pure, disembodied contemplation. Nietzsche's claim is that even if the objects of artistic depictions are ugly (*häßlich*), depicting them produces pleasure (*Lust*) (14[47] 13.241)[371] and this pleasure is best understood physiologically. It follows that uncovering the hidden physiological effects of decadent art can enable the creation of life-intensifying art (14[23], 13.228; cf. Dufour, 2001, p. 234)[372]. Aesthetic experience also serves as a stimulus to activity, to procreation (GD Streifzüge 22 6.126), and must not be understood, together with Kant and Schopenhauer, as a type of passivity (Ridley 2007, pp. 120-1).

2.b. Physiology of morality

One of the key tenets of Nietzsche's analysis of morality throughout his works is the denial of its supposedly supernatural origin[373]. Therefore, the various types of morality (most famously master and slave moralities) that Nietzsche subjects to philosophical scrutiny have a natural foundation and a history, and can therefore be investigated using a number of methods, which include, among others, genealogy, psychology, sociology and, of course, physiology. The goal of this section is not to offer an account of Nietzsche's approach to morality, an enormous task in itself, but to focus on how the analysis of morality is conducted physiologically[374]. We must start by emphasizing that the science of morality, as Nietzsche sees it, is still in its infancy, and therefore still naïve (JGB 186 5.105ff). With regard to physiology, this state of affairs has two causes. The first cause is the ignorance of physiology characteristic of philosophers and investigators of morality. The second cause is the difficulty of the subject matter itself. The

371 Nietzsche's views on ugliness are of course more complex. In GD Streifzüge 20 6.124, for instance, what is "ugly" is disempowering, it "weakens and depresses people" (*Physiologisch nachgerechnet, schwächt und betrübt alles Hässliche den Menschen*).

372 "Das Wesentliche an dieser Conception ist der Begriff der Kunst im Verhältniß zum Leben: sie wird, ebenso psychologisch als physiologisch, als das große Stimulansaufgefaßt, als das, was ewig zum Leben, zum ewigen Leben drängt…".

373 JGB 3 5.17 puts the matter bluntly: behind our conscious valuations there are "physiologische Forderungen zur Erhaltung einer bestimmten Art von Leben". The task is to investigate value naturalsitically.

374 An explicitly physiological analysis of moraltiy is developed first in the *Nachlass* of 1880 (3[10] 9.50) and in *M* (1881), although it is anticipated in *MA*.

task of the philosopher is to interpret moral valuations or judgements as signs, symbols or causes (see GM Vorrede 6 5.253 and earlier analyses in this chapter) of physiological processes:

> My attempt, to understand moral judgments as symptoms and sign-languages, in which processes of physiological thriving or turning out badly, and equally awareness of the conditions for preservation and growth, are betrayed.[375] (2[165] 12.149)

> The moral valuation is an interpretation, a way to interpret. The interpretation itself is a symptom of certain physiological states, as well as of a certain spiritual level of dominating judgments. Who interprets? – Our affects[376] (2[190] 12.161)

This already complicated task is rendered even more difficult by the fact that morality covers up, misinterprets physiological situations. Using the illusions of metaphysical concepts, morality has falsified nature and misunderstood the body:

> The unconscious disguise of physiological needs under the cloaks of the objective, ideal, purely spiritual goes frighteningly far – and I have asked myself often enough whether, on a great scale, philosophy has been no more than an interpretation of the body and a *misunderstanding of the body.*[377] (FW Vorrede 2 3.348)

Nietzsche is very clear about his desire to shift the focus of the research into morality from metaphysical considerations to a naturalised, philosophical inquiry. This shift is emphasized by Nietzsche's physiological analysis not only of morality

375 "Mein Versuch, die moralischen Urtheile als Symptome und Zeichensprachen zu verstehen, in denen sich Vorgänge des physiologischen Gedeihens oder Mißrathens, ebenso das Bewußtsein von Erhaltungs- und Wachsthumsbedingungen verrathen".

376 "das moralische Werthschätzen ist eine Auslegung, eine Art zu interpretiren. Die Auslegung selbst ist ein Symptom bestimmter physiologischer Zustände, ebenso eines bestimmten geistigen Niveaus von herrschenden Urtheilen. Wer legt aus? – Unsere Affekte".

377 "Die unbewusste Verkleidung physiologischer Bedürfnisse unter die Mäntel des Objektiven, Ideellen, Rein-Geistigen geht bis zum Erschrecken weit, – und oft genug habe ich mich gefragt, ob nicht, im Grossen gerechnet, Philosophie bisher überhaupt nur eine Auslegung des Leibes und ein Missverständniss des Leibes gewesen ist".

as a whole, but of notions that are part of the conceptual sphere of morality, for instance virtue (24[31] 10.662), the ascetic ideal (8[3] 12.330), egoism (11[8] 9.443) or criminality (M 202 3.176).

The descriptive task of physiology considered above is complemented by the diagnostic function Nietzsche employs it for. The attempt to understand "the human being under the skin"[378] (FW 59 3.423) is aimed not only at dispelling moral or metaphysical illusion, but also at uncovering the physiological states that underlie various practices and beliefs. Nietzsche's claim is that specific values stand in complex relations to specific forms of life and that a physiological diagnosis is needed in order to diagnose the value of these values. Nietzsche's interest lies in a physiological reading of morality and so his goal is not to do away with any and all moral notions and actions (M 103 3.91f). His aim is rather to think differently about morality and undermine the tyrannical tendency of a certain kind of morality, which Nietzsche criticizes for its one-sidedness, the exclusion of the multiplicity of possible moral perspectives, and its damaging effects on human existence (van Tongeren 1984, p. 71; van Tongeren 2006, pp. 393-5). This is a step towards the future re-evaluation of these beliefs, as will be discussed in the normative section, but this time from the point of view of physiology, not theology or morality (9[165] 12.433). I now turn to the last field of physiological inquiry to be considered here, that of conscious thought.

2.c. Conscious thought

In his book on Nietzsche, Klossowski has argued that Nietzsche describes a struggle between the body, understood as the place of active forces, or anatomically as the nervous system, and the brain, the place of thinking and consciousness. Klossowski's argument is that Nietzsche is highly critical of the role taken on by the brain, and consciousness, considering it the most fragile organ in the body and yet the one that has come to dominate the body and select the forces and impulses that help preserve it (Klossowski 1997, pp. 22-27). Klossowski argues that Nietzsche's philosophy is aimed at the liberation of forces and the recreation of the self (Klossowski 1997, p. 32). Conscious thought is a late development

378 "Der Mensch unter der Haut".

of human nature and its main function has been to generate errors that have had the advantage of proving to be useful for the preservation of (social) life. The human, "the most endangered animal, *needed* help and protection, needed his equals"[379] in order to survive, and so "*consciousness in general has developed only under the pressure of the need to communicate*"[380]. Consciousness, the "*ability to communicate"*[381] and connect one person with another, is related to the "*need to communicate*"[382] (FW 354 3.590f; see also JGB 268 5.221f). The errors produced by conscious thought stem from a deeply rooted difficulty: the problem of using language developed by consciousness in order to understand what is outside consciousness is that the act of conscious thinking "corresponds to a passivity" which is "grounded in *the fixity* of *the signs of language"* (Klossowski 1997, p. 43). Nietzsche employs physiology in order to expose the fixity inherent in language and recover within philosophical discourse the dynamism that characterizes becoming.

The relation between physiology and conscious thought[383] is twofold: on the one hand conscious thinking defines our understanding of physiology (Gerhardt 2006, p. 278) and, on the other hand, our physiological organisation grounds and informs the manner of our thinking, since reason inheres in the body (Gerhardt 2006, pp. 274-5). Before these two aspects can be elucidated, it is important to clarify what Nietzsche means by conscious thought.

Conscious thought has developed the illusions of substance, autonomy, identity and free will and it has generated a simplified outlook on reality. Our conscious perspective on the world has been geared towards finding the most practical course of action, rather than towards an understanding of nature in its full richness

379 "er brauchte, als das gefährdetste Thier, Hülfe, Schutz, er brauchte Seines-Gleichen".
380 "Bewusstsein überhaupt sich nur unter dem Druck des Mittheilungs-Bedürfnisses entwickelt hat".
381 "Mittheilungs-Fähigkeit".
382 "Mittheilungs-Bedürftigkeit".
383 The concern with a physiological interpretation of conscious thought starts with the first uses of the word 'physiologie' by Nietzsche (19[107] 7.454).

(Aydin 2003, p. 103)[384]. Consciousness is an organ of the body[385], its "work- and plaything" (*Werk- und Spielzeug*; Z I Verächtern 4.39) and has been developed in order to address the needs of the body in its social dimension: the importance of communication for survival in social groups. The simplified, abstract perspective we have developed is the result of evolution that has selected the individual best suited for survival, rather than knowledge. We can identify a disjunction here between the usefulness of a perspective and its truth: the survival of a feature of conscious thought does not entail that that feature gives us adequate understanding of reality. Given this diagnosis of our thinking, it follows that Nietzsche is highly sceptical about our ability to understand physiology outside the narrow interests of our survival.

The second aspect of this relation is the influence of our body on our thinking. Given that the subject is a multiplicity of drives and affects (40[21] 11.638), the intellect is the object of the struggle between the drives:

> As cells stand next to cells physiologically, so do drives next to drives. The most general image of our being is *a socialisation of drives*, with continual rivalry and particular alliances among them. The intellect object of competition. [386](7[94] 10.274)

If we are to strive for self-knowledge, we must, according to Nietzsche, take the body as our guide and philosophize *am Leitfaden des Leibes* (36[35] 11.565; 37[4] 11.578). This translates into the imperative to place our conscious thought in its physiological context as an organ or a function of the organism, rather than viewing it as an autonomous self-determining entity.

The same physiological reading is applied by Nietzsche to phenomena associated

384 "Die Logik unseres bewußten Denkens ist nur eine grobe und erleichterte Form jenes Denkens, welches unser Organismus, ja die einzelnen Organe desselben, nöthig hat." (34[124] 11.462).

385 Reason and understanding are not locally something in the body, but they express the body's power to act (Gerhardt 2006, p. 288).

386 "Wie Zelle neben Zelle physiologisch steht, so Trieb neben Trieb. Das allgemeinste Bild unseres Wesens ist eine Vergesellschaftung von Trieben, mit fortwährender Rivalität und Einzelbündnissen unter einander. Der Intellekt Objekt des Wettbewerbes.".

with thinking: memory (19[179] 7.475; 1[115] 9.30), consciousness (FW 354 3.592), scepticism (34[67] 11.440), language (34[124] 11.462) and philosophy (GD Sokrates 2 6.67).

Nietzsche's critique of reason echoes an important tradition in German philosophy, inaugurated by Kant, who engaged in the project of a self-critique of reason, and Schopenhauer, who emphasized the limits of reason from the point of view of his metaphysics of will. For Schopenhauer, all cognition is representation, which means it is subject to the object / subject distinction (WWV I 3). Because representation is based on this duality, it misses the meaning of the world, which for Schopenhauer is nothing but its essence, i.e. the will (WWV I, 118). Next to this difference on the issue of metaphysics, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer diverge because Schopenhauer does not accept an evolutionary explanation[387] for why representation has come to have a certain structure. The nature of representation is fixed, as the expression of the will. The similarities between the two, however, become more pronounced when we look at Schopenhauer's views on reason. These should be regarded in light of the distinction Schopenhauer makes between intuitive and non-intuitive or abstract knowledge[388] (WWV I 7). Intuitive knowledge, the domain of the understanding, gives certain, immediate and clear knowledge of things themselves (*die Sache selbst;* WWV I 41-2). Understanding, whether in animals or in humans, is nothing other than cognition of causality (WWV I 24)[389]. Reason is non-intuitive knowledge, and only mirrors what is given in intuition (WWV I 43). Its function is to create concepts (WWV I 46) which are abstract. Schopenhauer writes that it is with reason that doubt and error came into the world, while in the practical sphere it has generated care and remorse (WWV I 42). The knowledge reason can give is only abstract and discursive, can never be fully evident and has instrumental value. This becomes apparent in the products of reason: language (whose sole purpose is communication), science and planned action (WWV I 47). It is possible to identify here a number of themes that

387 Schopenhauer knew only the Lamarckian view of evolution, which he calls "an error of genius" (WN 44).

388 "Der Hauptunterschied zwischen allen unsern Vorstellungen ist der des Intuitiven und Abstrakten".

389 Nietzsche does not share this high praise of intuitive knolwedge.

re-surface in Nietzsche: 1) the abstract or impoverished nature of the knowledge accessible through reason, 2) a critique of language and conceptual thinking as aimed solely at communication, not at uncovering truth, 3) the limited nature of scientific knowledge, and 4) the association between rational thought and the feelings of care and remorse. This discussion of Nietzsche's critique of reason and of conscious thought serves as the platform for analysing, in chapter III, the contrast between Nietzsche's view and Spinoza's confidence in the power of reason to provide adequate knowledge and promote the ethical goal of empowerment.

III. Philosophical Physiology and Science

We are now in a position to address the question of the status of science in Nietzsche's turn to physiology. Does Nietzsche's turn to the body imply abandoning philosophy for physiology understood as a natural science? What use are descriptions of bodily processes for tackling the task of creating a new order of value and meaning that would overcome nihilism? My thesis is that Nietzsche's physiology must be understood as a philosophical physiology and that the accusation that he abandons philosophy for natural science through his use of physiology does not hold. I will use as my starting point Heidegger's discussion of 'biologism' and his claim that Nietzsche grounds his insights into life metaphysically, not biologically. I will argue that we do not have to understand Nietzsche's philosophy as metaphysics in order to extricate him from the charge of biologism. What we need is to understand well the nature of philosophical physiology and its differences to natural science. In order to do this we need to consider Nietzsche's critique of science, and ask why and how philosophical physiology is different.

What do "nervous states", "processes in the nerve cells" or "gastric juices" tell us about values and their creation (Heidegger 1961, pp. 92-3)? How can descriptions of physiological processes help us evaluate values and formulate new values that could overcome nihilism? This issue was tackled by Heidegger in the context of his critique of a number of readings that associated Nietzsche, more or less

crudely, with the biologism expounded by National Socialism (Bernasconi 2012, p. 159). We can distinguish between two formulations of biologism in Heidegger's work on Nietzsche. The first one, from 1939, defines biologism as the transfer of prevailing views about living beings from biology to other realms, such as art, history or philosophy (Bernasconi 2012, p. 170). Later on, Heidegger changes his formulation of biologism to the claim that Nietzsche would be "guilty of biologism if he had adopted certain concepts and key propositions from biology without realizing that they already implied certain metaphysical decisions (Bernasconi 2012, p. 170). In other words Nietzsche can be accused of biologism if he misunderstood the metaphysical ground that circumscribes the field of possible application of biological notions (Heidegger pp. 524-5). Heidegger's defence of Nietzsche against the accusation of biologism depends on the reference to metaphysics (Bernasconi 2012, p. 170). Heidegger's argument is that, while apparent biologism is impossible to ignore in Nietzsche's work, focusing on it can be an obstacle in grasping Nietzsche's thinking and that Nietzsche uses biological language in order to "make his account of the aesthetic state accessible to his contemporaries" (Bernasconi 2012, p. 171). According to Heidegger, Nietzsche presents his metaphysics as a biological interpretation of being (*Leben*=being; cf. Heidegger 1961, p. 518). Heidegger argues that it is true that Nietzsche couches his project of the re-evaluation of all values in biological terms, but in reality he grounds his insights into life metaphysically, not biologically. Nietzsche moves in the biological domain only superficially, while reaching the metaphysical level in his philosophical thought (Heidegger 1961, p. 599). The goal of this section is not to discuss the details of Heidegger's defence of Nietzsche against biologism through an appeal to metaphysics, but to argue that we need not consider the role of metaphysics in Nietzsche's philosophy in order to extricate him from this accusation[390]. The alternative suggested here is that it is possible to undermine the

390 Abel has argued that Nietzsche's philosophy is not a form of biologism because 1) the path to the body is not through only one discipline, but rather through reflection on consciousness and opening it up to its pre-cognitive conditions; 2) philosophy, Nietzsche's included, asks how we should think about the fact that relations between the body and consciousness are reciprocal: philosophy does not perform a scientific inquiry of these relations, but asks about its presuppositions; and 3) Nietzsche's analysis of *Leiblichkeit* is phenomenological. That means it does not look for the building blocks of the body but for an interpretation of it as a collection of multifarious, intelligent processes (Abel 2009, min. 47-53). I agree with and build on these claims, but

accusation of biologism through a careful investigation of the differences between Nietzsche's philosophical physiology and natural science, without an appeal to any potential metaphysical foundation.

1. Nietzsche's Critique of Science

Nietzsche dismisses any claims to knowledge of an "unconditioned truth" (*unbedingten Wahrheit*) (MA 630 2.356). On Nietzsche's reading the success that natural science has is not the result of uncovering the hidden fabric of reality, but of its usefulness. Science is an expression of human needs and interests, and does not have a metaphysical mandate (Babich 1994, p. 48). If we are trying to understand the nature of science we must look at its ground and assumptions, rather than at science's claims about reality. The insight into the antropomorphization fundamental to scientific inquiry is something that Nietzsche takes from Schopenhauer, but that he goes beyond (Babich 1994, p. 58). It is important to note that Schopenhauer's critique of science is a consequence of what he claimed was a lack of metaphysical knowledge on the part of the researchers. They did not understand that natural phenomena could not be fully explained by scientific[391] means, but only by an appeal to the will. Nietzsche's critique of science is based on the claim that there is too much metaphysics, and implicitly morality (JGB 22 5.37), in scientific inquiry, rather than too little. Nietzsche is criticial of sciences, and of life sciences in particular, because he believes they are grounded in substance metaphysics and so fail to do justice to the dynamic character of reality (GM II 12 5.315f).

An important reason for Nietzsche's attraction to science is his attempt to look for an alternative to the metaphysical manner of thinking that uses the notions of "final causes", "freedom of the will" and "causa sui" (JGB 21 5.35f). This explains his interest in the scientific concept of mechanism. Mechanism is the attempt to explain all phenomena using quantitative realities: mass and force. The

my approach is to start from Nietzsche's critique of science and show how it cannot live up to the demands of philosophical activity.

391 Science can describe regularities, but not explain why cause and effect relations, for instance, occur as they do. In order to do that we need to understand the notion of natural force, and, for Schopenhauer, a force is the expression of the will in nature (WWV I 96).

mechanistic interpretation of reality "views organization as the result of accidental concatenations of processes obeying physical laws" (Lenoir 1982, p. 7). It is these laws that determine the way mass behaves under the action of natural forces.

Mechanism can be useful as a method, a kind of ideal that allows us to make the world calculable (43[2] 11.701) and, by focusing on efficient causation, avoids the illusions of free will and finalism. This however is also the source of its weakness. Mechanism permits "counting, calculating, weighing, seeing, grasping"[392] (FW 373 3.625), but in doing so it anthropomorphizes[393] the world. Scientists err when they fail to see that the concepts they operate with (cause and effect, atoms, numbers, laws) are only conventional fictions. Nietzsche argues that mechanism masks the fundamental concept of his power ontology, namely activity (this error is especially harmful in the case of physiology and biology GM II.12 5.315f). Mechanism presents a senseless picture of events, in which there is no meaning (FW 373 3.626). According to mechanism there are no strong and weak wills, but only accidents. This is the "English-mechanistic world-stupidification"[394] Nietzsche argues against (JGB 252 5.195).

Nietzsche's claim is that mechanism does not allow us to see the world "from inside" (*von innen;* cf. Mittasch 1952, p. 86), in terms of endogenous activity, and that, in order to do this, we need to use the hypothesis of the "will to power" (*Wille zur Macht*). This provides us with the means to "render the so-called mechanical (and thus material) world comprehensible"[395] (JGB 36 5.54). Nietzsche seeks to offer an understanding of phenomena, of change and motion, that does not rely on exogenous factors, as does mechanism, but that interprets the world starting from an endogenous source of activity. Nietzsche interprets "wills to power" as

392 "Zählen, Rechnen, Wägen, Sehn und Greifen".

393 Science, due to the "democratic instincts of the modern soul" (*demokratischen Instinkten der modernen Seele*) upholds the tenet of "conformity of nature to law" (*Gesetzmässigkeit der Natur*) and claims that "nature is no different and no better off than we are" (*die Natur hat es darin nicht anders und nicht besser als wir*). These "bad tricks of interpretation" (*schlechte Interpretations-Künste den Finger*) are a "naïve humanitarian correction and a distortion of meaning" (*eine naiv-humanitäre Zurechtmachung und Sinnverdrehung*) used in the scientific understanding of nature. (JGB 22 5.37).

394 "englisch-mechanistischen Welt-Vertölpelung".

395 "die sogenannte mechanistische (oder 'materielle') Welt zu verstehen".

dynamic quanta, whose essence is nothing but their effect (*Wirkung*), and which can be understood only in the context of relations to other force-centers or "wills to power". They are fundamentally a will to overpowering (*Vergewaltigung*; cf. Müller-Lauter 1999b, p. 147). The opposition Nietzsche sets up is between an interpretation of nature using the concept of endogenous activity, and a relational account of power (between force-centers) and the mechanistic "explanation" grounded in substance metaphysics and the belief in causality. To sum up, mechanism, according, to Nietzsche, is based on an illusion because it is based on two convictions: that all action is motion (while Nietzsche claims activity consists in relation of commanding and obeying of "wills to power") and that whenever there is motion, there is something that moves (the illusion of substance as the subject of change) (Müller-Lauter 1999b, p. 147)

Nietzsche's critique of the scientific perspective, more specifically mechanism, is complemented by his critique of a number of key scientific notions of his time: causal determinism, atomism and progress.

Causal determinism

Together with the rejection of the doctrine of free will, Nietzsche accepts the "strict necessity of human actions"[396] (VM 33 2.395) and of the world (Müller-Lauter 1999b, p. 32). This, however, should not be confused with the hypothesis of causal determinism governing the world. Causal determinism implies the belief in an identifiable duality in nature, that between cause and effect, as well as the belief in a law governing reality. Nietzsche rejects both these assumptions, while exposing the roots of our belief in them. In FW 112 3.472f he argues that the duality of cause and effect is an arbitrary division that we project onto the world when we attempt to humanize it. Reality is a continuum and, when we pick out cause and effect, we isolate a number of processes out of the infinite number of processes that elude us. We manage to isolate events by projecting onto reality our picture of the world, made up of things that do not really exist: lines, surfaces, bodies, atoms etc. In other words, we believe in causality, but have not proven it (26[12] 11.152f). We look for causes and imagine them after the event, rather

396 "die strenge Nothwendigkeit der menschlichen Handlungen".

than find them there (Müller-Lauter 1999b, p. 64). For Nietzsche, causality is a description of the world rather than an explanation, and our concepts of cause and effect are a poor, simplifying description of reality[397]. Nietzsche dismisses the hypothesis that things in nature act according to a law not only because we cannot properly speak of "things", but also because it is unwarranted to believe that events happen regularly by virtue of some rule that they obey (14[79] 13.257). Each thing discharges the entire force that it is capable of at every moment. We can properly understand relations only if we conceive them as relations of tension between dynamic quanta, not between entities governed by laws of nature (Müller-Lauter, 1999, p. 147).

Nietzsche traces our belief in causality back to our belief in free will as cause (an older illusion, cf. MA 18 2.39f). In FW 127 3.482 Nietzsche argues that humans assume there are causes and effects because every person "is convinced that it is *he* who is striking and that he did the striking because he *wanted* to strike"[398]. It is the feeling of will that misleads humans into believing that causality exists and that they understand it[399]. This feeling was first manifested in the belief in forces of nature that work by magic, but has later been invested in the belief in causes and effects. We confuse the feeling of power we have when we do something with knowledge of a force that causes the event (Müller-Lauter 1999b, p. 64).

397 Müller-Lauter traces this critique of causality to Schopenhauer, who argued that causality cannot be explained as things simply acting on things, but rather as states of affairs following necessarily from other states of affairs (Müller-Lauter 1999b, p. 114). This account can be corrected in two ways: 1) Schopenhauer does not say that causality cannot be properly understood as things acting on things, but, more strongly, that it is "completely false" to believe that things act on things (FR 35): the connection between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche is closer than Müller-Lauter seems to suggest; and 2) Schopenhauer writes that we pick out certain changes or alterations (usually the final alteration, which we see as decisive, we call cause) and label them cause and effect, whereas we should see that all changes that have preceded an event form its necessary conditions. The chain of causality is without beginning (FR 34-5). We can see that Schopenhauer, just like Nietzsche, emphasizes the conventional and simplifying way in which we use the concepts of cause and effect.

398 "Er ist überzeugt [..] er sei es, der da schlage, und er habe geschlagen, weil er schlagen wollte.".

399 Here Nietzsche is in direct contradiction to Schopenhauer, who writes that "motivation is causality seen from within" and therefore rendered accessible to human understanding (FR 145). The idea that the way our will operates is the model on which we can understand causality in nature is considered by Schopenhauer "the cornerstone of my whole Metaphysics" (FR 145).

Atomism

We have already considered in section I Nietzsche's critique of substance and how he argues that the belief in immutable entities originates in the idea that there is a doer behind the deed, a subject that may or may not act. We project this simplifying view onto our perception of the world and believe that there are isolated and indivisible agents and that there are facts in nature that are identical. In the realm of science the belief in identical facts leads to atomism (atoms are things that do not exist; cf. FW 112 3.472) and to the belief in "a graduated order of classes of facts which corresponds to a graduated world order"[400] (WS 11A 2.547). We think that reality is composed out of atoms, fundamental and indivisible building blocks of reality, because we do not understand that all our doing and knowing is a "continuous, homogenous, undivided, indivisible flowing" (WS 11 2.547). The same view is present much later in GD Vernunft 5 6.78 where Nietzsche presents the atom as the result of the seduction of the Eleatic concept of being, or in GD Irrthümer 3 6.91 where the atom is described as the reflex of the belief in the I as cause, and thus as only an illusion. Every action or event is determined by a constellation of factors and we fail to grasp the context they are in (Müller-Lauter 1999b, pp. 49-50). In order to do justice to the dynamic character of reality we need to think beyond the prejudices of atoms as original unities and of substance ontology and conceive the fabric of reality as relations between wills to power that command and obey and that are in constant flux. In JGB 12 5.26 Nietzsche is optimistic about the current state of science and argues that Boscovich and others have shown the illusory nature of materialistic atomism. Nevertheless, the need for atomism persists[401] and we must detect its influence, particularly in the case of the Christian belief in the atomism of the soul.

In the domain of the life sciences, Nietzsche's argument against the existence of isolated classes of facts and a graduated world-order must be understood in the

400 "eine abgestufte Ordnung von Gattungen der Facten [...], welcher eine abgestufte Werthordnung entspreche".

401 Nietzsche associates it with a "metaphysical need" (*metaphysischen Bedürfnisse*; cf. JGB 12 5.26, possibly a reference to Schopenhauer's section on *Ueber das metaphysische Bedürfniß des Menschen* in WWV II).

context of one of the most important debates of his time, namely the debate on the problem of the transmutation of species. By the second half of the 19th Century it was generally accepted that species can evolve into new species. One of the bones of contention was whether all animals had one common ancestor, as Darwin argued, or whether species evolved from a number of original archetypes, which would imply that every class or family would have its own primordial ancestor (an opinion held by von Baer, for instance; cf. Lenoir 1982, pp. 253-4). The latter position was starting to lose ground, but the hypothesis of a common ancestor had its own share of difficulties. If there is no essential distinction between species based on their origin, then how do we classify and delineate different species? As the discovery of fossils, together with geographical discoveries, created a more nuanced understanding of biology, scientists started arguing that the distinctions we make can be artificial and that it is much more useful to speak of populations sharing similar traits, rather than species sharing the same essence (Bowler 1989, pp. 172, 212). Nietzsche's anti-essentialist (i.e. anti-atomistic) arguments fall in line with this new way of conceiving distinctions in the field of biology. A second problem, and a more difficult one to solve, was how to explain the evolution of species and the preservation of new traits if breeding inevitably leads to the blending of traits[402]. Galton argued that breeding, in the long run, would lead to the levelling of the population and the elimination of any outstanding features of organisms. Only the environment, given its constant effects, could shape a population in one direction or another (Bowler 1989, pp. 209-11, 254). Nietzsche rejects this biological explanation, by arguing that milieu-theory does not fully explain either degeneration or the appearance of the strong type. This raises two questions that must be addressed in the section on Nietzsche's normative thought. First, we must ask how Nietzsche's account of empowerment is formulated in terms of an endogenous source of activity. Second, we must ask what, if any, are the empowering effects of the strong individual on other human beings.

402 Nobody at this time understood genetics and so inheritance of traits was thought to occur through the mixing of the parents' traits.

Teleology and progress

In section I we considered Nietzsche's critique of finalism and, in this section, I have argued that Nietzsche's positive appraisals of mechanism must be read in the context of his attempt to formulate a non-teleological account of becoming. In the present context, we must ask what the teleological principles Nietzsche identifies and criticizes in science are. The answer to this question is twofold: with regard to individual forms of life, the drive for self-preservation is a mistaken assumption, while with regard to the phenomenon of life as a whole, it is wrong to confuse the phenomenon of evolution or transmutation of species with progress or improvement. In conjunction with his reading of the English biologist William Rolph[403] Nietzsche develops an understanding of life based on the principle that life is fundamentally growth: the "really fundamental instinct of life aims at the expansion of power"[404] (FW 349 3.585). The striving for self-preservation is only a particular case of the drive for expansion, for more power, and it appears only in conditions of crisis, hunger or distress (FW 349 3.585; GD Streifzüge 14 6.120). This must be understood as Nietzsche's reaction not only to 19th Century biology, but also to his understanding of Spinoza's conatus and Schopenhauer's will to life (Moore 2002, p. 46). The second teleological principle Nietzsche attacks is the belief of biologists in the 19th Century in a gradual and seemingly inevitable advance towards moral, social and intellectual improvement (Moore 2002, p. 29). The idea that evolution is in fact a manifestation of the Law of Progress could be found among Germans scientists, but also in the work of Herbert Spencer, whom Nietzsche explicitly criticizes (11[98] 9.476; FW 373 3.625). Nietzsche reads this evolutionary optimism as the symptom of the still persisting belief in divine providence and perfection (2[131] 12.130; 9[163] 12.431; 10[7] 12.457). Nietzsche's critique of teleology in its scientific expressions must be understood as a particular case of his objections against the idea of purposiveness: it presupposes a preexisting unity that is thought to pre-determine the paths of development organisms can take, and so robs us of the capacity to understand the complex

403 Nietzsche acquired his book *Biological Problems* in 1884 (Moore 2002, p. 47).

404 "des eigentlichen Lebens-Grundtriebes, der auf Machterweiterung hinausgeht"-

power to act of each body. This is another instance of how change and becoming are derived from and predicated on being.

After this excursus into the nature of Nietzsche's reflections on the limits and errors of science, we must return to the guiding question of this section and ask where Nietzsche's physiology fits in the context of the distinction between philosophy and natural science. My thesis is that we must understand Nietzsche's physiology as a philosophical physiology for two reasons. First, physiology allows Nietzsche to describe and diagnose moral and metaphysical life-denying illusions without falling back into the same anthropomorphic perspective. In other words, philosophical physiology serves the function of liberating philosophical discourse from metaphysical errors by formulating a perspective that strives to describe becoming without placing it in a subordinate role to being. Physiology is able to offers this perspective because it employs a philosophical vocabulary focused on processes, activity, endogenous power, struggle, originary multiplicity and, fundamentally for Nietzsche, will to power. Second, this diagnostic function of physiology is complemented by its part in what Nietzsche describes as the distinctive role played by the philosopher as legislator: the creation or begetting of new, life-promoting, values. Philosophical physiology, as will be discussed next and in the section on Nietzsche's normative thought, enables the philosopher to adopt an immanent, normative standpoint that is empowering and serves the purpose of affirming and enhancing life. The creation of life-enhancing values can only be accomplished if we think "under the guidance of the body"[405] (26[432] 11,266; 2[91] 12.106) and strive to find the best way to open up, rather than undermine, the endogenous power to act characteristic of the body.

2. The difference between philosophical and scientific physiology

> Compared to a genius, which is to say: compared to a being that either *begets* or *gives birth* (taking both words in their widest scope), the scholar, the average man of science, is somewhat like an old maid. Like her, he has

405 "am Leitfaden des Leibes".

> no expertise in the two most valuable acts performed by humanity.[406] (JGB 206 5.133)

In order to better understand this text, we must ask what Nietzsche means by "genius" and its ability to "beget" and "give birth", what the "average man of science" is and why he lacks the abilities of the genius, and how this inability of the "man of science" is expressed in science.

The concept of "genius" must be understood in connection with the concept of "*true philosophers*" [407] Nietzsche writes about in JGB 211 5.144f. They are characterised as "*commanders and legislators*" [408], in other words their activity is to create values, and say "that is how it *ought* to be"[409]. The creative activity, which consists in begetting values, has as its precondition the ability to "run though the range of human values and value feelings and *be able* to gaze with many eyes and consciences from the heights into every distance"[410] (JGB 211 5.144). The creative capacity of the genius is correlated with a number of other intrinsic qualities consistently affirmed of genius throughout Nietzsche's writings: 1) the genius is a squanderer of surplus energy 2) has the strength of will to "coordinate, bind and channel its energy in creative acts" and 3) embodies and "co-ordinates a maximal range of perspectives, conflicting value-schemes and impulses" (Siemens 2002, pp. 86-7).

b) The richness, strength and creativity of the philosopher as legislator is contrasted to the "average" character of the man of science. The latter is characterised by a number of "virtues" (*Tugenden*) characteristic of the "ignoble type"[411]. This type:

406 "Im Verhältnisse zu einem Genie, das heisst zu einem Wesen, welches entweder zeugt oder gebiert, beide Worte in ihrem höchsten Umfange genommen –, hat der Gelehrte, der wissenschaftliche Durchschnittsmensch immer etwas von der alten Jungfer: denn er versteht sich gleich dieser nicht auf die zwei werthvollsten Verrichtungen des Menschen.".

407 "eigentlichen Philosophen".

408 "Befehlende und Gesetzgeber".

409 "so soll es sein!".

410 "um den Umkreis menschlicher Werthe und Werth-Gefühle zu durchlaufen und mit vielerlei Augen und Gewissen, von der Höhe in jede Ferne".

411 "eine unvornehme Art Mensch". "das Problem der Wissenschaft kann nicht auf dem Boden der Wissenschaft erkannt werden" (GT Versuch 2 1.13). Science and the scientific man must be studied as symptoms of certain type of life, in this case the ignoble type.

1) is not dominant or authoritative, 2) is "industrious and moderate in his abilities and needs" 3) is "full of petty jealousies"[412]; and 4) most dangerously, "instinctively works towards the annihilation of the exceptional man"[413] (JGB 206 5.133f). The activity of annihilation is expressed in what Nietzsche calls the "inappropriate and harmful shift in the rank order […] between science and philosophy"[414]. This reversal consists in the "scientific man's declaration of independence, his emancipation from philosophy"[415] and in his desire to "play at being 'master' […] play at being *philosopher*"[416] (JGB 204 5.129f).

c) The problems with this reveearsal are that the man of science lacks the creative power of the genius, cannot create values and be "master", and that he inhibits the power of the philosopher to affirm itself and legislate:

> […] it is precisely the best science that will best know how to keep us in this *simplified*, utterly artificial, well-invented, well-falsified world[417] (JGB 24 5.41f).

The re-evaluation of values is not the responsibility of the man of science, who lacks the necessary qualities for this task. The creation of values is the province of the philosopher who, from the naturalisting standpoint of immanence – of which philosophical physiology is an integral part – can strive to formulate new, life-affirming perspectives[418]. A well-informed pursuit of science must depend on the commitment to immanence and naturalism that philosophical physiology can provide.

Philosophical physiology is a perspective and offers an interpretation, not an explanation as scientific physiology claims to do. In order to further emphasize

412 "reich am kleinen Neide".
413 "an der Vernichtung des ungewöhnlichen Menschen instinktiv arbeitet".
414 "einer ungebührlichen und schädlichen Rangverschiebung [...] zwischen Wissenschaft und Philosophie".
415 "Die Unabhängigkeits-Erklärung des wissenschaftlichen Menschen, seine Emancipation von der Philosophie".
416 "den 'Herrn' [...] den Philosophen zu spielen".
417 "[…] die beste Wissenschaft uns am besten in dieser vereinfachten, durch und durch künstlichen, zurecht gedichteten, zurecht gefälschten Welt festhalten will".
418 More on this task in chapter III.

and elaborate on the the role of philosophical physiology as one among many (albeit privileged) philosophical perspectives, it is useful to argue against the charge that Nietzsche is a reductionist and that he collapses aesthetic, moral or political problems into physiological questions.

What is reductionism?

Reductionism is the explanation of one theory or discipline (A) in terms of another (B) (Nagel 1979, p. 338; Wilson and Lumsden 1991, p. 404). The absorption or reduction of one theory into another has the following prerequisites: 1) the laws, axioms, principles, etc. of both disciplines must be explicitly formulated (ideal requirement) (Nagel 1979, p. 345); 2) the terms in discipline A must be connected to and derived from terms in discipline B (Nagel 1979, p. 353)[419]. The connections between the terms of the two disciplines can be analytical, conventional or synthetical: the links are material and independent observations are required in order to establish them (Nagel 1979, pp. 354-5). The question of reductionism is not whether a set of properties or facts about the object of study can be deduced from another set of properties or facts, because properties and facts about things are not directly observable. It should rather be framed as the question of whether a set of statements in one discipline can be deduced from a set of statements in a different discipline (Nagel 1979, p. 364). Nagel argues that the motivation behind the operation of reductionism should be the answer to the question: What do (especially the secondary) disciplines stand to gain from it? (Nagel 1979, p. 362)[420] The question of the usefulness of reductionism should not mask the belief of many scientists that the reduction of a "higher" to a "lower"[421] science results in a closer and closer approximation of truth, by reducing diverse, narrow and inaccurate theories to a unified, broad and accurate one (Rosenbeg 1985, p. 70).

419 Nagel argues that terms in the secondary science must be logically derived from the primary science, while Wilson and Lumsden argue that the connections also involve interpretation: the laws in the two disciplines can be isomoprhc (Wilson and Lumsden 1991, p. 404).

420 To take an example in which the answer to this question is not very encouraging, Rosenberg argues that reducing Mendelian genetics to molecular genetics would give rise to such unwieldy statements that they would not do any work for the advancement of either molecular or Mendelian genetics (Rosenbeg 1985, p. 107).

421 For instance the reduction of biology or chemistry to physics, a more "universal" or "general" science.

The operation of reductionism raises the question of the existence of any residue in the secondary discipline that cannot be explained in terms of the primary discipline. The position of hard holism implies the belief in processes that are not obedient to the theoretical constructs of any primary discipline (ontological independence). Soft holism holds that full descriptions of higher or secondary level must not only incorporate the theoretical apparatus of the lower level but also considerations that apply to the higher level alone, but are not in principle ontologically independent (Wilson and Lumsden 1991, p. 405)[422].

Is reductionism present in Nietzsche's philosophy?

The conceptual apparatus of physiology, as we have seen in section II, is marked by Nietzsche's use of the notions of symptom and sign in the description of the relation between morality or art and physiology. The claim that various types of morality are symptoms of physiological states or processes implies that we can gain a better understanding of morality by considering the physiological conditions that shape it, and not that the conceptual vocabulary of morality should be abandoned. If Nietzsche were a reductionist, he would have to hold that the set of statements we can make in morality or art can be deduced from a set of statements in physiology. While physiological description and diagnosis do offer important advantages, Nietzsche's claim, as we have seen so far, is not that aesthetic or moral vocabulary can or should be dissolved into physiological formulations. The language of morality is useful, and Nietzsche makes full use of it in, for instance, his description of the sovereign individual who has the "prerogative to promise"[423], is "master of the *free* will"[424] (GM II 2 5.293) and has the "proud knowledge of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*"[425] (GM II 2 5.294)[426].

422 Wilson and Lumsden estimate that most biologists are reductionists and soft holists (1991, p. 406).

423 "der versprechen darf".

424 "Herr des freien Willens".

425 "Das stolze Wissen um das ausserordentliche Privilegium der Verantwortlichkeit".

426 Schank has convincingly argued that we should not understand Nietzsche's description of the strong type of human as a purely biological account (Schank 2000, p. 354).

Nevertheless, in this subsection I would like to consider a small number of texts that may incline the reader towards seeing Nietzsche as, sometimes, a reductionist. The first passages I will consider are:

> My objections to Wagner's music are physiological objections: why disguise them with aesthetic formulas? After all, aesthetics is nothing but applied physiology."[427] (NW Einwände 6.418)[428]

And

> Wagner has become impossible to me from beginning to end, because he cannot walk, let alone dance / But these are physiological judgments, not aesthetic: now – I no longer have any aesthetics[429] (7[7] 12.285)

My question is how we should understand Nietzsche's claim that he no longer has aesthetics and that aesthetic formulas are only a disguise. If the reading of Nietzsche as a reductionist is to hold water, he must show how aesthetic formulae can be traced back, or translated into, physiological language. If this operation is succesful, it would be possible to hold that aesthetics is no longer needed. Unfortunately for the reductionist reading, Nietzsche's account of the tracing back of aesthetic phenomena to the physiological does not warrant a strong eliminationist thesis: "Wagner's principles and practices are all reducible to physiological needs: they are their expression ('hysteria' as music)"[430] (16[75] 13.510). If we ask, in light of this text, what it means to 'reduce' or 'trace back' (*zurückführen*) music to the physiological, Nietzsche's answer is that it means to consider the artistic as the expression of a physiological state (*Hysterismus)*. Here the operation of tracing back or reducing does not imply, as the reductionist would like, the elimination of the vocabulary of art or aesthetics or the claim that

427 "Meine Einwände gegen die Musik Wagner's sind physiologische Einwände: wozu dieselben erst noch unter ästhetische Formeln verkleiden? Ästhetik ist ja nichts als eine angewandte Physiologie.".

428 This is an adaptation of FW 368 3.616.

429 "Wagner vom Anfang bis zum Ende ist mir unmöglich geworden, weil er nicht gehen kann, geschweige denn tanzen. / Aber das sind physiologische Urtheile, keine aesthetische: nur – habe ich keine Aesthetik mehr!".

430 "die Principien und Praktiken Wagner's sind allesamt zurückführbar auf physiologische Nothstände: sie sind deren Ausdruck ('Hysterismus' als Musik)".

the language of aesthetics is superfluous[431]. Nietzsche's goal is to undermine the illusion that various artistic or moral phenomena are unconditioned or autonomous, and to place them in a naturalistic, immanent context. His task is to show the continuity between physiological and artistic or moral processes and to uncover in what sense we can speak of art or moralities as derivative of phyisology. Perhaps the best description of Nietzsche's position, according to the schema presented in the previous sub-section. is that of a soft holist: there is nothing in principle ontologically independent about aesthetics or morality, but a number theoretical considerations and vocabularies apply to these levels alone and there is nothing to be gained from attempting to fully doing away with them. A key text for further exploring the use of the concept of "tracing back" by Nietzsche is JGB 36 5.55.

> Assuming, finally, that we succeeded in explaining our entire life of drives as the organization and outgrowth of one basic form of will (namely, of the will to power, which is *my* claim); assuming we could trace all organic functions back to this will to power and find that it even solved the problem of procreation and nutrition (which is a single problem); then we will have earned the right to clearly designate *all* efficacious force as: *will to power*. [432]

In this aphorism, Nietzsche presents his hypothesis of the "will to power" as the best way of "clarifying our entire life of drives". Nietzsche's attempt to "trace all organic functions back to this will to power" obeys the methodological principle of parsimony *(Sparsamkeit;* cf. JGB 13 5.28), i.e. using single hypothesis. The prupose is to "render the so-called mechanistic (and thus material) world

431 As we can see in the following text: "man kann fast alle Prozeduren eines Philosophen auf Charakterfehler *zurückführen*" (my italics; 25[501] 11.145), the notion of "tracing back" is used by Nietzsche in a decidedly non-reductionist manner.

432 "Gesetzt endlich, dass es gelänge, unser gesammtes Triebleben als die Ausgestaltung und Verzweigung
Einer Grundform des Willens zu erklären – nämlich des Willens zur Macht, wie es mein Satz ist –; gesetzt, dass man alle organischen Funktionen auf diesen Willen zur Macht zurückführen könnte und in ihm auch die Lösung des Problems der Zeugung und Ernährung – es ist Ein Problem – fände, so hätte man damit sich das Recht verschafft, alle wirkende Kraft eindeutig zu bestimmen als: Wille zur Macht.".

comprehensible"[433], and not "comprehensible as a deception, a 'mere appearance'"[434] (JGB 36 5.54). The goal is to gain a better understanding of mechanism by complementing it, rather than through elimination. In light of this discussions, we could not find sufficient evidence to claim that Nietzsche strives to eliminate or collapse aesthetic (or other kinds of) descriptions into physiological accounts.

433 "die sogenannte mechanistische (oder 'materielle') Welt zu verstehen".
434 "nicht als eine Täuschung, einen 'Schein'".

Comparative Study

Spinoza turns to the body in order to formulate a critique of metaphysical illusions and a path towards empowerment aimed at maximizing freedom. His claim is that metaphysical illusions are disempowering and that empowerment requires adequate knowledge of the body. Nietzsche turns to the body in order to uncover a path towards empowerment and life-affirmation via a critique of metaphysics and morality and their manifestations in nihilism, décadence. His claim is that physiology, while not offering adequate knowledge of the body in Spinoza's sense, can serve as the guiding thread in the striving for empowerment and life-affirmation.

Both seek to elaborate a transformative project that requires a philosophical turn to the body. Nevertheless, in a number of critiques of Spinoza, Nietzsche claims that Spinoza's philosophy is an example of the problem he diagnoses, i.e. he is a metaphysical thinker and his philosophy leads to life-negation. Before addressing the systematic relations between their philosophical physiologies, we need to consider Nietzsche's critiques of Spinoza and follow up this account by asking whether Nietzsche's critique of Spinoza is justified[435].

435 This project requires explicit justification in light of the claim that, due to the fact that Nietzsche most likely never read Spinoza, "to discuss Nietzsche's interpretations and misinterpretations of Spinoza in relation to Spinoza's own writings is simply irrelevant." (Brobjer 2008b, p. 77). The validity of this claim depends on the purpose of the analysis of Nietzsche's claims about Spinoza. If the goal is to analyse Nietzsche's behaviour as a reader of philosophy, to track the origins of his views on Spinoza or to analyse Nietzsche's interpretations of Spinoza for their own sake, then Brobjer is surely right. These projects, while undoubtedly indispensible for the history of philosophy, do not exhaust the task that the historian of philosophy can set herself. The themes important to Nietzsche, in his reception of Spinoza, can be used as a guide in building a dialogue between the two outside the limits of Nietzsche's knowledge of Spinoza. A discussion of intrinsically interesting philosophical topics should be built on sound historical knowledge but has the potential to go beyond it. This depends on an analysis that does justice to Spinoza's thinking. The benefits of such an approach can, hopefully, open new perspectives on traditional philosophical problems.

I. Nietzsche's critique of Spinoza

What is Nietzsche's explicit assessment of Spinoza's philosophy? In order to answer this question we must ask 1) what aspects of Spinoza's philosophy was Nietzsche most interested in? and 2) how and why did his perspective on Spinoza change over time? In order to provide the background for this discussion, this section will begin with an overview of the sources for Nietzsche's knowledge of Spinoza, as well as a presentation of the overarching features of Nietzsche's engagement with the thinking of the Dutch philosopher. In response to the first question, I will argue that Nietzsche's focus is mainly on the concepts of reason, affects, conatus and egoism, while the metaphysical intricacies of Spinoza's philosophy are not of great interest to Nietzsche. Next to these core topics, we can detect a number of related discussions of: causality, mechanism, conflict, agreement, becoming and intuitive knowledge. With regard to the second question, I will argue that we must understand Nietzsche's engagement with Spinoza as an attempt to uncover the hidden presuppositions behind Spinoza's thinking. Nietzsche uses the results of this critical investigation in order to distance himself from Spinoza and formulate an increasingly radical critique of his thinking. Nevertheless, I will claim that this is not always the result of a deeper understanding of Spinoza's thinking, but rather the desire on Nietzsche's part to distance himself from a philosophy which comes close to many of his insights. This analysis can help us obtain a greater sense of coherence running through Nietzsche's engagement with Spinoza and, perhaps, moderate Sommer's claim that "Nietzsche's pertinent pronouncements between 1881 and 1888 in no way form a coherent picture"[436] (Sommer 2012, p. 158).

It has been argued, convincingly, that Nietzsche most likely never knew Spinoza's work directly. His knowledge of the work of the Dutch philosopher comes mainly from his reading of Kuno Fischer's work *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie,* more precisely the 2nd edition issued in 1865 (Scandella 2012, p. 309)[437]. Nietzsche read

436 A similar view is found in Stegmaier (2012, p. 528), who writes that Nietzsche varies wildly both in his views on Spinoza and in the themes of interest, and that this characterizes both the published and the unpublished pronouncements on the Dutch thinker. While important shifts cannot be denied, this is not necessarily the symptom of incoherence.

437 Gawoll has argued that Nietzsche also used the first edition from 1854. His argument is based on Nietzsche's quote of EIVP67 in Latin, a quote Nietzsche could not have gotten from later

it first in 1881 and later returned to it in 1887[438] (Scandella 2012, p. 319; Sommer 2012, p. 158). While we can notice from Nietzsche's *Nachlass* that the start of any significant interest in Spinoza coincides with his first reading of Fischer, we can doubt his claim that Spinoza's thought was hardly known to him before 1881 (Brobjer 2008b, p. 78). Nietzsche could have encountered references to Spinoza in Goethe (von Seggern 2005, p. 141), in Schopenhauer (Sommer 2012, p. 157), in Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus* (Wurzer 1975, p. 13), in Spir's *Denken und Wirklichkeit* (Wurzer 1975, p. 38) and in Friedrich Ueberwegs' *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie des Altertums* (Brobjer 2008b, p. 79), four sources he was well acquainted with. Furthermore, in 1865 Nietzsche attended a general course in the history of philosophy given by Karl Schaarschmidt in Bonn. He took 4 pages of notes on Spinoza, more than on any other philosopher (Brobjer 2008b, pp. 47, 78). Next to the aforementioned authors, Nietzsche later came in contact with Spinoza's philosophy through a number of other sources: Trendelenburg's *Ueber Spinoza's Grundgedanken und dessen Erfolg* (Rupschus and Stegmaier 2009, p. 301), von Hartmann's *Philosophie des Unbewussten,* Ueberweg's *Grundriss der Geschichte des Philosophie*, Dühring's *Der Werth des Lebens* (Sommer 2012, p. 157), Teichmuller's *Die praktische Vernunft bei Aristoteles* (Scandella 2012, p. 317) or Bourget's *Essais de Psychologie contemporaine* (Scandella 2012, p. 318)[439].

Nietzsche regards Spinoza's philosophy as the expression of the will to optimism characteristic of a deep sufferer (2[131] 12.131). On the one hand, he attempts various diagnostics of Spinoza's philosophy and some of its problematic traits. On the other hand, Nietzsche admires many of Spinoza's insights and finds a great degree of similarity between their overall philosophical projects, as well as between their treatments of some key issues. Nietzsche finds in Spinoza the project of naturalization ("Rückkehr zur Natur"), encapsulated in the phrase *deus*

editions (Gawoll 2001, p. 49, note 10). This proposition, however, was quite famous, and Scandella argues that it may have appeared in other sources as well, even when they are not directly linked to Spinozism (Scandella 2012, p. 311).

438 Fischer summarizes Spinoza's philosophy in 4 sentences: 1) rationalism or pure intellect 2) rationalism and pantheism 3) naturalism or system of pure nature 4) dogmatism or system of pure causality (Scandella 2012, p. 312).

439 For a number of other sources see Wurzer 1975, pp. 127-138.

sive natura (2[131] 12.131)[440]. Part of the project of reading the human back into nature is the dismissal by both thinkers of teleology (11[194] 9.519), free will (11[193] 9.518), and of the notion of a moral world order (2[131] 12.131). Next to the descriptive dimension of naturalism, Nietzsche is conscious of the links between their normative thinking. In 25[454] 11.134 he lists Spinoza among his ancestors in the attempt to see the human as something that must be overcome. The overcoming is not aimed at reaching a transcendent ideal, but rather at increasing one's power of acting. Nietzsche is aware that for Spinoza to act virtuously means to act according to reason, which means only to act according to one's own needs (*Nutzen*; cf. 11[193] 9.517. This implies the overcoming of moral values and a focus on 1) the specific constitution and capacities of each person; and 2) the naturally egoistic point of view, i.e. that virtue is power (*Macht*; cf. 7[4] 12.261; FW 99 3.455). Nietzsche is clearly very interested in the affirmative stance Spinoza managed to gain, even if he problematizes the way it is reached i.e. by affirming logical necessity (5[71] 12.214[441]). In order to better understand Nietzsche's explicit engagement with Spinoza's thinking, it is useful to track its development in the course of Nietzsche's writings, and to use this chronological analysis in order to bring out their similarities and difference.

1. Nietzsche's diagnosis of Spinoza

In order to gain an adequate understanding of Nietzsche's views on Spinoza we must look for the underlying evaluative commitments that lead Nietzsche to view Spinoza as he does. I will argue that these commitments change over time and that Nietzsche moves towards a physiological diagnostic of Spinoza. This will allow us to answer the question guiding this section, namely how and why Nietzsche's perspective on Spinoza changes over time. In order to better address this question, I will distinguish between three phases or periods in Nietzsche's engagement with Spinoza's thinking.

440 Nietzsche writes that Spinoza is the highest realist in 9[178] 12.443.

441 "Spinoza gewann eine solche bejahende Stellung, insofern jeder Moment eine logische Nothwendigkeit hat: und er triumphirte mit seinem logischen Grundinstinkte über eine solche Weltbeschaffenheit.".

1.a. The first phase (up to 1883)

This period is marked by some of Nietzsche's most positive comments on Spinoza and his philosophy. He ranks Spinoza as a genius of knowledge (MA 157 2.147f), the purest sage, and places him in the continuation of a line of Jewish thinkers who upheld the cause of enlightenment and intellectual independence during the European Middle Ages (MA 475 2.310). Nietzsche ranks Spinoza among the aristocrats of the history of spirit (15[17] 9.642) and writes of his pride in being part of a family of thinkers that includes Spinoza (12[52] 9.585; VM 408 2.534). He grants great importance to Spinoza's philosophy in the history of thought and argues that Schopenhauer's philosophy is an offshoot of Spinoza's insight that the essence of each thing is appetite (11[307] 9.559). In M 481 3.285, he claims that Spinoza (together with Pascal, Rousseau and Goethe) compares favourably with Schopenhauer and Kant. In the letter to Overbeck from July 30th 1881 Nietzsche writes that he felt an instinctual drive towards Spinoza, and it is likely that a great part of this attraction is explained by the fact that Nietzsche claims Spinoza associated joy with knowledge (together with Plato, Aristotle and Descartes - M 550 3.320f).

With regard to the content of Spinoza's philosophy, Nietzsche notes with approval a number of its key features: the critique of teleology; the rejection of free will and the claim that the will is determined and consists solely in the power to affirm or deny; the overcoming of good and evil as moral illusions; the emphasis on the role of affects and appetites in determining thinking and behaviour; and the identity of acting out of reason and acting according to one's own needs. Nietzsche's critique of Spinoza is, at this point in time, only a critique of some of his philosophical ideas. He criticizes Spinoza's dismissal of passions as disempowering, the equation of the intrinsic and essential appetite of human beings with a drive for self-preservation, and Spinoza's views on the nature and potential benefits of reason. These critiques result in Nietzsche's claim that Spinoza did not sufficiently understand what is required for the normative task of "fine, well-planned, thoughtful egoism"[442].

442 Notebook 11 from 1881 is key here and will be discussed later in this chapter.

1.b. The second phase (1883-1884)

The new major element that comes into play in this period, and that will also have a critical role during the last phase, is Nietzsche's interest in the background of Spinoza's philosophy (7[20] 10.244). The focus shifts from Spinoza's explicit and implicit philosophical convictions to the affects underlying and creating these beliefs. One way in which Nietzsche attempts to uncover Spinoza's hidden assumptions is to place him in the context of Jewish thinking. Nietzsche reads Spinoza's ethical commitments as a reaction to, i.e. as revenge against, Jewish Law. Similarly to Paul, Spinoza claims that the individuals are free to do what they want (7[35] 10.253)[443]. A similar reading, starting from the hypothesis of a secret feeling of vengefulness, can be found in Nietzsche's attempt to understand *amor dei* (28[49] 11.319)[444]. Another attempt to understand Spinoza is to read his thinking as a desire for power (7[108] 10.279). This psychological reading of Spinoza is based on the hypothesis that the origin of great philosophical systems is most often a moral theory (*Eine moral<ische> Grundfehler-Theorie*; cf. 7[20] 10.244).

With regard to specific Spinozistic themes, in this period Nietzsche develops critiques of already considered issues and introduces a number of new ones. Self-preservation is presented as a side effect, and not a goal of life (26[313] 11.233). The critique of Spinoza on this issue gains a new dimension, as he is now presented as the source of the errors of English utilitarianism on this this topic (26[280] 11.224). This is the point in time when we can detect Nietzsche's move away from acknowledging the role of active affects in Spinoza to sometimes presenting Spinoza's thinking as an attempt to overcome all affects (26[285] 11.226) and inclinations (26[48] 11.160). This period marks the beginning of Nietzsche's inquiries into the concept and experience of *amor intellectualis dei*

443 "Spinoza nahm mit seiner Ethik Rache am jüdischen Gesetz: 'das Individuum kann thun, was es will': ähnlich wie Paulus".

444 "An Spinoza./Dem 'Eins in Allem' liebend zugewandt, /Ein amor dei, selig, auf Verstand –/ Die Schuhe aus! Welch dreimal heilig Land! – – / Doch unter dieser Liebe fraß / ein heimlich glimmender Rachebrand: / – am Judengott fraß Judenhaß! – / – Einsiedler, hab ich dich erkannt?".

(26[416]) 11.262), as well as the association of Spinoza, or rather of the Spinozistic movement of Nietzsche's time, with mechanism (26[432] 11.266). These topics will be further explored in the following period. The topics of the overcoming of the human (25[454] 11.134) and of the self-overcoming of morality (8[17] 10.340) become important to Nietzsche's reading of Spinoza in this period.

1.c. The third phase (from 1885 onwards)

The most significant element during this period is Nietzsche's physiological diagnosis of Spinoza. Nietzsche claims that Spinoza's attempt to connect knowledge with joy is not only naïve, but that it is the expression of a will to optimism characteristic of a deep sufferer (2[131] 12.131). This condition is diagnosed by Nietzsche as a case of consumption (FW V 349 3.585f; 1[123] 12.39; 16[55] 13.504). In order to understand this diagnosis we must analyse both the manifestations of this condition in Spinoza's own thinking, as well as its consequences in the spread of Spinoza's ideas.

The history of the understanding and of the cultural representation of consumption (pulmonary tuberculosis) is marked by a profound change during the 19th Century. Before the discovery of the nature of the disease and, in 1882 by Koch, of the bacillus that causes it, the disease was associated with artistic romanticism. It was considered a disease of genius, sensibility and civilization. In the case of Keats, for instance, the period in which he had the disease (1820-1) was considered the most productive of his life (Snowden 2010, min. 18-19). The disease was thought to be caused by hereditary factors and so the victims were not feared or thought to be dangerous in any way (Snowden 2010, min 28-31). With the discovery of the contagious, not hereditary, nature of the disease, the perception of consumption changed. The sick were now considered dangerous, and urban environments, which facilitate the spread of tuberculosis, were seen as factors conducive to sickness and degeneration. The symptoms of the disease were, among others, physical exhaustion, followed by emaciation and a pale complexion (Snowden 2010, min 22-3). These symptoms can be found in Nietzsche's description of Spinoza in the late works[445].

445 Claiming that Spinoza suffered from consumption was common in the 19th Century (e.g.

In light of this account, we can gain a better understanding of Nietzsche's diagnosis of Spinoza as a consumptive. The emphasis on self-preservation in Spinoza and its spread throughout the natural sciences (FW V 349 3.585f)[446] must be understood as a contagious and dangerous process, by which a dogma that is a symptom of physiological exhaustion distorts our understanding of life.

A greater deal of attention is paid by Nietzsche to what this diagnosis means for the content of Spinoza's thinking. Nietzsche reads the search for joy (hedonism) to be the guiding instinct in Spinoza's philosophy (7[4] 12.260), and he writes that Spinozistic happiness is the happiness of the consumptive (1[123] 13.39). This illness manifests itself as desensualization (FW V 372 3.623f), the attempt to eliminate the affects (JGB 198 5.118), vengefulness (JGB 25 5.43), belief in causality (2[83] 12.103) and in a theological world view (36[15] 11.556), together with a fear of change and transience (18[16] 13.537). Spinoza's ethical ideal is now presented as an anaemic ideal (11[138] 13.64). Nietzsche understands Spinoza's emphasis on self-preservation as a sign of distress (FW V 349 3.585), which is expressed as the desire that the old God still lives (36[15] 11.556), albeit under a new guise: the belief that the world is infinitely creative and unbound and that it is governed by causality (2[83] 12.103). Nietzsche claims that Spinoza's project of a return to nature finds its background in Christianity (2[131], 12.131), in spite of the commitment to values contrary to Christian morality: egoism, the absence of a moral world order. The affirmation of life and the denial of metaphysical illusions are interpreted by Nietzsche as the consequences of a secret illness which manifests itself as the affect of vengefulness. This is the reason why Spinoza's affirmation of life does not imply an affirmation of change and becoming, but of the logical necessity of each moment (5[71] 12.214) as the manifestation of what stays eternally the same (9[26] 13.348). This makes Nietzsche distrustful of what he takes to be the key notions of Spinoza's philosophy: the value of truth and reason (JGB 25 5.43; 9[178] 12.443) and the *amor intellectualis dei*, which is the ideal of a hermit (GD Streifzüge 23 6.126). It is significant that the last mention of

LHP III 103).

446 If Spinoza appears as the theoretician of ego-conservation then Spencer is that of species-conservation (Scandella 2014, p. 181).

Spinoza in the *Nachlass* occurs under the heading "Zu: die Metaphysiker" (18[16] 13.537). Nietzsche has come to associate Spinoza's thinking with metaphysics, in spite of Spinoza's critique of a number of metaphysical notions.

In spite of the fact that Nietzsche now sees Spinoza's philosophy as an attempt to formulate a theodicy of a god that acts beyond good and evil (GM II 15 5.320f, 2[161] 12.144), he does not wish to abandon Spinoza's insights completely. He is interested in Spinoza's critique of compassion[447] (GM Vorrede 5 5.252), but more importantly he is interested in what he perceives to be Spinoza's overcoming of the affect of *morsus conscientiae.* This notion is considered in the 1886 *Nachlass* and in *GM*. Nietzsche asks the question of what could remain of the affect of the *bite of conscience* once moral notions of good and evil have been overcome (7[4] 12.261, 7[57] 12.314). The answer he finds in Spinoza is that, underlying this feeling, we find the affect of sadness. Remorse, according to the text of the *Ethics* that Nietzsche quotes, is sadness accompanied by the idea of a past thing which has turned out worse than we had hoped (EIII, Def. of Affects, XVII). In GM II 15 Nietzsche goes further in his explanation of how Spinoza came to free himself of moral prejudices and see the kernel at the heart of the feeling of remorse: "for Spinoza, the world had returned to that state of innocence in which it had lain before the invention of bad conscience" (GM II 15 5.320)[448].

There are a number of texts in which Spinoza is associated with a "spider" (*Spinne*; AC 17 6.184), a "Webweaver" (*Spinneweber*; JGB 25 5.42f) or with "conceptual cobweb-weaving" (*Begriffs-Spinneweberei*; GD Streifzüge 23 6.126). The simile of the spider can be traced back to Bacon's *Novum Organum*, which Nietzsche had in the German translation (Esmez 2015, pp. 177, 190). Bacon refers to empiricists as "ants" who "simply accumulate and use", to dogmatists as "spiders" who "spin webs from themselves", i.e. "rely solely or mainly on mental power", and announces the "bees" who most closely approximate the "true working of philosophy": they accumulate material but also have the "ability to convert and

447 He develops a more radical critique of compassion, which is seen as dangerous for culture and for the 'free spirit' (Wurzer 1975, p. 238).

448 "Die Welt war für Spinoza wieder in jene Unschuld zurückgetreten, in der sie vor der Erfindung des schlechten Gewissens dalag".

digest" it (NO I, 95). Bacon is critical of those who rely almost exclusively on reason to the detriment of lived, observable experience.

The same animal figures are used, to similar effect, by Nietzsche (Esmez 2015, p. 190). The association with the spider is mobilised by Nietzsche in his critique of Spinoza as a metaphysician and arch-rationalist. Spiders appear relatively benign, and do not display the predatory characteristics of the bests of prey, but are blood-sucking parasites that are cunning trappers: Nietzsche fears getting caught in the web of pale, blood-less philosophical concepts (Schrift 2004, p. 68-9). Nevertheless the spider, with its long history of use in Nietzsche's texts, also has more positive connotations. In the early "On Truth and Lies in an Extramoral Sense" (1873) the spider appeals to Nietzsche because its web, while appearing delicate and fragile, is remarkably strong and, crucially, the spider manufactures its web from itself without outside material. The spider stands for the "genius of construction" (*Baugenie*) who builds with "delicate conceptual material" (WL 1 1.882; cf. Schrift 2004, p. 62). Perhaps the best way to interpret Nietzsche's association of Spinoza with this animal is as the expression of admiration towards something that is deeply dangerous, i.e. Spinoza's 'sickness' or 'consumption'.

In the light of this analysis, we are now in a position to distil and discuss the major themes of Nietzsche's explicit engagement with Spinoza's philosophy.

2. The themes of Nietzsche's engagement with Spinoza

2.a. Reason and Knowledge[449]

From his earliest writings, Nietzsche manifests a great deal of appreciation for Spinoza as a thinker. In MA 157 2.147f he calls Spinoza (together with Kepler) a genius of knowledge (*Der wissende Genius*) while in MA 475 2.310 Nietzsche refers to him as the "purest sage"[450].

Nietzsche's critique of Spinoza's notion of reason starts in 1881 (11[132] 9.490)

449 Reason and (adequate) knowledge are not synonymous for Nietzsche, but they are for Spinoza, as will be argued later.

450 "[der] reinsten Weisen (Spinoza)".

with a critique of the effects reason can have according to Spinoza. Nietzsche reads Spinoza as advocating concord (*Eintracht*) and the elimination of struggle under the guidance of reason. Nietzsche's critique is that such a "phantasy" is in disagreement with the nature of life, which is growth through conflict between unequals[451]. Nietzsche's assumption here is that rational agreement can only work on the basis of equality, and that differences (which he takes to be pervasive down to "*den kleinsten Dingen*") lead inevitably to struggle over space or nourishment[452]. As a consequence, the appeal to reason has often done more harm than good. After this first critique, Nietzsche's attention shifts to the investigation of the assumptions and the background of Spinoza's appeal to reason. In FW 333 3.559[453] Nietzsche argues against the value Spinoza places on conscious, rational thought, because he believes that the greatest part of our mental activity is preconscious. What we observe consciously, the apparent objectivity and peaceful nature of reason, is only a temporary respite in the deeper struggle between instincts. Conscious thought is the least vigorous and the mildest and calmest type of thought. In a vein of thought of great importance to his diagnosis of Spinoza, Nietzsche claims that men of knowledge are afflicted by exhaustion precisely because their knowledge is the result of a struggle (FW 333 3.559).

Next to the critique of the presuppositions and effects of reason, a key element of Nietzsche's evaluation of reason is the association of reason with affects. This move had already been suggested by Spinoza, and Nietzsche is aware of this, as is

451 It is interesting to compare this critique of concord with Schopenhauer's, who argues that in EIVp29-31 Spinoza is guilty of false reasoning because he confuses the concepts of *convenire* and *communere habere* (WWV II 96). Spinoza's argument moves from the claim that we have something in common with other things (in virtue of being conceived under the same attribute EIVp29) to the claim that nothing can be harmful to us insofar as it has something in common with our nature (EIVp30) and therefore that a thing is good insofar as it agrees (*convenit*) with our nature (EIVp31). Schopenhauer's critique, like Nietzsche's, starts from the assumption that the notion of conflict best describes the fabric of the world. The directions of their critique differ, however, insofar as Schopenhauer does not doubt reason's capacity to create agreement, but rather problematizes the indeterminateness, the vagueness of the concepts used by Spinoza. We will return to this critique in the section on Spinoza's politics.

452 The references to struggle in this fragment have led Scandella, with good reason, to consider this passage in the light of Nietzsche's reading of Roux (Scandella 2012, p. 312).

453 "Das bewusste Denken, und namentlich das des Philosophen, ist die unkräftigste und desshalb auch die verhältnissmässig mildeste und ruhigste Art des Denkens".

shown in 11[193] 9.517f, a text which contains Nietzsche's notes on his reading of Kuno Fischer's account of Spinoza, together with Nietzsche's own commentary. As a summary of Spinoza's position on affects and reason, Nietzsche writes:

> We are determined in our actions only by our desires and affects. Knowledge must be an affect in order to be a motive (11[193] 9.517)[454]

This move is important not only for Nietzsche's diagnosis of reason, but, more specifically, for his diagnosis of Spinoza's use of reason and of the concept of *amor dei intellectualis*. Nietzsche aims to undermine the idea, which he attributes to Spinoza in FW 37 3.406, that reason and knowledge are pursued for what is "selfless, harmless, self-sufficient, and truly innocent"[455], and that the evil drives have no part to play in this pursuit. Nietzsche writes that Spinoza had naively connected happiness with knowledge (2[131] 12.131) and that Spinoza could gain an affirmative stance towards life only because he affirmed every moment as a logical necessity (5[71] 12.214). Spinoza needs, in order to alleviate his condition (that of a deep sufferer; 2[131] 12.131), to triumph over suffering using his logical instinct (5[71] 12.214). The desire to overcome suffering is most apparent, according to Nietzsche, in the culmination of Spinoza's theory of knowledge, the intellectual love of God. We can trace Nietzsche's engagement with this notion to a fragment from 1883, which, even if it does not refer to the intellectual love of God explicitly, deals with the phenomenon of "Verschmelzung mit der Gottheit". This merger expresses the desire to become one with the strongest[456], and is the result of fear in the face of power[457]. In Spinoza's case, this striving for power is expressed as desire for the "highest solitude and calm and spirituality" [458](7[108] 10.279). Nietzsche argues that the experience of *amor intellectualis dei* is something out of the ordinary and that, against Teichmüller, this great event needs to be considered carefully (26[416] 11.262). Nietzsche's diagnosis of this

454 "wir werden nur durch Begierden und Affekte in unserem Handeln bestimmt. Die Erkenntniß muß Affekt sein, um Motiv zu sein." The paragraph ends with "Ich sage: sie muß Leidenschaft sein, um Motiv zu sein."– this important sentence will be the discussed later.

455 "Selbstloses, Harmloses, Sich-selber-Genügendes, wahrhaft Unschuldiges".

456 "mit dem Mächtigsten, was es giebt, Eins zu werden".

457 "Die Furcht vor der Macht".

458 "höchster Ungestörtheit und Stille und Geistigkeit".

event is that it hides a secret feeling of vengefulness[459]. This diagnosis is grounded in the belief that Spinoza's philosophy is directed against life, against the senses, and "misses every drop of blood" (*jeder Tropfen Blut fehlt*) (FW V 372 3.624; GD Streifzüge 23 6.126)[460].

2.b. Affects

At the time of Nietzsche's first significant contact with Spinoza's philosophy, in 1881 (through his reading of Fischer), he is well aware, as we have seen, that Spinoza believes it impossible to consider human reason and knowledge without understanding the affects that accompany it. The same view can be found in a later text, from 1886, under the heading "Die Metaphysiker": Nietzsche writes that for Spinoza knowledge (*Erkenntniß*) is "master over all other affects, it is stronger"[461] (7[4] 12.261). Nietzsche understands the difference between his thinking and Spinoza's to centre on the kind of affect that is associated with knowledge. While Spinoza argues that knowledge is connected to an (active) affect, Nietzsche believes that, in order for knowledge to constitute a motive for our actions, and especially the life of knowledge, it must be a passion (*Leidenschaft)* (11[193] 9.517). Nietzsche holds that passions and struggle are empowering and uses Fischer's commentary in order to argue that for Spinoza passions disunite and create conflict, which weakens humans and societies. In an unpublished fragment from 1884, however, we can see Nietzsche taking a different attitude toward Spinoza. Under the heading of "Of the hypocrisy of philosophers"[462] Nietzsche writes that, under the influence of the "vengeful affect"[463], Spinoza's hypocrisy is that he advocates the "overcoming of affects"[464] (26[285] 11.226). This marks the beginning of Nietzsche's presentation of Spinoza's philosophy as an attempt

459 "Doch unter dieser Liebe fraß ein heimlich glimmender Rachebrand" (28[49] 11.319).

460 A number of puzzling references in the late work to Spinoza as "der Heilige Goethes" (11[138] 13.64, 12[1] 13.200) can be interpreted starting from Nietzsche's reading of Spinoza *amor intellectualis dei* as a purely rational, speculative ideal, divorced from any affect. This might stem from the conflation of Spinoza's third kind of knowledge with Schopenhauer's pure, "begierdenlosen" contemplation of Platonic Ideas (see Siemens 2011).

461 "Herr über alle anderen Affekte; sie ist stärker".

462 "Von der Heuchelei der Philosophen".

463 "rachsüchtige Affekt".

464 "der Überwindung der Affekte".

to overcome and eliminate all affects from the domain of philosophy. This line of thought is also expressed by Nietzsche in his published works. In JGB 198 5.118 Nietzsche claims that Spinoza champions the destruction of affects through analysis and vivisection[465]. Later, in AC 17 6.184 Nietzsche writes that to think as Spinoza did, i.e. metaphysically, is to become "increasingly thin and pale", to become "pure spirit"[466]. Finally, in GD Streifzüge 23 6.126, Nietzsche contrasts Spinoza "the hermit" (*Einsiedler*) with "Plato's philosophical erotics"[467]. This conforms to the overall tendency to have ambivalent references to Spinoza in the *Nachlass*, but to publish only the critical statements, that is characteristic of Nietzsche's engagement with Spinoza starting with 1885 (Brobjer 2008b, p. 81).

2.c. Self-preservation

Nietzsche understood that, for Spinoza, the essence of each thing, including humans, is appetite or desire (11[193] 9.517). This view of Spinoza is presented by Fischer and is not a contentious statement. However, the next step that Nietzsche takes, i.e. to argue that desire means desire for self-preservation, is more problematic. This is due not only to the fact that Spinoza does not equate conatus with mere self-preservation, but also because Fischer, Nietzsche's main source for knowledge about Spinoza, does not do this either (Rupschus and Stegmeier 2009, pp. 303-4). This has led Rupschaus and Stegmeier to argue that Nietzsche's source on this point was the work of Trendelenburg[468] (Rupschus and Stegmeier 2009, p. 301). It is possible to add to their argument a different consideration, this time related to Nietzsche's notes on his reading of Fischer. In 11[193] 9.517 Nietzsche writes that "*Desire* is the essence of the human itself, namely the striving by

465 "seine so naiv befürwortete Zerstörung der Affekte durch Analysis und Vivisektion derselben".

466 "immer Dünnere und Blässere, ward 'Ideal', ward 'reiner Geist', ward 'absolutum', ward 'Ding an sich'.

467 "philosophischen Erotik Plato's".

468 They point out that, while Fischer took Spinoza's system to be consistent (he is close to Fichte on this), Trendelenburg accuses Spinoza of inconsistency because, he claims, Spinoza surreptitiously re-introduced final causes (striving for self-preservation) in a system which was supposed to eliminate them. Crucially, Trendelenburg uses the word "Inconsequenz", which Nietzsche takes up in JGB 13 (Rupschus and Stegmeier 2009, pp. 300-1).

which the human wants to persevere in its being"[469]. The question of whether to interpret desire as self-preservation hinges on the meaning of the word being (*Sein)*. While Spinoza understood being (*esse)* as a dynamic reality that manifests its power as efficient cause[470], there is no reason to believe that Nietzsche did as well. If Nietzsche understood the concept of being to be part of the tradition of the metaphysics of substance that he criticised, then we can understand why he interpreted Spinoza's conatus doctrine as the expression of a homeostatic model of power, as the striving of each thing to remain in the same state.

In the context of his 1881 notes, Nietzsche uses his critique of self-preservation in the context of his discussion of "egoism". As I will argue in the normative section, Nietzsche criticizes Spinoza because he claims that the Dutch thinker, by appealing to a striving for self-preservation as the guiding thread for ethical behaviour, failed to fully appreciate the complexities and difficulties of understanding what thoughtful egoism means. In a later and different context, Nietzsche's critique of self-preservation, seen as a homeostatic tendency, is the result of his view that life wants to expand, to discharge its strength, and follows from his critique of nihilism (JGB 13 5.27f; 14[121] 13.301). Self-preservation is only a side effect or a particular manifestation of the discharge of strength characteristic of life (26[313] 11.233). Nietzsche argues that the appeal to self-preservation is not only an invalid methodological principle in trying to understand life (JGB 13 527f), but also that it is a sign of distress, or sickness on the part of the researcher (in this case Spinoza) (FW V 349 3.585). This diagnosis is used by Nietzsche not only in Spinoza's case, but also in his assessment of English utilitarianism (26[280] 11.224).

2.d. Metaphysics

A striking feature of Nietzsche's remarks on Spinoza is that he very rarely discusses Spinoza's metaphysics[471]. The notion of attribute, for instance, never

469 "Die Begierde ist das Wesen des Menschen selbst, nämlich das Streben, kraft dessen der Mensch in seinem Sein beharren will." (11[193] 9.517).

470 See chapter I section II.2.

471 See Wurzer 1975, 190.

appears in Nietzsche's notes, despite its prominent role in Spinoza's philosophy. This is surprising given that Fischer discusses the notion and that Trendelenburg's commentary on Spinoza places great emphasis on the concept of attribute. The few remarks we have that connect to Spinoza's metaphysics start in 1885. Nietzsche argues against the idea of an unbounded and infinitely creative world. He claims that infinite novelty requires infinite force and that this is a remnant of the old religious belief in an infinitely powerful deity (*der alte Gott noch lebe*; cf. 36[15] 11.557). In the same fragment Nietzsche claims that the scientific way of thinking denies the possibility of eternal novelty and of an unlimited force, and that the concept of force (*Kraft*) is incompatible with the notion of infinity (*unendlichen*). Nietzsche also criticizes Spinoza's causal model for understanding the world. His argument is that this is the result of a 'psychological need' (*psychologische Nöthigung*), rather than of knowledge of the truth or falsehood of the belief in causes (2[83] 12.103)[472]. In 1887 and 1888 Nietzsche's critique of Spinoza culminates in the accusation that he shows contempt for all that is changing (*alles Wechselnde;* cf. 9[160] 12.430) and that he values what remains eternally identical (*Ewig-Gleichbleibenden*) over the short, transient moments (*Kürzesten und Vergänglichsten*) (9[26] 13.348). It is worth noting that in both these texts Spinoza is mentioned together with Descartes. This follows the grouping found in Kuno Fischer's book, where Spinoza is placed under the heading of the Cartesian school of philosophers. Nietzsche argues that Spinoza fears change and transcience (*der Wechsel, die Vergänglichkeit*) and that this is the expression of "a depressed soul, full of suspicion and bad experience"[473] (18[16] 13.537). This observation raises the question of whether Spinoza's philosophy is capable of explaining change or becoming in a way that overcomes the difficulties intrinsic to the metaphysics of being, and will be discussed in section III of this chapter.

Before moving on, however, it is important to note that Nietzsche endorses one aspect of Spinoza's understanding of God. This is the thesis that the whole world is the expression of a God who acts beyond good and evil. Nietzsche reads Spinoza as a more radical thinker than those who claim that only the evil we perceive in

472 For more on Nietzsche's critique of mechanism, see chapter II, section III.
473 "eine gedrückte Seele aus, voller Mißtrauen und schlimmer Erfahrung".

the world is an illusion (10[150] 12.539). Spinoza argues against those who think that God acts *sub ratione boni* (GM II 15 5.320) and he has the means to do this, Nietzsche writes, because he employs a mathematical form (7[4] 12.262)[474]. This allows him to see through the theological illusion of teleology and of a moral world order (2[131] 12.131).

As a conclusion to this section, we must raise the question of what drives Nietzsche to apply a psychological, historical and ultimately a physiological analysis to Spinoza's work and, in an ad hominem argument, to Spinoza himself. The answer to this question must be guided by three important elements: 1) the refusal on Nietzsche's part to fully consider the role of power in Spinoza's philosophy and the identification of conatus with the drive for self-preservation; 2) the move away from what Nietzsche knew was the essential role of affects in Spinoza's epistemology to his portrayal of Spinoza as someone who wants to eliminate all affects; and 3) the portrayal of Spinoza as the metaphysical thinker *par excellence* in Nietzsche's late writings, in spite of Nietzsche's awareness of Spinoza's various critiques of metaphysics. It may be justified to ask whether Nietzsche's sometimes unfair criticisms of Spinoza are the result of his increasing realisation that their thoughts share a great number of insights. In trying to save becoming from being, Nietzsche criticizes in Spinoza an understanding of reality in which there is no place for real development (Sommer 2012, p. 178). It is perhaps no coincidence that Nietzsche chooses to neglect Spinoza's thinking on the concept of power, even though he was aware of it. This may occur precisely because it comes so close to his "*doctrine of the development of the will to power*", of which

474 Nietzsche's evaluation of the geometrical method has itself an interesting history. In the very first fragment to mention Spinoza, Nietzsche considers the geometrical form acceptable only as an aesthetic expression: "Die starre mathematische Formel (wie bei Spinoza) – die auf Göthe einen so beruhigenden Eindruck machte, hat eben nur noch als ästhetisches Ausdrucksmittel ein Recht" (19[47] 7.434). In this fragment Nietzsche's claim is that the value of a philosophy should be judged from an artistic perspective, as a work of art. In JGB 5 5.19 he writes that the mathematical form used by Spinoza is "hocus pocus" and that that it only serves to rationalize an insight which has been reached by means other than cold, pure dialectics. However, in the 1886 *Nachlass*, as we have seen, Nietzsche sees some benefits to using this method.

Nietzsche claims: "nobody has ever come close to this, not even in thought" [475] (JGB 23 5.38)[476].

Stegmaier argues, using FW 372 3.623f, that Nietzsche is more interested in Spinoza's merging with his philosophy than in the diagnosis of consumption (Stegmaier 2012, p. 525). Spinoza stands for Nietzsche, as for many of his contemporaries, as a person for his philosophy, a personality of first rank that conceived a philosophy that is both metaphysics and ethics, monism and perspectivism, Judaic and Christian, materialist and rationalist, pantheistic and atheist, and so free of all dogmatic categorization. We have not managed to preserve what lived in Spinoza and brought him to work as he did, but only the skeleton of his philosophy, mere formulae or empty categories. Without understanding the background of his philosophy, which is what Nietzsche is after, we have allowed Spinoza's ideas to have mutated into what Nietzsche calls "vampirism" (Stegmaier 2012, p. 525). This analysis notwithstanding, we must still try to clarify the meaning of Nietzsche's diagnosis. The label "consumptive" tells us something important about precisely the (physiological) conditions that form the foundation of Spinoza's thinking. As Stegmaier acknowledges, Spinoza's sickness is not that of the priest from FW 351 3.586ff or of the religion founder of FW 353 3.589f and of the *Genealogy* (Stegmaier 2012, p. 528). His philosophy remains irritating and we must elucidate the nature of the illness that makes it so, because it is the precise nature of the sickness that resulted in the "categories, formulas, *words"*[477] (FW 372 3.624) that remain of Spinoza. My thesis, which will be developed in the course of this chapter, is that we can do so by comparing and contrasting Spinoza's and Nietzsche's views on the fundamental notion of their ontologies, namely "power".

475 „Dieselbe als Morphologie und Entwicklungslehre des Willens zur Macht zu fassen, wie ich sie fasse – daran hat noch Niemand in seinen Gedanken selbst gestreift:".

476 I am indebted to Keith Ansell-Pearson for pointing out the following interesting point: Nietzsche read a French author named Jean-Marie Guyau, who developed an account of desire that is spinozistic. In his annotations to Guyau's work, Nietzsche writes, next to the French thinker's account of desire: "will to power". Without engaging here in an analysis of this interesting fact, we must note that it is indicative of the similarities Nietzsche himself saw between his doctrine of "will to power" and the Spinozistic notion of "desire" or "conatus".

477 „Kategorien, Formeln, Worte".

II. Evaluation of Nietzsche's criticisms

1. Reason and knowledge

We can speak of 'reason' in Spinoza in two ways: 1) the technical use of the notion of *ratio*, by which Spinoza means the second type of knowledge, i.e. knowledge of "common notions and adequate ideas of the properties of things" (EIIp40s2) and 2) a broader sense in which rational knowledge refers to adequate knowledge as a whole, i.e. both the second and the third types of knowledge. Nietzsche's critique of reason is the critique of what he describes as an "organ" of the body and a late development that is prone to distort or simplify rather than provide knowledge of reality. Spinoza would join Nietzsche in his critique of unreflected, everyday knowledge which does not understand causes. Nevertheless, he would argue that this is a poor or limited understanding of reason and its capacity to provide knowledge. This difference runs deep and finds its source in Spinoza's commitment to parallelism, which entails that there is a potentially available adequate mental and rational description for all events in nature. Next to this key metaphysical difference, and more closely related to the present thesis, are two practical differences between Spinoza and Nietzsche that are part of their divergence on 'reason' entails. First, they differ fundamentally on the role and power of reason. As we will see more closely in the normative section, we cannot understand Spinoza's ethical and political philosophy without acknowledging that the role of reason is to reduce conflict as much as possible and promote agreement. We will also observe Spinoza's (moderate) optimism in the power of reason to achieve precisely this task. Nietzsche will not only doubt reason's efficacy to do so, but will problematize the very nature of the project, and claim that the striving towards agreement is very often against the interests of both the individual and of the body politic. Reason, according to Nietzsche, hides conflict and tries to diminish it. Second, we have the difference in the content of their beliefs that reason or knowledge cannot be understood in abstraction from the affects. Spinoza's transition from inadequate (first kind of) knowledge to adequate understanding consists in the transition from passive to active affects. The emphasis on self-transformation is at the same time a transformation of knowledge and of the accompanying affects. It is at this point that the underlying difference between

the two surfaces: because he cannot appeal to parallelism, Nietzsche cannot claim that a change in knowledge necessarily brings with it a transformation in one's affective economy.

2. Affects

Spinoza's discussion of affects, which is one of the main topics of the *Ethics*, starting with book III, consists in his account of the dynamics that describe our affective constitution, together with an evaluation of these affects with a view of maximizing to our freedom. Spinoza distinguishes between passive and active affects. In EIIID3 affects are defined as "affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections". Spinoza explains that "if we can be the adequate cause of any of these affections, I understand by the affect an action; otherwise, a passion". The goal of the *Ethics* is to show that to increase the proportion of actions, and therefore of adequate ideas, is to enhance our freedom to act. Spinoza's discussion of passions, or passive affects, is complicated by a further crucial distinction. While a passion is a "confused idea" of the mind, it can affirm of the body a "greater or lesser force of existing than before" (EIII Gen. Def. of Affects). This implies that some passions are useful and can serve Spinoza's ethical goal. A more detailed discussion is reserved for the section on Spinoza's normative thought, but we can anticipate this discussion by noticing one key element in Spinoza's philosophy: passions, even in the felicitous case in which they affirm of the body a greater force of existing than before, are still connected to a confused idea of the mind. One way to tackle this is to argue that, given the essentially finite condition of human nature, which translates into the view that we are always, to a greater or lesser degree, passive, the power enhancing or joyful passions are an instrumental good (at least as far as finite modes such as human beings are concerned[478]). While this view does capture a number of important themes in Spinoza's philosophy, it does not, I will argue, do full justice to Spinoza's commitment not only to the possibility of increasing to a large degree our adequate knowledge and therefore our active affects, but also to

478 This line is pursued by Matthew Kissner in his *Spinoza on Human Freedom* (2011).

his belief that we already possess a large degree of second and, crucially, third type of knowledge. The association between the third type of knowledge, the *amor dei intellectualis* and active affects already undermines Nietzsche's late critique of Spinoza's rationalism as "increasingly thin and pale"[479] (AC 17 6.184). The more interesting question is whether this transformative impulse that defines Spinoza's practical philosophy can find a counterpart in Nietzsche's thought. While we cannot expect that the same logic of transformation of affects is to be found in Nietzsche, we can find a very similar striving for self-transformation, as will be outlined in the section on Nietzsche's ethics and politics. This transformative impulse should not, however, be confused with the transition from reactivity to activity. The binomial action/reaction, that is crucial to Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche, is used only in the *Genealogy,* and, as discussed in the chapter on Nietzsche, an exclusive focus on it does not do justice to Nietzsche's thought. It is not from this angle that we will try to uncover similarities between the two, but rather starting from the goal of their ethical thinking, namely empowerment or freedom, together with the means for achieving this goal, i.e. better knowledge of the body.

3. Conatus and egoism

Nietzsche's reading of conatus as self-preservation is problematic and does not capture the meaning of Spinoza's ontology of power (see Chapter I, section II.2.[480]). Both Spinoza and Nietzsche think the notions of power and desire outside the conservative tendency of self-preservation[481], and the differences appear only in the way they conceive the logic of the manifestation of power. In the normative section, I will also argue that they both strive to develop fundamentally similar concepts of "thoughtful egoism"[482] that promote both ethical and political

479 "immer Dünnere und Blässere".

480 The problem with self-preservation is that it is teleological. In the first chapter I have argued that Spinoza claims that humans act on account of ends, an endorsement of teleology, only because he believes that our representations act as efficient causes: final causes are revealed to be nothing more than a special case of efficient causation.

481 Deleuze speaks of an "affirmative conception of essence: the degree of power as affirmation of the essence of God" (Deleuze 1981, p. 140).

482 We must nevertheless nuance this claim by pointing out textual considerations that seem to justify Nietzsche's worries that Spinoza did not fully understand what is required for "thought-

empowerment. Both understand human beings as entities defined by striving or desire for empowerment. The difference stems from the various ways in which the structure of empowerment is understood. The concept of 'thoughtful' or 'enlightened egoism' is the placeholder for the similar ways in which they try to formulate normative commitments that take into account the better knowledge of the body they bring to their philosophies. I will now turn to a more detailed analysis of the key (implicit and structural) questions and issues that they both address in connection to their turn to the body.

III. Systematic comparison of their philosophical physiologies

In order to compare the philosophical physiologies of Spinoza and Nietzsche we must elucidate how the key notion of power is understood by the two thinkers and how they converge or differ on the nature of the knowledge provided by their respective physiologies. In section IV of this chapter, we will go on to ask what the normative consequences of their turns to the body are. In order to prepare the ground, we must start by outlining some key similarities and differences with regard to the context of their philosophical physiologies, namely their views on metaphysics.

1. The critique of metaphysics

In order to gain a systematic understanding of the grounds for Spinoza's and Nietzsche's critiques of the metaphysical notions considered in chapter I and II, we need to focus on their views on substance ontology using three key concepts as our guiding thread: 1) genuine multiplicity, 2) endogenous vs. exogenous power and the question of spontaneous activity and change, and 3) relational power.

ful egoism". Bar a small number of texts, most notably the *TIE*, Spinoza prefers the first person plural pronoun ('we') to the singular ('I'). We can observe this predilection clearly in the *Ethics*, together with a preference for impersonal formulations, e.g. "man thinks" (EIIA2; cf. Jaquet 2011, pp. 351-2). Furthermore, Spinoza argues that the greatest good is "common to all" (EIVp36). This can raise doubts over Spinoza's ability to think "thoughtful egoism" and to oppose it to the demands of social drives in the way Nietzsche does. Whether this is the case can only be discussed after an exposition of their respective ethical and political commitments.

We have already seen in chapter II the emphasis Nietzsche places on a discussion of these three topics in order to elaborate his critique of the philosophical tradition. Our task now is to see to what extent Spinoza's philosophy, with its emphasis on the notion of substance, can accommodate any, or all three, of these notions.

By way of introduction, it is important to qualify the claim that the concept of substance is central to Spinoza's philosophy, as formulated in the *Ethics*. One can find in the *Ethics* three concepts that are usually[483] taken to be synonymous: substance, God and nature. Of these three, "God" and "nature" are used by Spinoza all throughout the *Ethics,* up to and including book V. The term substance, however, is last used in the Physical Interlude, which means that Spinoza employs it for only the first quarter of his work. Is this simply an accident, or is the disappearance of this crucial term an indication that Spinoza comes to find it inadequate for his purposes? Should we take this to mean that Spinoza believes that the term "substance", with its traditional connotations, no longer suits the needs of his thinking? In the subsequent analysis of Spinoza's reformulation of this concept we must, bearing in mind the account of the traditional understanding of substance presented in chapter II, ask whether this reshaping makes Spinoza's notion of substance so far removed from the tradition that Nietzsche's criticisms no longer apply to it.

The first step is to delineate clearly the traits of the Spinozistic concept of substance that distinguish it from the traditional characterisation as a self-caused and self-identical principle of unity. We must concede that self-causation is key to Spinoza's concept of substance and that he uses it to conceptualise substance as the principle of 'spontaneity'. There is nothing outside substance that could limit its power or modify it in any way. Nevertheless, it would be misleading to understand substance as a substratum that remains identical over time and that is the source or origin of the spontaneous production of effects as something separate from its effects. Spinoza does not see substance as identical over time: substance

483 Distinctions have sometimes been suggested in the secondary literature. Curley, for instance, argues that we should read God or substance to refer solely to *natura naturans*, not *natura naturata* (Curley 1969, p. 42). For convincing arguments against this, see Melamed 2009, pp. 31-34.

is the absolutely infinite power of production that continuously re-constitutes itself, i.e. reality, and so can never be identical with itself. Substance, understood as incessant activity, does not require a substratum, or a stable, enduring thing that acts in order to bring forth its effects. One can speak about Spinoza's substance as identical with itself only in the weak sense that it is all that exists[484], or in the negative sense that there is nothing outside it that limits it, but not in any meaningful way with regard to its concrete content. Substance is a unity in the sense that various modes are expressions of the absolutely infinite productive power of substance, but they do not stand to substance as parts to a whole or as predicates related to one subject (the traditional way of understanding the relation between substance and its modes). Both claims require further explanation.

We will begin by debunking the argument that the relation between substance and finite modes can be understood as the relation between a whole and its parts[485]. This understanding of substance has the disadvantage that it conceives modes as fragments dependent on a pre-existing totality and in relation to which they are passive[486]. Next to the explicit disavaowal of such a view on Spinoza's part (EIp12 and p13), it is useful to outline the reasons why the logic of Spinoza's system precludes such a possibility. This view implies a) that substance or its attributes could be divided into finite modes, which is absurd (Deleuze 1968, p. 27) and b) that were we to add all the finite modes existing in the world we would obtain substance, or at least one of its attributes[487]. This claim is false according to Spinoza because the sum of all finite modes considered under each attributes is the infinite mediated mode of each attribute. I have already argued in the chapter on Spinoza that this view of substance, coupled with the emphasis on exogenous power, is a source of Spinoza's dissatisfaction with mechanism and that it is an

484 The best way to understand this "all" in Spinoza is, in Negri's words, as an "open totality".

485 "For Spinoza, the substances and things that could be found in nature were not discreet substances in the first place but rather the *constituent parts* of one substance, that is, God." (my italics; Emden 2014, p. 105). It is perhaps telling that we find this view in a book focused on Nietzsche's philosophy.

486 The view that substance, the whole, is constituted by its parts is precluded by Spinoza's commitment to monism.

487 While Deleuze sometimes speak of modes as parts of substance, he is careful to caution his readers that part refers to what expresses, not what composes a whole (Deleuze 1968, p. 288).

important reason why the Physical Interlude does not give us his definitive opinion on the nature of modes and of their finite power.

We can now turn to the second claim, that the subject-predicate relation does not do justice to Spinzoa's notion of substance. While we can endorse the claim that "Spinoza accepts change and movement in God" (Melamed 2009, p. 55), we must steer clear of understanding this claim in an Aristotelian framework. Substance is not the principle of unity or a persisting subject of change. Using EIp16, Melamed argues that the modes are predicates of substance, i.e. they inhere in substance and are properties of substance or God (Melamed 2009, p. 69). Properties follow from the definition of a thing (in this case substance): the definition gives the essence of a thing, while the intellect infers its *propria* (Melamed 2009, p. 68). While this description is valid, it does not do enough to capture the dynamic nature of Spinoza's substance. In order to capture productivity within an immanent horizon, we must turn to the category of expression, and use as our guiding thread Deleuze's analysis of this issue. The hypothesis that modes are constituent parts of substance implies that substance is an originary and already constituted totality and that the notion of finite modes picks out a number of given elements within it. On Deleuze's reading, however, we find no commitment to the belief that substance is enclosed within the horizon of being. What we have, rather, is an understanding of substance as an overabundant or absolute[488] power that is always in action, transcending itself and yet remaining within itself as immanent, and is, as a consequence, a principle of infinite production that is defined by its openness. The absolute divine power manifests itself as the power to produce everything and the power to think or conceive everything (Deleuze 1981, p. 135). With regard to the relation between substance and its modes, the best way to understand finite modes is to see them as various degrees of power which, in their limited manner, explicate[489] or express the absolute power of substance (Deleuze 1981, p. 143). The mode is defined by a degree of intensity, as a degree of divine

488 Infinite under each attribute, which means it is infinitely infinite (Deleuze 1981, p. 63).

489 To "explicate" (explicare), as Deleuze shows, is a key notion for Spinoza. It designates an operation of the understanding by which it perceives the movement of the thing it studies. This operation is intrinsic and not extrinsic to the thing, and points to a dynamic operation of development of the thing that is explicated (Deleuze 1981, p. 103).

power, and by a ratio of extended parts that are determined to form a structure characterised by the certain determinate ratio of motion and rest corresponding to the intensity of power that defines the mode in question (Deleuze 1981, p. 135). The mode, considered as a particular essence, is a physical, not a metaphysical reality (Deleuze 1968, p. 291). The transition from a lesser to a greater power is a change or variation in intensity or in the quality of power that a mode expresses.

After reaching the conclusion that the best way to understand the nature of modes is to see them as degrees or intensities of power that express the essence of substance, we are in a position to discuss the three guiding topics mentioned at the beginning of this subsection: genuine multiplicity, endogenous vs. exogenous power and the relational account of power.

1. Can degrees of power constitute genuine multiplicity, or are they inevitably, in virtue of the fact that they are derived from substance, less real than it? Are they mere appearances that indicate something deeper or more profound that grounds them? Even if Spinoza's philosophy has room for multiplicity, can it include qualitative diversity as a mark of genuine multiplicity? To begin with, we must clear up a methodological point: while Spinoza is perfectly happy to argue that things may have more or less reality depending on their degree of power, i.e. the effects they produce, it is abusive to attribute to him the claim that things are appearances in the sense of simulacra, or semblances of a deeper underlying reality. This follows from the claim that things or modes are distinct from substance (do not exist and cannot be conceived through themselves), but are not different[490] from substance in the sense of separate or superficial. Deleuze's claim that 'expression' is the category best suited to describe Spinoza's philosophy has the advantage that it shows how modes can be distinct from substance without being emanations or exemplars of a transcendent model. A Deleuzian inspired account of Spinozistic substance shows how substance is prior to its modes in a way that does not compromise the reality of modes.

This leaves us with the second, and more complicated issue of why we should

490 For an in depth analysis of numerical, formal and real distinctions in Spinoza see Deleuze 1968, chapters 1 and 3.

understand Spinozistic substance in terms of "qualitative variegation" (Schaffer 2010, p. 57) rather than as a homogenous thing or unity. One important point about modes that needs to be emphasized is that they are not discrete or fundamental entities on the model of atoms. In contrast to a pluralist metaphysics, Spinoza's philosophy does not commit him to postulate the existence of basic objects in the world[491]. A monism of the type adopted by Spinoza is well adapted to deal with the hypothesis that there are no fundamental entities in the world, –the foundation of pluralist metaphysics – and that every part has parts, indefinitely (Schaffer 2010, p. 62). The definition of a thing refers to a mode's power to act, its conatus, but it does not pick out a stable and fundamental entity that can be conceived outside of its context i.e. its causal nexus. This shows that, in order to obtain clarity on the question of qualitative distinctions, we need to inquire into Spinoza's relational account of power. Before we do this it is important to see whether Spinoza's commitment to substance stops him from having an account of endogenous power.

2. Can Spinoza speak of endogenous or intrinsic power or activity? Or should we derive all the power of finite modes from the absolutely infinite power of substance? These two possibilities can co-exist, as long as we understand the meaning of the derivation of finite from infinite power. Individual things or modes are "certain and determinate" expressions of power, which means specific or particular limited manifestations of power (Viljanen 2008, p. 103). They inhere in substance, or more precisely its attributes, so they cannot be understood in abstraction from it. We understand finite modes adequately if we know their definition, which picks out and describes the essence of a mode. The definition shows us a) how the definendum is produced and b) the properties or effects that necessarily follow from the essence of the definendum alone (Viljanen 2008, pp. 94-5). This means that the definition describes the dynamic nature of a thing insofar as it is not affected by external causes. This is the key to understanding what endogenous power, or activity, means for Spinoza: acting according to one's own nature or essence, namely out of internal, not external causes. Given that we can always be only partial causes of the effects we bring about, (we are part of

491 As we have seen in the analysis of the "simplest bodies" of the Physical Interlude in chapter I of this thesis.

nature), the real question regarding endogenous power is not whether it obtains in nature (we have already seen how Spinoza's critique of mechanism should be understood starting from the notion of endogenous power in chapter I), but what the ratio is between endogenously and exogenously caused action is: the objective of Spinoza's ethical theory is to increase endogenous activity, i.e. freedom.

This focus on the endogenous activity of modes within the context of substance defined as absolutely infinite power allows us to better understand the reasons behind an important shift in Spinoza's account of human nature. In EIIIpref Spinoza famously writes that "I shall consider human actions and appetites just as if it were a question of lines, planes, and bodies". In the later, and unfinished *TP*, Spinoza writes that he will deal with passions as with atmospheric phenomena, such as "heat, cold, storm, thunder" (TP I 4). The emphasis on power is, arguably, what led Spinoza look for a method that is better suited to capture the dynamic nature of affects. Coming very close to Descartes' method in the *Passions of the Soul*, Spinoza writes as a physicist rather than geometer (Jaquet 2004, p. 117).

3. So far, we have seen Spinoza describe nature as a multiplicity of degrees or intensities of power within the horizon of an immanence-based, monist account of substance or nature that does not annul multiplicity or compromise the endogenous power to act on the part of finite modes. How do these instances of power differ? What is the source of the variation in degrees of power or activity that characterizes modes and how does it account for qualitative diversity? Modes cannot be understood as static entities, in isolation or by themselves: they are not fundamental entities. The only way to grasp them is in connection to substance and to other instances of power. In order to provide a relational account of power while maintaining his commitment to monism, Spinoza would have to be committed to the following theses: a) the world is best described as an entangled system, i.e. it has more properties than just the sum of the properties of its modes or, phrased differently, entangled systems are systems that contain new information (Schaffer 2010, p. 51) and b) things in the world are best understood starting from the entangled system. This can result in two ways of adequately conceiving modes.

The first is to understand them as they follow from the power of substance: to connect them to God as their proximate cause. This path results in the following conundrum: it is difficult to explain how these various intensities of power interact with each other. Deleuze writes that all particular essences agree because they are all included in the production of each other (Deleuze 1968, p. 282). However, this leaves two important points incompletely elucidated. One is that common production does not necessarily result in agreement unless the production is governed by a rational principle. Therefore, this makes reason a prior principle that governs the absolutely infinite power of production of substance. The other important point is that it does not clarify the exact way in which essences can be said to contribute to each other's production. It seems that this is possible only insofar as essences are included in God and the interaction is mediated by God: we cannot speak of direct interaction between modes and so we cannot speak of a relational account of power. These difficulties build on what we have seen in chapter I to be the difficulties that knowledge of the third kind has in explaining an increase or decrease in power.

The second is to conceive things as dynamically coherent multiplicities[492] transitioning to greater or smaller degrees of power. The logic of his thinking commits Spinoza to a relational account of power in which the world is structured according to power relations and transitions that constitute the essence of the striving of each thing[493] (conatus*)*. This means that the focus is on the causal interactions with other modes and that what constitutes a mode is its capacity to produce an effect:

> 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 (EIID7)

The various ways in which modes affect other modes and influence their power

492 For a discussion of two types of multiplicity on Spinoza: of infinitely small bodies and of affects, see chapter I, section II.

493 Given Spinoza's fundamentally relational power ontology a thing cannot exist or be fully understood on its own, so any strong distinction between outside and inside breaks down (see Jaquet 2011).

to act can be subsumed under four headings: they increase (*augetur*), diminish (*minuitur*), aid (*juvatur*) or restrain (*coercetur*) their power (Jaquet 2004, pp. 163-5). This understanding is provided by the second kind of knowledge, which shows the relations under which existing modes agree or are opposed to one another (Deleuze 1968, p. 279). It is solely in this kind of knowledge that we can speak of a genuine multiplicity, one whose reality is not jeopardised by the existence of substance and which allows qualitative diversity precisely through a relational notion of power. This is possible because the relations that obtain within this genuine multiplicity can either be of agreement or of conflict or tension. Qualitative diversity follows from power relations that are either of agreement or conflict. Nevertheless, it is impossible to ignore in Spinoza the tendency towards emphasizing the third kind of knowledge. This entails a view of substance in which the various essences are fundamentally in agreement. Spinoza's commitment to the rational structure of substance percolates throughout Spinoza's philosophy and, we shall see, has significant consequences for his normative thinking.

2. The motivations behind Spinoza's and Nietzsche's turns to the body

Both Spinoza and Nietzsche are thinkers of immanence and for both the turn to the body is part of their projects of naturalisation, as we have seen in the first two chapters. Their philosophical physiologies are motivated by both theoretical and practical goals. The turn to the body, with its emphasis on self-knowledge, is the best way to undermine metaphysical illusions and values that have enabled theologians and moralists to maintain their power and inhibit authentic self-transformation on both individual and societal levels. A key difference between Spinoza and Nietzsche lies in the fact that Spinoza sees his project as dealing with eternal philosophical problems while Nietzsche is reacting to a crisis of the present. Nietzsche places his philosophical discourse in the context of a historical-developmental account of individuals and societies that does not have a parallel in Spinoza's philosophy. This claim requires further explanation Therefore, in the remainder of this section I will deal first with a) how Spinoza and Nietzsche draw out the deleterious effects of metaphysical values in practical terms and with b) how they understand these metaphysical illusions in the context of the crisis of the present and as eternal philosophical problems, respectively.

a) Spinoza's philosophy, the turn to the body included, has a fundamentally practical orientation. In order to obtain freedom, Spinoza's ethical goal, we must overcome the obstacles of ignorance and superstition:

> Since dread is the cause of superstition, it plainly follows that everyone is naturally prone to it (despite the theory that some people hold that it arises from men's having a confused idea of God). It also follows that superstition must be just as variable and unstable as all absurd leaps of the mind and powerful emotions are, and can only be sustained by hope and hatred, anger and deception. (TTP Preface 5)

Superstition is "Spinoza's shorthand for subservience to theology and ecclesiastical control" (TTP Introduction, p. xxiv), subservience fuelled by unreflected adherence to the metaphysical illusions he criticizes. How does superstition work and why does Spinoza hold it to have deleterious effects? First, in our discussion of superstition, we must distinguish between its source, or origin, and the manner in which it is reinforced. The cause of superstition is dread, or fear (*metus*), as Spinoza writes here and in TTP Preface (3 and 4). People are subject to fear because they have "a boundless desire" for the "good things of fortune", which "are quite uncertain" (TTP Preface 1). People desire them because "most people have no self-knowledge" (TTP Preface 2), in other words, people lack "sure judgment" (TTP Preface 1). When the mind lacks self-knowledge[494] it finds itself "in a state of doubt" and is "ready to believe anything" (TTP Preface 1). This describes the state of the person who is guided by passions, which are unstable, and not by reason (TTP Preface, 5). The illusions that dominate people in this state are discussed by Spinoza in EIapp and have been discussed in chapter I. What makes Spinoza's discussion of superstition in the *TTP* interesting for us is that Spinoza raises the following problem: while "nothing governs the multitude as effectively as superstition", it is also "variable and unstable" and cannot hold sway over people for very long (TTP Preface 5). Given these premises, how can Spinoza explain the force of superstition and the capacity of priests, or of

494 I read self-knowledge to mean knowledge of what "a body can do",i.e. of its active affects. This is in line with Spinoza's critique of philosophers, (in TP I 1), namely that they misunderstand affects, and therefore the nature of human beings.

statesmen who use religion, to hold on to power[495]? Here, we see that besides the "natural" explanation that "all men are born ignorant of the causes of things" (EIapp), Spinoza also discusses historical explanations:

> To cope with this difficulty[496], a great deal of effort has been devoted to adorning religion, whether true or false, with pomp and ceremony, so that everyone would find it more impressive than anything else and observe it zealously with the highest degree of fidelity. (TTP Preface 6)

In order to govern the people and place them in a state of servitude (or bondage), the theologians have tried to utilize religion in order to exploit superstition and the natural disposition towards fear that humans possess. In the hands of interested parties, religion has morphed into "external ritual" and faith has turned into "credulity and prejudice". We are now in a position to point out why Spinoza is critical of superstition: it turns "rational men into brutes" by preventing them from using their "own free judgment" and distinguishing "truth from falsehood" (TTP Preface 9) through the use of rituals. This amounts to the disempowering effect of superstition on human beings and society.

While it is important to show that Spinoza wrote his philosophy with the specific historical and political contexts and issues of his day in mind, we must emphasize that he formulates his project as an attempt to deal with eternal philosophical questions in a way that Nietzsche does not. It is useful to note that they both argue against the detrimental effect theologians and the metaphysical and moral illusions they promote have on humanity, but we must be sensitive to the distinct ways in which they understand the role played by theologians. Spinoza presents them as exploiting a number of given or "natural" weaknesses inherent in human nature (errors described and undermined through the turn to the body), and, while they do invest considerable effort into maintaining their privileged position, it does not follow that the theologians are responsible for the frailties of human nature.

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495 The *TTP* is set up as a critique of "the many men who take the outrageous liberty" to "utilize religion to win the allegiance of the common people" (TTP Preface 8) and so strive to obtain secular authority and a "worldly career" (TTP Preface 9).

496 The fact the superstition is variable and unstable and therefore shaky ground for theologians to build their power on.

The turn to the body, with its emphasis on the empowering role of knowledge and of the transition from passive to active affects, is perfectly suited to counter the weaknesses that theologians and moralists exploit.

Nietzsche formulates much of his philosophy, including the turn to the body, as a reaction to his diagnosis of the crisis of the present. At first, he appears to formulate his insights in a manner close to Spinoza. According to Nietzsche the priests, or the "philosophers, to the extent that they have been dogmatists"[497] (JGB Vorrede 5.11), have played a pivotal role in creating the illusions responsible for state of décadence that characterizes modernity.

> We know, our *consciences* are conscious of it these days –, just what value those uncanny inventions of the priests and the church have, *how they were used* to reduce humanity to such a state of self-desecration that the sight of it fills you with disgust – the concepts 'beyond', 'Last Judgment', 'immortality of the soul', the 'soul' itself; these are instruments of torture, these are systems of cruelty that enable the priests to gain control, maintain control…[498] (AC 38 6.210)

The nihilistic values discussed in the chapter on Nietzsche are the priest's, moralist's or philosopher's "inventions". However, Nietzsche differs from Spinoza in formulating a developmental account of the physiological disposition that makes it possible for these errors to take root. What in Spinoza is a "natural" propensity towards fear and superstition is for Nietzsche the result of a process, as he describes it in the *Genealogy*. While this process will be discussed in greater detail in the normative section of this chapter, we can anticipate by saying that humans undergo a change in which the outward expression of their drives is inhibited and turned inwards. This leads to physiological exhaustion and suffering which the priest can

497 "Philosophen, sofern sie Dogmatiker waren".

498 "Wir wissen, unser Gewissen weiss es heute –, was überhaupt jene unheimlichen Erfindungen der Priester und der Kirche werth sind, wozu sie dienten, mit denen jener Zustand von Selbstschändung der Menschheit erreicht worden ist, der Ekel vor ihrem Anblick machen kann – die Begriffe 'Jenseits', 'jüngstes Gericht', 'Unsterblichkeit der Seele', die 'Seele' selbst; es sind Folter-Instrumente, es sind Systeme von Grausamkeiten,
vermöge deren der Priester Herr wurde, Herr blieb …".

pretend to cure, while in reality only offering a palliative that may diminish the suffering but in fact accentuates the sickness. This palliative is a type of morality (slave morality) that Nietzsche criticizes and that further deepens the physiological degeneration in a way not paralleled in Spinoza's analysis. The importance of a historical understanding of the ground of development of nihilistic values is underlined by Nietzsche's use of the method of "genealogy", used as a means to inquire into the value of morality and to "induce doubt and self-reflections" in the readers (Saar 2008, pp. 299, 312). Genealogical research has at least three crucial aspects: 1) the study of the history or evolution of a phenomenon, 2) the analysis of its function and effectiveness and 3) a critical evaluation (van Tongeren 2006, p. 390). According to Saar, genealogy is situated between history and philosophy and is characterised by a "specific range of objects, a specific mode of explication and a specific textual form", which make genealogy a "distinct, innovative and highly theoretical way of 'writing history'" (Saar 2008, p. 298).

Despite the differences, Spinoza and Nietzsche come close by arguing that the priests gain power because they exploit the weakness generated by human beings' lack of self-knowledge, which for both implies ignorance of the body. The turn to the body serves both thinkers in their common project to undercut the illusory beliefs and promote the enhancement of power and self-overcoming of both individuals and society.

It is instructive to consider now in more detail the topic of teleology, as a case study of the more general discussion so far. For both Spinoza and Nietzsche the critique of teleology plays a privileged role in their assessments of the notion of substance and in their critiques of the philosophical tradition. Both converge in using a naturalistic and immanent framework in which teleology is discredited. For both, humans are not a special part of nature, and do not have the ontic privilege one can identify in Hegel or Heidegger (Yovel 1992, p. 112). Nevertheless, there is a difference in emphasis[499] between the two. Spinoza argues against teleology because he wants to reformulate the notion of God as coextensive with nature. This

499 This analysis builds on, but does not repeat all the details of their respective critiques of teleology, which can be found in the first two chapters of this thesis.

means that he is focused on arguing that there is no goal or final cause to be found outside nature and everything is produced by efficient causation. While Nietzsche accepts the thesis that we are part of nature and that there is nothing outside nature that transcends it, his critique of teleology has a slightly different explicit focus. Nietzsche is concerned that the belief in teleology restricts our understanding of becoming and that the belief that the possibilities available to human beings are reducible to a small number of pre-determined teloi is bound to stunt our capacity for development and self transformation[500]. Nietzsche's arguments target primarily this impoverishment or simplification of our understanding of reality and of human nature, ideas current in western thinking from Aristotle down to, perhaps, the modern notion of 'teleonomy'[501] in biology. While this concern is not as prominent in Spinoza, we can nevertheless see from his discussion of the illusory nature of the values of 'good' and 'evil' that he is also interested in undermining the notion of pre-determined model or ideals according to which we should act. Both Spinoza's and Nietzsche's philosophical physiologies find their motivations in the unacceptability of a pre-determined mode of behaviour that presents itself as universal, to the exclusion of all possible alternatives.

3. Conscious Thought

In his work on Spinoza, Deleuze argues that there are three great resemblances between the Dutch thinker and Nietzsche: they both denounce "consciousness", "values" and "sad passions"[502] (Deleuze 1981, p. 27). According to Deleuze both criticize our propensity to marvel at consciousness, its will and its effect on the body while we are unable to say what a body, a far richer phenomenon, can do

500 The worry about teleology undermining our ability to see what we could accomplish can also be found in Spinoza's claim that "we do not know what a body can do" (EIIIp2s) together with the claim that it is our task to discover its power.

501 Teleonomy is the science of adaptation, according to the principle that the body's structures and functions serve an overall purpose and is "teleology made respectable by Darwin" (Dawkins 1999, p. 294-5). Dawkins presents his book "The Extended Phenotype" as an essay in teleonomy and presents its main problem as deciding the "nature of the entity for whose benefit adaptations may be said to exist", viz. the species, group, individual or gene(s) (Dawkins 1999, p. 81). To what extent this resembles traditional teleology and what the details of a Nietzschean or Spinozistic critique of this notion might be is beyond the scope of this thesis.

502 The last two will be the subject of the section on normative thought.

(Deleuze 1981, p. 28). He argues that Spinoza's turn to the body should not be read as a devaluing of thought in relation to extension – that would be precluded by Spinoza's parallelism. The meaning of the turn is to be found in the devaluing of consciousness with regard to thought. According to Deleuze this amounts to a discovery of the unconscious (Deleuze 1981, p. 29). Consciousness is the locus of illusions for Spinoza because it ignores the order of causes (Deleuze 1981, p. 29). Prima facie it seems that a similar argument can be found in Nietzsche: consciousness is a superficial phenomenon that falsifies reality (see chapter II) and should be analysed as a constellation of symptoms or signs of deeper, pre-conscious physiological processes. However, these similarities need to be unpacked and analysed beyond Deleuze's claims, if we are to understand the deep systematic connections and differences that the French thinker only alludes to. In order to further buttress Deleuze's point, we can mention another crucial similarity between Spinoza's and Nietzsche's views of the role of consciousness: both argue that by simplifying reality it performs a function crucial for life. In chapter I (p. 72) we have seen how inadequate knowledge, in spite of the fact that it fails to give an accurate description of the causal nexuses that govern reality, is successful in presenting us with practical guidelines that allow individuals to successfully navigate practical obstacles and survive. In chapter II (section II.2.c.), we have analysed how the simplifying or falsifying function of consciousness is revealed by Nietzsche to have a crucial role in enabling the individual to survive in a world of becoming. For both thinkers, this practical role played by consciousness is the expression of the power to act of the body, a power that is not necessarily aimed at an increase in knowledge, but rather at practical goals.

The first important difference is that, while for Spinoza unreflected thinking ignores causal relations in the world, Nietzsche criticizes a picture of reality structured by causal relations (chapter II, pp. 156-7). Both believe that we should uncover the deeper layers behind our immediate, unreflected thought, but what they expect to find is significantly different. Nietzsche argues that the causally governed picture of the world advocated by Spinoza is, in virtue of being a simplification, an example of falling into the illusions generated by conscious thought in its pursuit of a manageable picture of reality.

Second, and perhaps most importantly, we cannot find in Spinoza a thematic discussion of the conscious/unconscious binomial, and so the use of these terms by Deleuze has the disadvantage of masking important aspects of Spinoza's view of the importance of obtaining adequate knowledge of the body. The extraneous imposition of these terms has the advantage of opening up the path for a possible comparison between Spinoza and Nietzsche, but at the same time it hides dynamics of knowledge that diverge significantly. Spinoza contrasts our natural state of ignorance ("all men are born ignorant of the causes of things") with adequate knowledge. To use the term 'consciousness' to refer to the natural state of ignorance is misleading because a) adequate knowledge is also what we would call consciousness and b) while Spinoza never has an explicit discussion of consciousness, many commentators argue that the place to discuss such a topic in Spinoza is his analysis of the notion of "ideas of ideas"[503], which would in fact make conscious knowledge count as (at least partial) adequate knowledge, a function of the mind's power of thinking. Spinoza's point is that to transform inadequate into adequate knowledge means to transform passive into active affects. Due to his parallelism, it is clear that an empowering transformation in knowledge must imply a transformation in the body's power to act. This implies that adequate knowledge, or consciousness, is not an "organ" or a late development of the organism as Nietzsche holds, but is identical with the body insofar as the latter acts.

Because Nietzsche holds the view that consciousness is only an organ of the body, he faces the following problem: even if we could gain conscious knowledge (what other kind is there?) of the body, it would not have the immediate transformative effects it has in Spinoza. According to Nietzsche, our knowledge of the body is not sufficient for any practical purpose because we "first need to persuade the *body*" [504](GD Streifzüge 47 6.149). This text continues as follows:

503 See Gueroult (1974, p. 50) and the survey of similar opinions in Nadler (2008, p. 581). For a dissenting view, see Nadler (2008, p. 592): "consciousness is a function of (because identical with) a mind's internal complexity (which is an expression of its body's complexity)".

504 "man muss den Leib zuerst überreden". How exactly this might be achieved will be discussed in the normative section.

> Strict adherence to significant and refined gestures and an obligation to live only with people who do not 'let themselves go' is more than enough to become significant and refined: two or three generations later and everything is already *internalized.* It is crucial for the fate of individuals as well as peoples that culture begin in the *right* place – *not* in the 'soul' (which was the disastrous superstition of priests and half-priests): the right place is the body, gestures, diet, physiology, *everything else* follows from this…[505]

Next to the unsurprising critique of those who "despised the body", the "priests and half-priests", this text points out the fundamental difference between Spinoza and Nietzsche on this issue, namely that Nietzsche, due to the absence of the doctrine of parallelism, must find a way to *internalize* the results of whatever knowledge of the "body, gestures, diet, physiology" we might obtain[506]. "*Everything else*" follows not from pure knowledge, but from the incorporation of this knowledge. Better knowledge is not automatically transformative for Nietzsche in the same way that it is for Spinoza. Spinoza and Nietzsche share the belief in the importance of increasing our knowledge of the body, but while Spinoza claims that what is unconscious should be brought to consciousness (which can contain adequate knowledge), Nietzsche has the further task of incorporating that knowledge into the body, if it is to be empowering. The turn to the body is a tool used in order to uncover pre-conscious processes and in this respect Deleuze's thesis reveals something important about Spinoza's and Nietzsche's thinking. However, given their positions as philosophers, their task is not to renounce conscious thought but to find ways to expand it and make it capable of understanding its nature and limitations.

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505 "Die strenge Aufrechterhaltung bedeutender und gewählter Gebärden, eine Verbindlichkeit, nur mit Menschen zu leben, die sich nicht 'gehen lassen', genügt vollkommen, um bedeutend und gewählt zu werden: in zwei, drei Geschlechtern ist bereits Alles verinnerlicht. Es ist entscheidend über das Loos von Volk und Menschheit, dass man die Cultur an der rechten Stelle beginnt – nicht an der 'Seele' (wie es der verhängnissvolle Aberglaube der Priester und Halb-Priester war): die rechte Stelle ist der Leib, die Gebärde, die Diät, die Physiologie, der Rest folgt daraus…".

506 A similar thought is present in the earlier FW 11, where Nietzsche speaks of: "The *task* of *assimilating knowledge* and making it instinctive" ("Aufgabe, das Wissen sich einzuverleiben und instinctiv zu machen" FW 11 3.383)

4. Similarities and differences in Spinoza's and Nietzsche's understandings of the body

In chapter I I argued that Spinoza tries to think the body as a multiplicity of affects that expresses the power to act that defines substance. The power to act of finite modes (the conatus), a limited and precise expression of the absolutely infinite power to act of substance, constitutes the essence of each finite mode or thing. My question is: to what extent is Nietzsche's understanding of the body comparable to Spinoza's (the power to affect and be affected in a great number of ways). In order to do this, their respective understandings of the body need to be unpacked and compared in relation to the following questions: 1) What is the main parallel between Spinoza's and Nietzsche's understanding of the body? 2) How do their notions of power converge and differ and, consequently, given their diverging views on substance, can they formulate similar accounts of power? 3) What role does conflict play in their accounts of power? and 4) How do they think multiplicity with regard to the body?

1. Both thinkers transform the question of what a body is into the question of what a body can do, i.e. its activity, effects or active affects. Both argue that we do not have or possess a body, but that we are our body. They share an emphasis on the notion of activity in trying to understand the body and so this comparative study must focus on making explicit the points of contact and the differences between their respective turns to the body starting from the notions of endogenous power and genuine multiplicity. A focus on the notion of power can serve as the guiding thread for unpacking the structure of their respective turns to the body and, subsequently, the ethical and political consequences of their appeal to the body.

An investigation of the power of the body to express and transform itself raises the question of whether we can speak of a pure plasticity of the body. This problem is touched on by Benoit who argues that, with Nietzsche, we should distinguish between a "weak conception of conservation" and a "selective conservation". The weak conception is indeed repudiated by Nietzsche, while the selective conservation (*Selbsterhaltung*) is not only compatible with, but a precondition for auto-expansion (*Selbsterweiterung*), growth (*Wachstum*) or intensification

(*Steigerung*). Benoit argues that we should understand this second type of conservation as an art which, through the courageous taking of risks, is able to meticulously select the best food, place, climate, or recreation (Benoit 2014, pp. 489-92). Ultimately, however, this type of beneficial conservation only has an instrumental value: as Benoit writes, the will to power may sometimes slow down its tempo, but it does fundamentally consist in self-overcoming, and can lead in certain cases to the "disappearance of the self". The dynamic of the real, as Nietzsche sees it, is not guided by a static tendency (Benoit 2014, pp. 492-3). Using the analysis of the notion of "Type" from chapter II (pp. 129-130) we can, by using Nietzsche's philosophical physiology, take this analysis of the tension between expansion and conservation further and uncover a number of interesting parallels with Spinoza.

Nietzsche borrows from the life sciences the use of "type", because he is attracted to the emphasis on the internal structure of the organism and to the imperative to explain life-forms through more than just blind mechanical processes. He sometimes speaks of types as immutable in order to argue against the possibility of radical, unencumbered change. The notion of type finds its counterpart in Spinoza's use of the concept of a "certain determinate ratio of motion and rest" In spite of the difficulties surrounding the Physical Interlude, Spinoza uses this phrase throughout the *Ethics*. This means that while he advocates a dynamic understanding of power as expression, Spinoza is aware of the importance of restricting what might seem an unlimited capacity for empowerment. He argues that as long as the parts that form an individual communicate their motion to each other as before, the changes that the parts undergo do not alter the nature of the individual. Two important consequences follow from this. First, both Spinoza and Nietzsche add a conservative element to their discussion of the power to act of the body in order to formulate an account of personal identity without appealing to metaphysical entities. Second, as we will see in the normative section, the flourishing or enhancement of the specific power to act each body has, depends on knowledge of what makes each body unique. The absence of pure plasticity is not a hindrance to the project of empowerment, but rather a key ingredient that makes an informed account of what empowerment is possible.

2. They both have an immanent and naturalised concept of power, which they believe offers the best description of the nature of reality. Both strive to offer an understanding of power in terms of degrees of activity, in which the endogenous power to produce effects is understood starting from within each thing rather than as a reaction to external causes. This allows us to understand the motivations behind their respective critiques of mechanism and to notice that they converge in their critique of a notion of power that is purely exogenous. Nietzsche's critique of Spinoza has helped us highlight how, for the Dutch philosopher, a key issue is whether the endogenous power of finite modes can be derived from the immanent power of substance. We have seen how Spinoza thinks power under the category of expression (of God's absolute power): insofar as a finite mode acts, and therefore expresses its essence, its power can only increase (disempowerment can come only from outside causes, so not from the mode's actions). There is nothing in the essence of a mode that can disempower it. For Nietzsche however, power is an intrinsically pluralistic, conflictual and relational notion (between will to power organisations acting on each other). He displaces the notion of substance/being with the notion of activity, and argues that power manifests itself through expansion and squandering of itself. Under Mayer's influence Nietzsche thinks power as accumulation followed by sudden discharge which exhausts itself in the production of effects. Endogenous power, for Nietzsche, must be understood starting from the premise of inner conflict or tension, the condition for accumulation and discharge, within the multiplicity that constitutes a living being. This tension can be creative or destructive, depending on the structure of the inner conflict, as discussed in chapter II.

Before moving on to the issue of conflict, it is important to take stock of a key similarity between Spinoza's and Nietzsche's accounts of power, especially as it is manifested in the case of individuals, as desire. This similarity is crucial because it places them in opposition to the traditional way of understanding desire. This traditional account can be traced back to Plato and, importantly for Nietzsche, is at the core of Schopenhauer's account of will. In the *Symposium* the essence of *Eros*, of desire is need, or lack. Even the love of wisdom, philosophy, is defined as the lack of wisdom. The satisfaction of desire, the positive state

of fulfilment, is the negation or annihilation of desire seen as lack. To desire is to desire something other and the goal of desire is "its *end* in static being" (Rethy 1988, p. 27). Nietzsche reverses this concept of desire and of the nature of philosophy in particular. He reformulates the notion of desire, or *Eros,* in terms of intoxication (*Rausch*): "The essential thing about intoxication is the feeling of fullness and increasing strength"[507] (GD Streifzüge 8 6.116). Intoxication is designated as the "physiological precondition"[508] indispensible for "art or any sort of aesthetic action or vision"[509] (GD Streifzüge 8 6.116). It is, as such, "an expression of an excess and not a search to transcend a deficiency" (Rethy 1988, p. 30). Nietzsche's project of affirmation of life consists in the affirmation of the whole and is not restricted to "the flight of beauty" Plato speaks of (Rethy 1988, p. 30). Affirmation is "the voluntary seeking out of the detested and notorious sides of existence" (Rethy 1988, p. 30). A similar reformulation of the notion of desire can be found in Spinoza, albeit not in the context of a discussion of art. The consequence of Spinoza's critique of teleology is that he understands power only using efficient and immanent causes. Desire, or the essence of a finite mode, is "appetite together with consciousness of the appetite" (EIIIp9s). While it is true that desire is desire of something, the object of desire acts as an efficient cause (insofar as it is a representation, see chapter I, pp. 83-4), not as a final cause. Desire cannot be understood as the lack or need of the object of desire, but as an expression of power that expresses itself in its striving. For Spinoza a "lack" is nothing, so nothing could result from it, not even desire (Schrivjers 1999, p. 72). For both Spinoza and Nietzsche desire is a dynamic expression of fullness. This implies that the satisfaction of desire does not signify its annihilation through the attainment of a static end. We need to be careful in this discussion of desire in order to distinguish between the object of desire, the object towards which desire moves us, and the cause of desire, i.e. the efficient or adequate cause as Spinoza would phrase it. The object of desire does not act as cause, while our representation of the object, together with other internal factors move us to an

507 "Das Wesentliche am Rausch ist das Gefühl der Kraftsteigerung und Fülle".
508 "Physiologische Vorbedingung".
509 "es irgend ein ästhetisches Thun und Schauen".

adequate expression of our power to act[510]. Spinoza's understanding of activity, i.e. the production of effects, follows from the essence of finite modes necessarily (chapter I, pp. 80-81). To act according to our needs or desires does not mean finding what is useful for us in order to persevere in the same state, but rather focusing on producing effects of which we are the adequate cause. A critique of Nietzsche's objections to Spinoza's notion of conatus understood as self-preservation not only allows us to clarify Spinoza's notion of power, but points us towards an adequate understanding of his ethical theory.

3. Spinoza acknowledges the existence of conflict in the order of nature and develops an account of the body that explains the variations in power of each finite mode. Nevertheless, his notion of power does not allow him to think conflict as an intrinsic part of the essence or definition of a finite mode (it would be a self-contradiction and his theory of definitions precludes it), nor does he employ conflict as a conceptual tool in order to describe the relations between essences within substance. It is true that in EIIIp6, when Spinoza introduces the notion of conatus, he explains it using the phrase of "striving against". This however, is an explanation of conatus, not a definition, and Spinoza never gives a definition of conatus in the *Ethics*. Given Spinoza's attention to detail in his terminology, this fact must be significant. Spinoza's account of conatus in this proposition situates it in the order of nature, in which resistance and opposition are inevitable, and so conatus has the ability to (sometimes) manifest itself in conflict. Resistance is the form that conatus may occasionally take in its interaction with other modes. This does not imply that conflict is embedded in the definition or essence of conatus, nor does it entail that conflict is empowering.

Spinoza argues that insofar as we express our power (always a function of virtuous behaviour guided by reason) we agree in nature with other rational agents. Conflict is either something to be overcome or a preparatory step in the development of virtuous behaviour. Resistance is not an intrinsic part of the essence of power. In the section on normative thought I will argue that resistance is the background

510 If we are moved to act by external causes then we cannot speak of "our" desire. We are not its adequate cause.

against which empowerment can occur, but that given Spinoza's conceptual vocabulary it cannot be seen as an essential part of empowerment. It does not play the same positive role that resistance and conflict play in Nietzsche's views on power. In his study of the immanent nature of power in Spinoza[511], Saar picks out a number of key traits this concept has: it is constitutive of reality and agency (Saar 2013, pp. 140, 154); it is relational insofar as knowledge of any finite thing is relational and depends on the causal nexus (Saar 2013, p. 143); and relations of power are not a zero-sum game – they are not reducible only to opposition and can bring about a general increase in power (Saar 2013, p. 152)[512]. Saar points out that the question of Spinoza's political thought is how best to bind individual powers in order to increase the power of both individuals and of the whole (Saar 2013, p. 152). Nevertheless, he also claims that power is ambivalent in nature: it can empower or disempower other finite modes with which a thing interacts (Saar 2013, p. 168). This claim is problematic because authentic power for Spinoza is always an expression of rational agreement: it is impossible for two modes to act according to their own essences, which agree in nature, and yet find each other in opposition. Saar is correct if we consider only Spinoza's politics: Spinoza's realism commits him to argue that politics is the realm of chance encounters and contingency, because we do not have adequate knowledge in politics. This is a practical obstacle specific to practical philosophy, but it should not alter our perception of the ontological points Spinoza makes about power. A similarly problematic reading of Spinoza's notion of power, as including both active and passive power, can be found in Armstrong (2013, p. 17), who speaks of the "interdependence of passive and active power and of how an increase in the one entails an increase in the other" and in Schrijvers (1999, p. 67), who speaks of the "special cooperation between passivity and activity", which "should rather increase simultaneously". This stems from what Schrijvers claims is Spinoza's confusion between a wider sense of "power of acting" (when one is either partial or complete/adequate cause) and a particular meaning, in which one is adequate cause. However, the reference to a "passive" or "wider" meaning of

511 Saar, *Die Immanenz der Macht: Politische Theorie nach Spinoza.*

512 Under what conditions the interaction between different individuals is not one of confrontation but of cooperation and mutual benefit will be discussed in the normative section.

power should be read as the acknowledgment of the finite nature of modes: we sometimes encounter resistance and are acted on. We are modified by outside causation, but insofar as we are receptive and resist it we express (a greater or smaller degree) of our power to act. True power to act is always essentially active and passive power refers to what is in fact active power manifested in the context of overcoming resistance (Jaquet 2004, pp. 158-161).

Nietzsche's notion of power results in a picture of becoming (the dynamic character of reality) in which conflict and resistance are not only ontologically constitutive, but (sometimes) empowering[513]. The power to re-shape and overcome oneself is an integral and necessary part of life-enhancement and affirmation: a process of non-teleological self-transformation. Nietzsche thinks power relations as relations of domination and submission which are not mediated by what, in *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche calls the small reason. Power expressions for Nietzsche are characterised by struggle rather than rational agreement (struggle is ontologically constitutive, but does not exclude the possibility of co-operation or self-organisation).

4. There are two types or accounts of multiplicities in Spinoza, as we have seen in chapter I: of affects and of (the simplest) bodies, composing larger bodies (finite modes under the attribute of extension). If we take Spinozistic substance as an expressive, open totality, and view it under the second kind of knowledge, there is no reason to argue that Spinoza cannot think genuine multiplicity. Spinoza's understanding of conatus includes the possibility of resistance and conflict between modes, as long as they are considered in the order of nature. However, his philosophy runs into difficulties on this point when he considers essences (under the third kind of knowledge). From this perspective, it is not clear how Spinoza can think any kind of conflict or contradiction between or within essences. One consequence of this is that he finds it difficult to account for variations in power precisely because such transitions require an account of opposition between finite modes. The overall tendency of Spinoza's thought is to search for ways in which conflict is minimized, and this follows from our hopefully increased rational

513 The thought that resistance or conflict can act as a stimulant for empowerment, as in the case of the *Agon*, can be traced back to at least as early as *Homer's Wettkampf* (1872).

and adequate understanding of substance as the immanent cause of essences, i.e. degrees of power, that find themselves in agreement. While for Nietzsche genuine multiplicity is unthinkable without tension or conflict (whether potential or actual), Spinoza is driven by his understanding of substance as a rational structure to argue that the multiplicity of intensities of power is by no means necessarily connected to conflict. If we were to have a perfectly adequate understanding of the world (on the model of God's infinite understanding), we could grasp the world as a multiplicity of essences that agree with each other. Nietzsche's understanding of reason as a late organic development stops him from granting it the same fundamental ontological role it has in Spinoza, where the world is essentially and fully thinkable by reason. This leads us to conclude that the most fertile ground for comparison is focusing on Spinoza's understanding of the world through the second kind of knowledge and that this provides us with the most comprehensive overview of the power to act of the body and of interactions between the body, seen as a multiplicity of affects, and nature. Spinoza's and Nietzsche's turns to the body come closest here, because only here can we adequately understand struggle, resistance and disempowerment in Spinoza's philosophy.

This important result, that focuses our attention on the notion of affect (*affectus*) as the central concept of Spinoza's discourse on the body, helps us connect it with one of the most important terms of Nietzsche's philosophical physiology, viz. drive (*Trieb)*. Spinoza's discussion of affects is constitutive of what has been called, in the literature, a mixed discourse[514]. Affects are psycho-physiological realities that can be known either starting from the attribute of thought or of extension (Beyssade 1999, pp. 114-6). These descriptions are used depending on the nature of the specific issues discussed and on the advantages[515] of thinking under one attribute or the other. The condition of possibility of this psycho-physiological discourse is Spinoza's doctrine of attributes. This is often referred to as parallelism, as has

514 Spinoza sets the foundations for the mixed discourse centred on affects in proposition 14 to 31 of book II, while its systematic treatment is accomplished in book III of the *Ethics* (Jaquet 2004, p. 44).

515 Is it helpful to understand all the bodily events involved in the affect of generosity? Or, conversely, should we have all the ideas of all muscles and cells in order to swim? (Jaquet 2004, p. 33).

been done in this thesis as well, even if this term does not belong to Spinoza. While its use presents certain advantages, it can be misleading if we take it to refer to monotony of expression, i.e. a simplistic systematic translation between attributes. Instead of parallelism, Spinoza speaks of equality of power manifested under different attributes, which does not lead to uniformity, but to diversity of expression (Gueroult 1974, p. 64; Jaquet 2004, pp. 32-5).

Without the foundation in the doctrine of attributes, Nietzsche faces a similar task in his turn to the body, namely providing a rich description of the body starting from its power to act, a description that connects it to a psychological description of humans while avoiding the dangers of mind-body dualism. Drives, for Nietzsche, play a crucial role both in his psychology and in his physiology. Recalling the analysis in chapter II (pp. 100-102), drives form an indefinitely multiple and interconnected diversity that interpret the world and have an evaluative function. This function, which runs deeper than conscious thought, reveals what, taking our cue from Spinoza, we can call Nietzsche's mixed discourse. The dynamic multiplicity of drives, just like Spinoza's affects, is structured by relations of conflict and co-operation. This can help us work towards the elucidation of Nietzsche's somewhat criptic mention of "physio-psychology":

> A genuine physio-psychology has to contend with unconscious resistances in the heart of the researcher, it has "the heart" against it. Even a doctrine of the reciprocal dependence of the "good" and the "bad" drives will (as a refined immorality) cause distress and aversion in a strong and sturdy conscience – as will, to an even greater extent, a doctrine of the derivation of all the good drives from the bad.[516] (JGB 23 5.38)

Leaving aside here the topic of "resistances in the heart of the researcher", we must notice Nietzsche's suggestion that a "genuine physio-psychology" must contain a doctrine of drives, whether this amounts to a description of the reciprocal

516 "Eine eigentliche Physio-Psychologie hat mit unbewussten Widerständen im Herzen des Forschers zu kämpfen sie hat 'das Herz' gegen sich: schon eine Lehre von der gegenseitigen Bedingtheit der 'guten' und der 'schlimmen' Triebe, macht, als feinere Immoralität, einem noch kräftigen und herzhaften Gewissen Noth und Überdruss, – noch mehr eine Lehre von der Ableitbarkeit aller guten Triebe aus den schlimmen.".

dependence of drives or of their derivation from each other. A critic might point out that the context for this quote is merely Nietzsche's interest in liberating psychology from "moral prejudices and fears"[517] and recasting it "as morphology and the *doctrine of the development of the will to power"*[518]. This, however, does not explain the reference to physiology and does not clarify the phrase "physio-psychology". A more likely interpretation, suggested by the comparison with Spinoza, is that the mixed discourse of psychology and physiology is best suited to describe the multifarious manifestations of will to power. While Nietzsche might focus on a physiological or a psychological description depending on the problems he is dealing with, he aims to unpack the consequences of his power ontology using a mixed discourse, amounting to a morphology of will to power. Within the horizon of naturalism and immanence, Spinoza and Nietzsche share the similar project of exploring the various manifestations of power using a mixed discourse built around the notions of affect and drive, respectively.

IV. Ethics and politics in Spinoza and Nietzsche

This last section of the comparative chapter will be devoted to an analysis of the similarities and differences between Spinoza's and Nietzsche's ethics and politics as they follow from their respective turns to the body. This task requires us to ask: 1) How do their normative commitments relate to their philosophical physiologies? and 2) What are the salient features of their ethics and politics and how do they fit in their overall philosophical thought? In order to discuss the connections between the descriptive and the normative aspects of their philosophies, we need to confront the question: how can philosophies steeped in immanence produce norms or values and how can these norms be justified?

1. Spinoza's normative thought

In order to gain an understanding of Spinoza's ethics and politics we need to consider: How is the descriptive aspect of Spinoza's turn to the body relevant

517 "moralischen Vorurtheilen und Befürchtungen".
518 "als Morphologie und Entwicklungslehre des Willens zur Macht".

to his normative thinking?; To what extent does Spinoza's strictly deterministic naturalism allow room for normativity?; and 3) What are the goals and methods of Spinoza's ethics and politics? In order to best understand Spinoza's ethical and political thinking we need to consider his philosophy in the light of its fundamental impetus, the search for freedom (EVpref). The project of striving for freedom (*Libertas)* provides the framework in which the answers to the three sub-questions can be understood as a coherent unity. Each of the answers will, in turn, serve to further elucidate the meaning of the notion of freedom.

1.a. Description and normativity

The turn to the body shows us that all human beings (in fact all finite modes or things) strive for empowerment or freedom. The striving for increase in power is not a goal which we can set for ourselves, it is inevitable. The difference between human beings lies in the various ways in which they understand empowerment (adequately or not) and in the methods they employ in striving for empowerment. These differences entail that humans sometimes fail to empower themselves. The task of the *Ethics* is to make us understand this fundamental striving and how we can best proceed to empower ourselves.

More specifically, the turn to the body is relevant to ethical and political thinking in two respects. First, it reveals a number of metaphysical illusions, already analysed in chapter I section 1, which are detrimental not only to the creation of an adequate philosophical discourse, but also for the ethical and political striving for liberation. The illusions of teleology, free will and morality are employed by theologians in order to maintain their power and restrict humans to a state of bondage or servitude (as analysed in section III of the present chapter). Spinoza situates his account of liberation against the obstacles of innate ignorance and oppressive power structures. Second, the philosophical discourse developed by Spinoza with the help of the turn to the body provides the concepts necessary in order to give positive content to the notion of freedom and in order to describe the methods by which freedom can be pursued. Spinoza's normative thought revolves around the definition of (human) beings in terms of desire, which is the manifestation of a finite amount of power. Contrary to much of western philosophical thinking,

Spinoza understands desire not in terms of lack or need, but as an expression of power manifested through the effects it produces. Spinoza's anthropology is therefore a study of the relations of power ("an anatomy of power" Hardt 1991, p. XII) that obtain in nature and an attempt to outline the logic of these various power relations: the logic of affects. Spinoza's normative project can be understood only in the context of his definition of humans as beings who strive for an increase in their power. The role of normative thinking is to show how this pursuit can best be conducted[519]. This implies the overcoming of the illusions of morality and a focus on the specificity of each individual and what increases its characteristic power of acting. Before discussing the details of Spinoza's normative thought, it is important to gain a better understanding of what he means by freedom. This will allow us to understand how normative thinking can have a placed in a fully deterministic and immanent world view.

1.b. Freedom and necessity

In order to outline Spinoza's notion of freedom we must consider it outside the traditional opposition between freedom and necessity. Spinoza is critical of the concept of free will and argues that adequate knowledge reveals that nature is governed by strict necessity. Spinoza's own notion of freedom must be situated within the context of the contrast between determination from outside and determination from within. Insofar as bodies are acted on from the outside, Spinoza considers them un-free, whereas the greater their endogenous power to act, the freer they are. This compatibilist notion of freedom distinguishes itself radically from the notion of free will because it admits of degrees. Only God or nature can be said to be absolutely free, since there is nothing outside of nature that could determine it to act. In the case of finite modes, however, we can only speak of a limited degree of freedom that is in constant change, depending on the power relations that obtain in nature. Freedom is the power of any mode to produce effects that can be explained solely from the nature of that mode itself, without any contributing external factors.

519 The more we seek our advantage the more we are endowed with virtue (EIVp20).

If we are to know how best to increase and express our power, we must understand, according to Spinoza, the specific nature of our own body. Self-knowledge is necessary "both for the sake of speculation and in order to arrange one's life wisely" (EIIp49s). Knowing our body implies knowing what our body can do. The specific knowledge required has, however, been unavailable so far (EIIIp2s). The epistemological primacy of the search for knowledge of the body translates, for Spinoza, into a central role for the body in ethical and political thinking.

1.c. The goals and methods of Spinoza's ethics and politics

a) What are the various manners by which a thing can best increase its power? and b) How are these strategies understood in ethical and political contexts? It is important to remember that due to Spinoza's commitment to naturalism and immanence, he does not draw a sharp separation between the realms of ethics and politics. The discourses that fall under these two different headings refer to the same dynamic, constitutive processes of power. While Spinoza can speak of different organisations that agree more or less in nature, it is possible to claim that "there is no substantial difference in Spinoza's metaphysics between a singular and a plural subject" (Schrift 2013, p. 115) a human and a community.

The ethical strategies of empowerment

The premise for discussing the strategies of empowerment is a fundamental distinction between two kinds of strategies. The distinction stems from the difference Spinoza sees between two possible types of readers of his works. On the one hand, we have the sage, or the philosopher, who is willing to analyse and think through the "cumbersome" geometrical order of Spinoza's demonstrations. The importance of knowledge for Spinoza's ethics is brought out sharply by his definitions of good and evil. Good is "what we *certainly know* to be useful to us" (EIVd1, my italics), while evil is "what we *certainly know* prevents us from being masters of some good" (EIVd2, my italics)[520]. On the other hand, we have a less philosophically attuned audience to whom Spinoza wants to present his teachings

520 It is difficult to disagree with Ursula Renz's claim, during her talk at the Collegium Spinozanum in Groningen, July 7th, 2015, that truth is the only genuinely normative term in Spinoza.

"briefly … so that everyone may more easily perceive what I think" (EIVp19s). This distinction must not be exagerrated, of course. Spinoza's philosophy does not allow for the existence of an intrinsically ignorant person or of an absolutely wise and perfect sage[521]. His philosophy depends on the acknowledgment of the existence of degrees of knowledge or virtue, and the acceptance of the fact that the wise will sometimes act out of ignorance, under the dominion of sad passions.

i. The first set of strategies

The first kind of method for empowerment is characterised by the fact that it does not require fully adequate knowledge, especially of the third kind. This does not imply that it is false, only that it can be implemented despite the lack of sufficient proof for each possible case. In the scholium to EIVp18 Spinoza offers a number of dictates of reason that enable an individual to seek "what is really useful to him". These dictates are 1) that virtue is the striving to act "from the laws of one's own nature", 2) that virtue should be desired "for its own sake", 3) that suicide is against virtue, 4) that we should not live in isolation and that the presence of others is beneficial to us and 5) that to man "there is nothing more useful than man", particularly those who strive to be "governed by reason".

In EVp10s Spinoza revisits this topic and provides another list of "correct principles of living, or sure maxims of life" which can be used "so long as we do not have perfect knowledge of our affects"[522]. Spinoza argues that we should commit these maxims to memory and apply them frequently so that "our imagination[523] will be extensively affected by them"[524]. This will ensure that the "power of rightly ordering and connecting the affections of the body" is not easily disturbed by the passions to which we are inevitably subject as part of nature. These maxims include 1) continuous contemplation of the benefits of "mutual friendship and

521 For the contrast between Spinoza's philosopher and the Stoic sage, who embodies ethical perfection, see (DeBrabander 2007, especially pp. 47-9 and James 1993, pp. 311-2).

522 It is difficult to see how the state of perfect knowledge could ever be achieved in practice.

523 The use of the term "imagination" marks the fact that we are not in the province of adequate knowledge.

524 This is reminiscent of ancient "Spiritual exercises" as described by Hadot (1995; in particular Part II).

common society"; 2) focusing on what is good in each thing so that we are affected by joy; 3) the principle that hate is to be conquered by love or nobility and not repaid with hate; and 4) always remembering that "men, like, other things, act from the necessity of nature". Imagining that human beings always act out of necessity makes the affect of hate we may feel towards them smaller than if we imagine them as free (EIIIp49) and so can more easily be overcome. Practicing these principles will enable and motivate the ethical agent to "strive, as far as he can, to come to know the virtues and their causes and to fill the mind with the gladness which arises from the true knowledge of them" (EVp10s).

This last claim shows us how the first set of strategies can prepare us for the pursuit of freedom by allowing us a certain respite from the bondage we find ourselves in with relation to our passions. While the benefits of this approach are formulated in terms of imagination and a focus on joyful passions, they constitute the springboard to the development of active affects. In his treatment of the dictates of reason, Rutherford argues that "Spinoza is helping himself to normative vocabulary that he is not strictly speaking entitled to" (Rutherford 2008, p. 495). He argues that Spinoza discusses the dictates of reason not to prescribe action, but in order to show the causal powers of reason and how the life guided by active affects would look like (Rutherford 2008, pp. 495-6). In other words, they are not practical principles, but "acts of understanding" (Rutherford 2008, p. 503). On this reading, Spinoza does not take himself to be capable of demonstrating normative principles because they are not the sort of propositions about the necessary order of nature that the *Ethics* is about and, in any case, the normative force of such principles requires a robust desire for one's own "true advantage" that most people lack (Rutherford 2011, pp. 501-2). I submit that this analysis should be modified as follows. Most people (if not all) lack the robust desire needed to act only according to the dictates of reason, but they do follow them to a certain degree, depending on their power. This means that the dictates of reason can act as guidelines for action insofar as they serve as examples, or stimuli for promoting a certain kind of behaviour. Because Spinoza allows for teleology in his description of our mental life in the manner considered in chapter I, he can find it beneficial to outline general principles of action that may help us in the absence

of adequate knowledge. The fundamental tension in play in Spinoza's practical philosophy is between the specific, concrete knowledge of what is good or bad for us and general principles that are much easier to formulate, but do not provide sufficient understanding of each particular situation we encounter. This tension, symptomatic of the limits inherent in philosophical discourse in accounting for particularism, is also present in Nietzsche's thinking[525].

In light of this discussion, we can now consider Bove's book *La stratégie du conatus* and its arguments concerning the importance of active resistance for the conatus in its striving for empowerment. Bove's argument is that all finite modes are in a constant state of danger and that we will always encounter bodies that act as obstacles in the world (Bove 1996, pp. 12-14). The conatus is an actual and productive singular essence (Bove 1996, p. 9) and it needs a rational strategy in order to survive[526]. Furthermore, it also needs this rational strategy in its effort for actualisation, namely for turning passions into actions by having clear and distinct ideas. The conatus produces, through the strength of its imagination, a number of tools to help it in its efforts: habit, memory, recognition (Bove 1996, pp. 15-16). So far, we can see how Bove's account highlights two essential elements: 1) that struggle is inevitable and that we are always at risk of being affected by sad passions. We therefore need to commit maxims of reason to our memory in order to empower our imagination to stave off the deleterious effects of sad encounters; 2) the struggle and resistance against sad passions must be mediated by a rational strategy. Reason, however, does not function at its full capacity in this case. It does not adequately show how we agree[527] with other essences, but rather how to face the dangerous encounters that occur in nature. For Spinoza struggle can best be described as a permanent occurrence which can sometimes be directed towards the flourishing of reason, but also as a state of affairs we must see through if we are to understand nature adequately. The more third kind of knowledge we have, the more we realise, according to Spinoza, that conflict is an appearance, an

525 The topic of how this impetus towards particularism plays out in Spinoza's philosophy will be the topic of the next sub-section.

526 Man cannot always act, and must accommodate himself to the common order of nature as much as possible. (EIVp4 and corollary).

527 This will be considered in the next sub-section.

illusion. Even if active resistance is beneficial, the notion of struggle in Spinoza cannot be said to have the same central role it plays in Nietzsche.

Existence for Spinoza implies struggle against or resistance to sad encounters: they are inevitable in nature, but can be reduced using instruments like a well-structured body politic or adequate thought. Resistance is not part of the essence or definition of the conatus (Spinoza never offers a definition of conatus), but it does describe a large number of encounters that finite modes have (hence the inclusion of resistance in the explanation of conatus in EIIIP6). Struggle must be mediated by reason: it can prepare the ground for empowerment (according to the second set of strategies) only if it is conducted according to the dictates of reason (first stage). In this way we learn how to defend ourselves against or avoid sad encounters. Resistance is the background against which, if managed judiciously, empowerment can occur. If empowerment does occur then struggle is reduced.

A further aspect of Bove's argument is relevant both in order to show how the passage from the first to the second kind of strategies is conceptualised by Spinoza, but also in order to show the importance of the body in this discussion. Among the tools developed by the conatus, Bove mentions habit, which is not a passive acquisition through the repetition of the same experience, but rather the aptitude of the body to link two or more affections (Bove 1996, pp. 24). The discussion of habit shows how the organisation of our affects in order to resist sad encounters is best considered under the attribute of extension. Habit, as an expression of the autonomy of the conatus and its affirmative power, remains an important part even in the transition to the third kind of knowledge[528] (Bove 1996, pp. 28-9).

Two of the upshots of the arguments in this section are: 1) that security is only a passive joy and leads to laziness and the mollification of body and mind, whereas risk-induced activity can be conducive to veritable flourishing (Bove 1996, pp. 183-4); 2) What benefits a body is not known a priori and cannot be deduced by pure reasoning from certain premises, but must be discovered empirically, in the course of experience (EIIIp2s). Both these themes – the importance of danger and of the usefulness of experience – bring Spinoza close to Nietzsche.

528 Imagination and memory now play only a small part.

ii. The second set of strategies

The second set of strategies described by Spinoza depends on obtaining adequate knowledge[529]. In Spinoza's words, it consists in "ordering and connecting the affections of the body according to the order of the intellect" (EVp10). Joy for Spinoza consists in understanding the necessity of nature, not in being in agreement with nature: we cannot avoid being part of nature and there is nothing good, beautiful or perfect about nature, as the Stoics believed (Matheron 1994b, pp. 155-6, 158)[530]. We are now in a position to ask how the ethical goal of increasing our freedom must be understood under the attribute of extension and then proceed to outline the specific methods of empowerment Spinoza explores.

The human body is defined by its ability to act and be affected in a great number of ways. The increase in power, or freedom, is understood by Spinoza as the increase in the capacity of the body to act and be acted on. This passage from a smaller to a greater power is called joy (*Laetitia)* and it can occur in two ways. First, it can be the increase of the entire power of the body to act. In this case, it is called *Hilaritas* and it is always good because it preserves the specific ratio of motion and rest that characterizes the body[531] (EIVp42). Second, there is the case in which joy, under the name of pleasure (*Tittilatio)* affects only one part of the body. In this case joy can have deleterious effects insofar as it alters the ratio of motion and rest that parts communicate to the body and therefore alters the form of the entire body (EIVp43). The power of the body to act and be acted on must be understood in relation to the effects produced by the body. The greater the power of the body is, the more effects can be explained from the laws of the body's own nature alone. The ability to act characteristic of the body is naturally mirrored by the ability of the mind to understand affects from the nature of the body alone.

529 The practical behaviour stemming from the second and the third types of knowledge is the same (Matheron 1994b, p. 149).

530 The critique of the stoic ideal of living according to nature and the focus on understanding the necessity of nature are themes that will also be encountered in Nietzsche.

531 Active affects, insofar as they relate to the mind, fall under the category of "strength of character" (*fortitudo*), which is divided into "tenacity" (*animositas*), the desire to preserve one's being, and "nobility" (*generositas*) the striving "to aid other men and join them to him in friendship" (EIIIp59s; cf. Jaquet 2004, p. 100).

Following this description of ethical empowerment under the attribute of extension we can understand Spinoza's claim that ethical empowerment consists in arranging the order and connection of the affections of the body according to the order of the intellect. But 1) how can the mind order the affections of the body according to the order of the intellect? ; 2) What is the order of the intellect? 3) What are the benefits of this process? and 4) What is the model of the "free man" according to which we should guide our behaviour and our attempt at empowerment?

1. Because we know things from "fortuitous encounters", we do not understand their nature, and so we do not have adequate knowledge of the way they affect us. This means that we can never have adequate knowledge of our affects as long as they depend on external causes. Nevertheless, Spinoza argues, we have the ability to form a clear and distinct concept of any affection of the body[532] (EIVp4), because we can understand a) the common notions or properties that our bodies share with the external things, in virtue of which they affect us (EVp4dem) and b) the necessary manner in which things follow from the eternal essence of God (EVp14). We have the power to dissociate our affects from the thought of their external cause (EVp2) and focus on their relation to God or common notions. This increases our understanding and, therefore, increases our power over the affects.

2. The order of the intellect refers to the order "by which the mind perceives things through their first causes[533], and which is the same in all men" and is distinguished from the order and connection of the affections of the human body (EIIp18s). The order of the affections of the body depends on things outside the human body and, therefore, on "random encounters" in nature. Our mind thinks according to the order of the intellect as long as it "has the power of forming clear and distinct ideas, and of deducing some from others" (EVp10dem).

3. The benefits of this process of empowerment are twofold. First, it enables the individual to be less disturbed by passions, because a greater force is required to affect a well ordered body and mind (EVp10s). This is reminiscent of the

532 Understanding all our affections (EVp14) is a purely hypothetical situation, of course, given our finite nature.

533 The power that produces them: God expressed through its attributes.

strategies for survival through resistance mentioned in the preceding section. The difference lies in the fact that now the power of the conatus is explained through adequate knowledge rather than imagination. Second, it enables the individual to form sound political associations based on agreement and mutual help, with a view to the further amplification of individual empowerment. The process of empowerment can be greatly helped by felicitous encounters with other modes, especially human beings, and promotes, in turn, feliciotus encounters. This will be the topic of the next section.

4. The content of the model of the "free man" mentioned in EIV Preface cannot be absolute, or universal, because it depends on the specific constitution of each human body, and, therefore, on the enhancement of the specific power each body has. Nevertheless, Spinoza is able to provide us with some of the traits of the (hypothetical) free man. A free man would always understand things under the aspect of eternity (i.e. adequate knowledge; EIVp62dem) and would form no notion of evil, since he would never be affected by passions (EIVp64). He would be freer in a state than alone (EIVp73) and would strive to engage in relations of friendship with others in order to promote virtue and help them live under the guidance of reason (EIVp37 and EIVp73s)[534].

Politics

In order to consider some of the key consequences of Spinoza's turn to the body for his political thinking, we need to understand the context and motivations. We also need to consider the content of his political philosophy under the attribute of extension as well as its benefits.

The problem of Spinoza's political philosophy is not the form that the civil state should take, but rather liberation (Negri 1991, p. 220). In the sphere of the political, liberation must be understood, in the first instance, as emancipation

534 These characteristics are presented by Spinoza in propositions 59 to 73 of part IV of the Ethics. These are dedicated to outlining the "exemplar of the free man". For a discussion of the "exemplar of the free man" see Kissner (2011, ch. 8). Kisner argues, convincingly, that the free man is a thought experiment that allows us to understand the nature of the terms "good" and "evil" or "bad", and not a realistic goal we can expect to reach.

from various forms of domination (Balibar 1998, pp. 1-2). Oppression is brought about by various instances of theological and secular authorities who act in the name of transcendent, theological values[535]. The transcendent model of what the State ought to be[536], together with moral interpretations of human behaviour[537] (TP I 1), are impediments to the empowerment of individuals, and, ultimately, of the state. Adherence to transcendent, and therefore universal and absolute values, does not do justice to the individuality of human beings, i.e. the specific, unique structures and powers to act and be acted upon of each body, as well as of each mind. As a consequence, it cannot promote the specific strategies of empowerment we have already considered with regard to Spinoza's ethical project. The goal that the transcendent values serve to promote is the preservation of the power of theologians (Balibar, 1998, pp. 7-8). Their domination, manifested in the condemnation of vices rather than the promotion of virtues, makes them hateful to other human beings (EIVp63s), and the detrimental effects of theologically-inspired oppression are amplified by the fanaticism[538] of theologians[539]. We can therefore understand the importance of historical analysis[540] for Spinoza's politics: he is interested in exposing, in order to undermine, the various manifestations of metaphysical and theological illusions and their practical effects (Negri 1991, pp. 120-1).

535 Spinoza argues that the history of the Hebrew state shows that it is pernicious for the priests to gain secular power (TTP 18 6 [1]) because they strive to regulate beliefs, which can only lead to sedition within the body politic (TTP 18 4 [1]).

536 Skinner traces the beginnings of the secularization of political theory to at least as early as the 13th Century. He contrasts Augustine's influence, for whom the Christian should not be concerned with temporal goods and be mindful only of eternal life, with the outlook developed following the recovery and translation of Aristotle's *Politics* (Skinner 1978a, p. 349). The modern idea of the State presupposes that political theory and a political society exist solely for political, not other-worldly, purposes (Skinner 1978a, p. 352).

537 Spinoza rejects the work of philosophers who have written satires, or utopias, instead of a theory of politics with useful application.

538 They are the first victims of their own illusory values (Balibar 1998, p. 15).

539 Theology should be distinguished from true religion, which Spinoza understands as justice and charity (TTP 20 17) based on obedience to God's laws (Balibar 1998, p. 49; Negri 1991, p. 105). True religion can be a vehicle for liberation (TP II 22).

540 See the analysis of the nature of the Hebrew state (TTP 18 4), but also of Rome, Macedon (TTP 17 5, 6) or of the power of the Pope (TTP 19 17). This is all meant to substantiate Spinoza's commentary on the state of the Dutch Republic of his day.

The difficulties that an account of the constitution of the civil state must face revolve around the fact that the horizon of the state is the horizon of war (Negri 1991, p. 200). If men were to live according to reason, then Spinoza claims they would live in agreement (*conveniunt)* (EIVp35). However, that is not the case because humans are guided by their passions (TP I 5), and humans necessarily differ with regard to their passions (EIVp32). The civil state must develop institutions that are capable of directing the ineradicable inter-human conflict towards empowerment in the best way possible (TP I 4, 6). While political institutions can and do facilitate individual empowerment, they must be suitable for individuals who act from the first kind of knowledge, i.e. imagination[541]. The constitution of the body politic cannot be predicated on the fictitious assumption that all humans possess the second and third types of knowledge[542].

As a way into the content of Spinoza's political philosophy, I will take my cue primarily from the late *Tractatus Politicus*[543]. This differs from the earlier *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* because it moves away from the language of the social contract (Balibar 1998, pp. 50-1) and gives us the opportunity to consider Spinoza's analysis of the power and potential for liberation of the multitude under the attribute of extension. Even if the *TP* is not complete, due to Spinoza's death, it offers us important insights into his mature political thinking and it resonates with a number of important passages in the Ethics. Spinoza's political philosophy in this late period can be aptly described with the phrases "political physics" (Negri 1991, p. 194) or "physics of social relations" (Negri 1991, p. 109), with a view to developing a strategy of collective liberation guided by the motto: "as many as possible, thinking as much as possible"[544] (Balibar 1998, p. 98). The aim of Spinoza's political philosophy is twofold: to explain the constitution[545] of the body politic in terms of power, rather than by appeal to transcendent norms and causes

541 "Politics is the metaphysics of imagination, of the real, human constitution of the world." (Negri 1991, p. 97)

542 The civil state can nevertheless prove to be beneficial to the sage.

543 The *TP* uses a scientific method similar to the *Ethics*.

544 The analysis of the concept of "multitude" in Spinoza, especially in the *TP,* goes beyond the ambit of this thesis. What we can discuss here is the multitude under the attribute of extension, as "political physics".

545 The constitutive process is historical, naturalised and immanent (Balibar 1998, p. 36).

(Balibar 1998, p. 66)[546]; and to discuss the best way to promote empowerment or liberation through politics[547]. Spinoza's thesis is that the best state is that in which humans pass their lives in unity and laws are kept unbroken. Sedition, wars, contempt or breach of laws must be imputed to the bad state of the body politic rather than to humans and, conversely, virtues should be ascribed in the main to the virtue of the state (TP V 3, 4)[548].

> The best way to organise a state is easily discovered by considering the purpose of order, which is nothing other than peace and security of life. Therefore the best state is one where men live together in harmony and where the laws are preserved unbroken. (TP V 2)

Human beings are not born citizens, but made so (TP V 2). Nevertheless, they are naturally inclined to form societies because they are driven by passions and are guided to form a civil order either by a common hope, desire or by common fear[549] (TP VI 1). A disturbance in the commonwealth can lead to a change in its form, but never to the complete dissolution of political society (TP VI 2). The task of political theory is to find the best way to organise the commonwealth.

Peace and safety, the two main characteristic of a well-functioning commonwealth, are indispensible conditions for human flourishing. They constitute the conditions of possibility for beneficial encounters that can increase one's power to act. Spinoza is careful to highlight, in a number of places, that peace should not be understood merely as the absence of war, but in a much stronger sense, as the "strength" (TP V 4) and "union or harmony of minds" (TP VI 4).

Humans are inconstant and are led more often by superstition and fear than by sound judgement. This means that the law-makers need to implement a rational

546 Spinoza constructs a world and "destroys the possibility of dominating it" (Negri 1991, p. 185). "It is … the responsibility of the (democratic) state to 'demythicise' dogma" (Balibar 1998, p. 115).

547 "It is one thing to have dominion and care of affairs of state by right, and another to exercise dominion and direct affairs in the best way" (TP V 1).

548 The preservation of the body politic is not a conservative notion. It must be understood under the principle of mobility and development of power (Balibar 1998, p. 96).

549 Hope and fear are never good in themselves, but can be useful when they restrain a certain kind of excessive and deleterious joy (EIVp47; cf. Jaquet 2005, p. 285).

strategy that empowers the body politic and, by consequence, its members. This is accomplished by formulating and enforcing good laws that ensure humans "either voluntarily or constrained by force or necessity, […] will all live as reason prescribes" (TP VI 3). Spinoza's argument is that human nature cannot be trusted to be virtuous, i.e. to be constant in the pursuit of common welfare and by consequence of its own good. To entrust the proper functioning of the state to "the good faith of any man" (TP VI 3) is naïve, because it does not take into account the inevitable lapses in good judgement or in virtuous action that the finite, imperfect nature of humans necessarily entails. The best strategy is to set up sound laws and institutions[550].

From the perspective of the turn to the body, it is important to notice that Spinoza sometimes refers to the commonwealth as a body that should be guided by a (rational) mind. This is not just a metaphor: the composition of individuals, under the attribute of extension, forms a body[551]. The greater of lesser power to act of the body politic depends on the cooperation ensured by rational laws. This cooperation, or harmony, consists in agreement. Agreement occurs when the divergence caused by passions is reduced as much as possible, but does not imply the exclusion of all difference and diversity. Agreement arises when individuals strive to act according to the particular power to act specific to each of their different constitutions, as will be argued below. For Spinoza, the best political organization is that which best promotes the community and agreement of humans, and the individual pursuit of empowerment is always best pursued in society (EIVp73). Spinoza's ethics and politics are geared towards demonstrating that the greatest good of an individual can be realised only within the framework of the search for the common good. The greatest good (to know God) is common

550 These arguments should be read against the background of a long-running debate on the best means to ensure the existence of a flourishing political association. The debate takes place between those who claim that the effectiveness of government depends on laws and institutions (e.g. Hume), and those who argue that, given that individuals control government and institutions, the state depends on the virtue (or corruption) of those in charge (e.g. Machiavelli or Montesquieu; cf. Skinner 1978b: 45).

551 The body politic is more complex than others due to the nature of its constituents, i.e. human life forms characterised by their share in reason. Spinoza distinguishes between reason, common to humans, and traits common to all animals ("circulation of the blood and other features" TP V 5).

to all and can be possessed by all equally (EIVp36), and there is no opposition, only perfect agreement, between the rational pursuit of my good and helping others (EIVp37; cf. Jaquet 2005, pp. 297-8)

Human beings do not exist and cannot be understood in isolation. The subject is constituted by its outside, and the subject's power will always be outmatched by external things. This is why it is important to ensure, as much as possible, that the interactions of the subject with its environment are not to its detriment (TP II 21). The body politic is in a privileged position to do so, since its power far outweighs that of single individuals (TP II 13). For human beings the advantages of living in a society that encourages useful encounters[552] are twofold: it provides the body with the resources it needs in order to maintain itself, function properly and so act and be acted on in a great number of ways; and humans can observe things and so both gain "experience and knowledge" of them and alter them to their advantage (EIVapp XXVII). The wise man will therefore be freer in society than in isolation (EIVp73) and will strive to promote the preservation and empowerment of the state. He will also strive to make others understand and act according to reason (EIVp37dem), because nothing is more useful to man than another rational person (EIVp35cor1).

In order to complete the task of analysing the consequences of the turn to the body for Spinoza's politics, we must ask how exactly individuals co-operate in a society in order to promote what is "more useful, *or* better*"* for our nature. A key locus for understanding how individuals can cooperate is EIVp29-31, in which Spinoza explains what he understands by the phrase "to agree in nature". Proposition 29 reads:

> Any singular thing whose nature is entirely different from ours can neither aid nor restrain our power of acting, and absolutely, no thing can be either good or evil for us, unless it has something in common with us.

552 The power to act of a mode can be assisted by an external power: in this case, even if the body is acted on, the interaction can still prove empowering.

This proposition is demonstrated by Spinoza through an appeal to his understanding of a finite mode's (in this case human being's) power of acting. The condition for understanding the causal interaction between a human being and an external thing that increases or decreases its power of acting is to consider both human beings and the external thing under the same attribute (EIVp29dem). This means that what the human being and the external thing have in common is that they are expressions of substance under the same attribute[553]. While this proposition follows naturally from Spinoza's metaphysics, proposition 30 appears much more problematic:

> No thing can be evil through what it has in common with our nature; but insofar as it is evil for us, it is contrary to us.

While in EIVp29 Spinoza argued that sharing something with our nature, i.e. being modes of the same attribute, is the condition for either useful or detrimental interactions, he now seems to claim that it can only serve as a premise for beneficial interactions[554]. Something can be evil only if it has something in common with us (EIVp29), but something cannot be evil through what it has in common with us (EIVp30). This apparent inconsistency must be analysed carefully, since it used by Spinoza in the demonstration to P31: "Insofar as a thing agrees with our nature, it is necessarily good". This means it serves as the bridge in the transition from the notion of a thing having "something in common with us" to "a thing agrees with our nature". Is Schopenhauer correct to claim that the transition from *communere habere* to *convenire* is accomplished by sophisms? (WWV II 93). In order to find an answer, we must look to the demonstration given to EIVp30, which reads:

> We call evil what is the cause of sadness (by p8), that is (by the definition of sadness, see IIIpIls), what diminishes or restrains our power of acting. So if a thing were evil for us through what it has in common with us, then the thing could diminish or restrain what it has in common with us. But

553 In the course of the demonstration Spinoza refers to EIIp6 which reads: "The modes of each attribute have God for their cause only insofar as he is considered under the attribute of which they are modes, and not insofar as he is considered under any other attribute".

554 This claim starts from the premise that "common" and "contrary" in EIVp30 are opposites because they refer to what is not evil to us vs. what is "evil for us".

> (by IIIP4) this is absurd. Therefore, no thing can be evil for us through what it has in common with us. On the contrary, insofar as it is evil, that is (as we have already shown), insofar as it can diminish or restrain our power of acting, it is contrary to us (by IIIp5), q.e.d.

The crucial segment of this demonstration is when Spinoza claims that if a thing were evil, i.e. detrimental to us through what it has in common with us, then it would diminish what it has in common with us. In light of EIVp29 this does not seem to hold: a human being and a dose of poison both have in common the fact that they are expressions of the attribute of extension, yet their composition (ingestion, in this case) would be harmful to the human being. The two would interact through what they have in common (extension) in a harmful way for the human being without in any way diminishing what they have in common. In order to buttress his demonstration, Spinoza invokes EIIIp4: "No thing can be destroyed except through an external cause*".* At first glance this does not seem to have much bearing on EIVp30. There is, however, a case in which Spinoza could argue he is justified to invoke it. This would be the case in which what two things have in common is not just their attribute, but is something which constitutes their individual essences and is intrinsic to them. In this situation, Spinoza would be correct to claim that something that constitutes the essence of a thing cannot destroy that very essence.

While this reading helps us make sense of the use of EIIIp4 in this context, it gives rise to the following situation: the attribute of thought produces or constitutes the essence of finite extended modes, but is not intrinsic to modes, or a part of them. The attribute of extension (or thought for that matter) is expressed through finite modes. The essence of a finite mode does not contain within itself the essence of the attribute, it only expresses its power. We must look to the relation between finite essences, expressed through various ratios of motion and rest, if we are to understand how agreement works in Spinoza. Given this line of argument, it follows that Schopenhauer was indeed correct to point out an inconsistency or equivocation[555] here, an inconsistency that not only does not fit into Spinoza's

555 "to have something in common" is used by Spinoza in two ways, without explicitly

metaphysics, but also makes it hard to understand how harmful interactions between modes could occur. Nevertheless, Spinoza does offer us the resources to understand agreement in a way that avoids these difficulties.

"Only insofar as men live according to the guidance of reason, must they always agree in nature" (EIVp35). This proposition, together with its demonstration, will help us tackle the question of what agreement in nature means and, in order to better clarify the meaning of this notion, will allow us to contrast it with the cases in which agreement is absent.

Our first clue is Spinoza's claim that agreement in nature occurs only insofar as men live according to the guidance of reason. To act according to reason implies that our actions are "understood through human nature alone (by EIIId2), as through its proximate cause". In other words, it means to "do only those things which are good for human nature, and hence, for each man, that is (by EIVp31c), those things which agree with the nature of each man" (EIVp35dem). It is crucial to notice Spinoza's emphasis on understanding the "nature of each" human being. Given that the constitution of each human being differs, to live according to reason means to know and to maximize the specific power of each human being. Spinoza's key move here is to indicate that agreement in nature does not imply uniformity, but rather cooperation between differently constituted bodies and their specific manifestations of power. A human being agrees with the nature of other human beings when he "acts entirely from the laws *of his own nature*" (my italics; EIVp35c1) or by "his power of acting according to the laws *of his own nature*" (my italics; EIVp35c2).

This reading can be challenged in two ways. First, a critic can point to EIVp36 "The greatest good of those who seek virtue is common to all, and can be enjoyed by all equally" and argue that Spinoza here speaks of an ethical goal that is common to everyone, and not differentiated according to specific bodily and mental structures. The demonstration of this proposition, however, shows us

distinguishing between the two: 1) two modes have something in common insofar as they are expression of the same attribute – this makes it possible for the two modes to interact; 2) two modes have something in common insofar as they agree in nature.

how this challenge can be met. According to Spinoza, the greatest good of those who seek virtue, i.e. act according to the guidance of reason, is "to know God, that is (by EIIp47 and EIIp47s), a good that is common to all men". We can see from EIIp47d that, even though Spinoza speaks of knowing God as a common good, this does not mean that the content of that knowledge is common to all human beings: the human mind knows God because it perceives "itself, its own body, and external bodies".[556] (EIIp47d). Second, and this is a more troublesome objection, a critic may ask why Spinoza claims that we agree in nature insofar as we exercise our reason and express our power. How can Spinoza guarantee that acting according to the laws of our own nature will not generate conflict rather than cooperation? In order to tackle this issue, we must consider how Spinoza understands the cases in which agreement is absent.

In propositions 32 to 34 of EIV, Spinoza presents the following line of thought: human beings do not agree in nature insofar as they are subject to passions (EIVp32). When human beings are dominated by passions they are changeable and inconstant (EIVp33), from which Spinoza deduces that insofar as humans are dominated by passions they can be contrary to one another (EIVp34). The claim that grounds this line of thought is that agreement can only occur in virtue of power, i.e. each mode's expression of its endogenous power to act, (EIIIp7) and that, because passions are "lack of power, *or* negation"[557], modes cannot be said to agree due to passions (EIVp34d). Spinoza argues that things "which agree only in a negation, *or* in what they do not have, really agree in nothing" (EIVp34s). If we accept this premise, and remember that passions are affects produced by an external cause, then it follows that passions make human being inconstant and we can see how they can generate conflict. While everyone can share equally in knowledge and love of God, i.e. virtue, it is impossible for multiple individuals to share in the love of a finite thing that cannot be shared without hating each other and striving "to harm one another" (EIVp34).

556 We do not know all external bodies, of course. In that case we would all be identical (our minds would be identical), but only because we would be the perfect sage that Spinoza claims we can never be.

557 Not utter lack of power, of course, only a smaller degree.

Going back to the question of how acting according to reason does not generate conflict, we can start answering by pointing out that conflict for Spinoza is the result of the existence of passions: it is indicative of a lesser degree of being or power and is excluded the more we act from the laws of our own nature, i.e. we gain in being, power or perfection. A second step in the argumentation is to inquire into the claim that "things which are said to agree in nature are understood to agree in power". This takes us to the heart of the matter: According to Spinoza's metaphysics, finite modes are expressions of different degrees of power. These degrees of power, as we know them under the third type of knowledge, are understood and derived directly from the absolutely powerful essence of God. Unless God's essence or power would contain a self-contradiction, it would be impossible for various degrees of its power to be antagonistic. The impossibility of conflict within this totality, as seen under the third kind of knowledge, is symptomatic of an even broader difficulty: it is hard to see how any kind of relations can obtain between essences, when they are understood to be derived directly from substance. For the purposes of the present investigation, it is important to highlight that Spinoza's claim that cooperation arises naturally from virtue is based on a metaphysical view that is predicated on the belief in a rationally structured totality.

2. Nietzsche's normative thought

In order to investigate the ethical and political consequences of Nietzsche's turn to the body we must address a number of issues: How is the descriptive aspect of Nietzsche's turn to the body relevant to his normative thinking?; To what extent does Nietzsche's critique of free will allow room for agency or freedom and therefore for a meaningful discussion of normativity?; and: What are the goals and methods of Nietzsche's ethics and politics? In order to best understand Nietzsche's normative thinking, from early 1880 on, we need to consider his philosophy in the light of the fundamental problems that he is responding to.

2.a. Description and normativity

The fundamental question for Nietzsche's normative thinking, just as for Spinoza, is: how can a philosophy steeped in immanence produce norms or values and how

can it justify them? Nietzsche does not strive to offer imperatives or ready-made solutions for ethics or politics, nor does he abandon normative questions altogether. We can understand his philosophy as an attempt to provide the impetus for the revaluation of all values without the promise of identifying "true" or "absolute" values that some moralities have so far postulated – "there are no moral facts"[558] (GD Verbesserer 1 6.98). In order to better understand what kind of guidance Nietzsche's thinking can offer in the domain of normativity, it is useful to start with another fundamental question that he shares with Spinoza: How, given that both think of forms of life as self-empowering, can there be cases in which this striving for growth and empowerment is not actualised? What are the obstacles or blockages that interfere with the process of growth and expansion? We have already considered above (chapter III, section III.2.) the role of oppressive power structures and of the priest and moralist in the creation and use of moral and metaphysical illusions for the purpose of disempowerment. The conclusion of that analysis was that the condition that makes these oppressive power structures successful is, according to Nietzsche, the lack of self-knowledge. How does Nietzsche understand self-knowledge and how does it connect to his normative thinking?

> So, how many people know how to observe? And of these few, how many to observe themselves? 'Everyone is farthest from himself' – every person who is expert at scrutinizing the inner life of others knows this to his own chagrin; and the saying, 'Know thyself', addressed to human beings by a god, is near to malicious. *That* self observation is in such a bad state, however, is most clearly confirmed by the way in which *nearly everyone* speaks of the nature of a moral act [...]Your judgement, 'that is right' has a prehistory in your drives, inclinations, aversions, experiences, and what you have failed to experience;[559] (FW 335 3.560f)

558 "es [giebt] gar keine moralischen Thatsachen".

559 "Wie viel Menschen verstehen denn zu beobachten! Und unter den wenigen, die es verstehen, – wie viele beobachten sich selber! 'Jeder ist sich selber der Fernste' – das wissen alle Nierenprüfer, zu ihrem Unbehagen; und der Spruch „erkenne dich selbst!" ist, im Munde eines Gottes und zu Menschen geredet, beinahe eine Bosheit. Dass es aber so verzweifelt mit der Selbstbeobachtung steht, dafür zeugt Nichts mehr, als die Art, wie über das Wesen einer moralischen Handlung fast von Jedermann gesprochen wird [...]Dein Urtheil 'so ist es recht'

Nietzsche begins by arguing that we lack self-knowledge and chooses to focus on the precarious state of our understanding of morality and of what we take to be our moral acts. There is a crucial move Nietzsche makes in the text quoted here: he connects moral judgements to the notions of "drives, inclinations, aversions, experiences", which may be recognized, in light of chapter II, as part of the language of his philosophical physiology. While there is no explicit reference to the body in this text, the turn to the body in interpreting moral phenomena is implied in Nietzsche's appeal to the terms "drive" (*Trieb)* or "inclinations" (*Neigungen*), as well as by the emphasis at the end of FW 335 on *physis*, a move to be analysed later. The appeal to physiology undermines any claim that moral judgements or acts have to a source or origin outside nature, any claim that they have a privileged or transcendent nature. This argument is meant to problematize the distinction between the descriptive and normative spheres and to challenge us to think normativity in the context of the project of naturalisation. This involves, as has been argued in chapter II (p. 149), a critique of "this 'absoluteness' of the feeling, 'here everyone must judge as I do'"[560] (FW 335 3.562), i.e. the universal pretences of a certain morality which considers "one's own judgement a universal law"[561] (FW 335 3.562). The explicit target of Nietzsche's attack here is Kant's "categorical imperative". Nietzsche aims to offer "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", namely "that one must make an appeal to something or someone transcendent in order to legitimate one's political or ethical position" (Schrift 2013, p. 108).

To undermine the distinction between description and normativity and to emphasize the importance of self-knowledge, especially knowledge of morality, while interpreting it in a physiological key is an important task, but it appears to answer only the first half of Nietzsche's critique, namely "that you haven't yet discovered yourself or created for yourself an ideal of your very own"[562] (FW

hat eine Vorgeschichte in deinen Trieben, Neigungen, Abneigungen, Erfahrungen und Nicht-Erfahrungen;".

560 "Diese 'Unbedingtheit' des Gefühls 'so wie ich, müssen hierin Alle urtheilen'".

561 "sein Urtheil als Allgemeingesetz zu empfinden".

562 "dass du dich selber noch nicht entdeckt, dir selber noch kein eigenes, eigenstes Ideal

335 3.562). Why should we create an ideal of our very own – the fundamental normative question – and what would this ideal look like? To the first part of the question, we can attempt an answer only if we keep in mind Nietzsche's position as phrased in the beginning of this section: we are life-forms already always engaged in the process of empowerment, but we constantly run the risk of going astray in the attempt at self-empowerment. To formulate the answer in these terms has the advantage that it highlights the continuity between what so far have been called the descriptive and the normative aspects of Nietzsche's thinking, a distinction that Nietzsche is interested in questioning. It also reveals the need to elaborate new ideals, namely to find the best possible path towards empowerment. These ideals should be sensitive to the unique constitution and conditions of existence of each individual if they are to be conducive to empowerment. The emphasis in normative inquiries falls on finding the best means suited to pursue the given striving for growth and empowerment.

With regard to the content of the normative "ideal" Nietzsche mentions, there are four aspects of this project that must be highlighted. First, Nietzsche shifts the focus from moral evaluation of past acts and "those who have nothing to do but drag the past a few steps further through time and who never live in the present"[563] to a focus on the temporal dimension of the future, and therefore on the "creation of tables of what is good that are new and all our own"[564]. Second, this orientation towards the future is accompanied by an emphasis on the power of "great reason", of the body, to create new values and ideals, i.e. the activity of "self-legislation". The real question is not what a body is, but what a body can do. Third, elaborating this ideal involves understanding the context in which it is possible to do so:

> We, however, *want to become who we are* – those who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves! To that end we must become the best students and discoverers of everything lawful and necessary in the world: we must become *physicists* in order

geschaffen hast".

563 "welche nicht mehr zu thun haben, als die Vergangenheit um ein kleines Stück weiter durch die Zeit zu schleppen und welche selber niemals Gegenwart sind".

564 "die Schöpfung neuer eigener Gütertafeln".

> to be creators in this sense – while hitherto all valuations and ideals have been built on *ignorance* of physics or in *contradiction* to it. So, long live physics![565] (modified translation; FW 335 3.563f)

The project of "becoming who we are" is synonymous with the task of creating ourselves insofar as they must both be conceived within the horizon of immanence and necessity. To give oneself a law can only occur if one understands nature and what is "lawful and necessary" in it. This point gives rise to the following possible objection: if we must understand everything lawful and necessary in the world, if we "must become *physicists* in order to be creators", then are we not, on account of the immensity of the task, condemned to never become creators? This problem, similar to a possible charge against the importance Spinoza attaches to knowledge of God or Nature for ethics, is met by Nietzsche with a response akin to Spinoza's: our focus must be on our bodies, on our drives and inclinations, not on understanding everything about nature. An accurate way to phrase Nietzsche's point is to say that we must become physicists and gain the relevant knowledge insofar as this knowledge refers to our body, to the "nearest things"[566]. This brings into relief the fourth crucial aspect of Nietzsche's stance on the ethical ideal: the focus on the particularism or specificity of each person's constitution or nature. Because we are "new, unique, incomparable" beings, we must create new tables that are "all our own". A procedure adapted to the irreducible specificity, or particularism (Poellner 2009, p. 153), of each of us is the only method that can generate empowerment in an authentic sense. Only when equipped with this knowledge can we avoid "valuations and ideals" that "have been built on *ignorance* of physics or in *contradiction* to it". In light of Nietzsche's emphasis on particularism, the moral question "What should *I* do?" is reinterpreted as "What should *I* do *here*?", which means that particularism has two dimensions: the focus

565 "Wir aber wollen Die werden, die wir sind, – die Neuen, die Einmaligen, die Unvergleichbaren, die Sich-selber-Gesetzgebenden, die Sich-selber-Schaffenden! Und dazu müssen wir die besten Lerner und Entdecker alles Gesetzlichen und Nothwendigen in der Welt werden: wir müssen Physiker sein, um, in jenem Sinne, Schöpfer sein zu können, – während bisher alle Werthschätzungen und Ideale auf Unkenntniss der Physik oder im Widerspruch mit ihr aufgebaut waren. Und darum: Hoch die Physik".

566 In other words, we must understand the social constraints, customs and hereditary factors that apply to ourselves in particular (Poellner 2009, p. 157) as they are embodied in us.

on the specificity of each individual and the focus on the concrete, particular nature of what is to be done in each specific situation or context (Gerhardt 1992, p. 39).

In order to better understand Nietzsche's thinking on these issues we will turn to the earlier notebook 11 from 1881.

2.b. "Fine, well-planned, thoughtful Egoism" in 1881

> For until now it has been the lack of a fine, well-planned, thoughtful egoism that has kept human beings as a whole on so low a level! (11[303] 9.557)[567]

What is the "low level" that Nietzsche speaks of in this fragment and why does he criticize it? What is "fine, well-planned, thoughtful egoism", in which way can it help overcome the "low level", and why should we strive to use it in order to overcome humanity's current predicament, as Nietzsche sees it?

The starting point for these investigations is to understand the target of Nietzsche's critique in notebook 11, namely the morality of altruism. This discussion needs to be placed in the context of Nietzsche's disagreement with the English philosophers Spencer and Mill, and also with Rée (Sommer 2012, p. 171). The morality of altruism presents un-egoistic action as the highest value, i.e. acting for the sake of another while being indifferent to oneself, or even in spite of harmful consequences for oneself (as the mother acts for the child or the prince for the people). However, such an action is, according to Nietzsche, only apparently selfless. Selfless actions produce a feeling of power (*Machtgefühl*) and they do so precisely because they are the conditions that allow us to continue in our position as prince, mother or whatever role we may play in society. Altruistic actions constitute, in fact, an egoistic practice aimed at preserving our position as functions of society (11[199] 9.521; cf. Siemens 2015, pp. 6-7).

Nietzsche's claim is that egoism (*der Egoism*) is not a choice – like all organisms or life-forms we perform self-regulatory processes – but that we have so far

567 "Denn bisher ist es der Mangel an feinem planmäßigen gedankenreichen Egoismus gewesen, was die Menschen im Ganzen auf einer so niedrigen Stufe erhält!".

pursued it badly. We did not understand that our behaviour has been oriented towards the well-being of society, not of ourselves as individuals. In order to better understand this claim we must be aware that Nietzsche, in this notebook, aims to provide a developmental account[568] of individuals and their relation to society using his readings in the life sciences (especially Roux and Mayer). Nietzsche argues that social drives and instincts are stronger than individual drives because they have been developed over an immensely long period of time in communities or societies:

> Our drives and passions have been selected in societal and sexual associations throughout immense stretches of time (arguably previously in ape-herds): so, as social drives and passions, they are stronger than the individual, even now[569] (11[130] 9.487f).

Individuals, late appearances (11[189] 9.515), have become more and more complex as a result of evolutionary developments. The "herd instincts" and "herd-affects"[570] are much older and stronger than "thoughtful egoism", a late and rare feeling. Individuals still feel the original herd instinct strongly and moralities are often just glorified gregarious instincts:

> Egoism is something later and still rare: the herd-feelings are stronger and older. E.g. the human still *values* itself as highly as the others value it[571] (11[185] 9.513)

Nietzsche highlights the disparity between the interests of the individual and of the community (11[46] 9.459) and takes issue with what is commonly understood, or rather misunderstood, as egoism, e.g. the desire to accumulate wealth or the vanity of the conqueror and statesman, which he argues is only the result of herd

568 Historical accuracy is not of the essence: what matters is the explanatory power of the model Nietzsche offers in order to understand the relation between persons and society in the present (Siemens 2015, p. 2).

569 "Unsere Triebe und Leidenschaften sind ungeheuere Zeiträume hindurch in Gesellschafts- und Geschlechtsverbänden gezüchtet worden (vorher wohl in Affen-Heerden): so sind sie als sociale Triebe und Leidenschaften stärker als individuelle, auch jetzt noch".

570 "Heerdeninstinkt" (11[344] 9.574) and "der heerdenbildenden Affekte" (11[226] 9.528).

571 "Der Egoism ist etwas Spätes und immer noch Seltenes: die Heerden-Gefühle sind mächtiger und älter. Z.B. noch immer schätzt sich der Mensch so hoch als die Anderen ihn schätzen.".

instincts[572] (11[226] 9.528). He sees both altruism and this improper understanding of egoism as signs of a morality in which the community shapes the individuals, rather than one in which the ego determines itself (11[226] 9.528). This state of affairs is, according to Nietzsche, the result of our ignorance, the lack of self-knowledge which stems from misunderstanding our own physiology. This ignorance has been exploited by various holders of power, communities, princes, party leaders, founders of religion, and philosophers like Plato, in order to glorify selflessness (11[303] 9.557) and enhance their own power. Nietzsche's claim is that behind morality there are physiological processes:

> What is morality! A human, a people has undergone a physiological change, experiences this in a common-feeling and interprets it in the language of its affects, and according to the degree of its knowledge, without noticing that the place of change is in the Physis.[573] (11[103] 9.478; also 11[112] 9.481),

We only see the intellectual or the affective interpretations of a process, not the physiological (*das Wesentliche*, 11[75] 9.470; 11[128] 9.487). Our opinions are based on physiological processes unknown to us (11[85] 9.473; for more on this see chapter II, section II.1.b.).

We have seen what Nietzsche understands by "low level" as well as the causes for the current state of affairs: human beings have developed as organs or functions of a society and lack knowledge of their own physiology. This does not, however, suffice as an answer to the question of why Nietzsche considers this a "*low* level" (my italics) that should be criticised and overcome. What is wrong with acting under the illusions of the morality of altruism? Nietzsche's response is that conformism to herd values inhibits freedom of thought (11[185] 9.513[574]) and

572 Certain individuals are said to think only of themselves, but the 'self' is constituted (overwhelmingly) by herd instincts. Humans pursue their desires (e.g. for wealth or power) without understanding themselves and their own desires, and so fail to see the real source of their actions as well as their true purpose and benefit: the well-being of the community, not of themselves.

573 "Was ist Moralität! Ein Mensch, ein Volk hat eine physiologische Veränderung erlitten, empfindet diese im Gemeingefühl und deutet sie sich in der Sprache seiner Affekte und nach dem Grade seiner Kenntnisse aus, ohne zu merken, daß der Sitz der Veränderung in der Physis ist.".

574 "Der Egoism ist etwas Spätes und immer noch Seltenes: die Heerden-Gefühle sind mäch-

hides the specificity of each individual – a message akin to that analysed above in FW 335. The focus on the specificity of each human and on the "nearest things" is highlighted in the list of preliminary questions Nietzsche writes down in the beginning of this notebook:

Each impersonal form of life must be regarded as common and contemptible.

> A. How much do I need in order to live in a way that is healthy and agreeable to me?
>
> B. How do I acquire this in a way that the process of acquisition is healthy and agreeable and meets the requirements of my spirit, especially as recreation
>
> C. How do I have to think of others in order to think as well as possible of myself and to grow in the feeling of power?
>
> D. How do I bring others to acknowledge my power?[575] (11[11] 9.444f)

The emphasis on what is nearest to and particular to each form of life, and on what is beneficial to each, including recreation, is very similar to Spinoza's concerns in EIVp45s[576]:

> It is the part of a wise man, I say, to refresh and restore himself in moderation with pleasant food and drink, with scents, with the beauty of green plants, with decoration, music sports, the theatre, and other things of this kind,

tiger und älter. Z.B. noch immer schätzt sich der Mensch so hoch als die Anderen ihn schätzen (Eitelkeit) Noch immer will er gleiche Rechte mit den Anderen und hat ein Wohlgefühl bei dem Gedanken daran, auch wenn er die Menschen gleich behandelt [...]weil wir gesehen haben, daß der Hang zur Heerde so groß ist, daß er immer wieder durchbricht, gegen alle Freiheiten des Gedankens! Es giebt eben noch sehr selten ein ego!".

575 "Jede unpersönliche Form des Lebens muß als gemein und verächtlich gelten. / A. Wie viel brauche ich, um gesund und angenehm für mich zu leben?/ B. Wie erwerbe ich dies so, daß das Erwerben gesund und angenehm ist und meinem Geiste zu Statten kommt, zumal als Erholung? / c. Wie habe ich von den Anderen zu denken, um von mir möglichst gut zu denken und im Gefühle der Macht zu wachsen? / d. Wie bringe ich die Anderen zur Anerkennung meiner Macht?".

576 One element that is key for Nietzsche, but not thematised as such in Spinoza, is the distinction between 'power' and the 'feeling of power'. More on this later.

> which anyone can use without injury to another. For the human body is composed of a great many parts of different natures, which constantly require new and varied nourishment […]

Conformity to the imperatives of a morality that presents itself as universal, absolute and final inhibits the growth of each form of life. We take on values that do not fit our specific conditions of existence and so we run the risk of harming ourselves: our capacity to self-legislate, create values and "become who we are". We are constituted as a great and diverse multiplicity of drives and affects and acting as mere organs or functions of the greater organism of society is the alienation of our power to act. We are faced with the task of becoming who we are: we either acknowledge and enhance our individuality or we fall into forgetfulness of what we are and strive to act as functions of a social organism, in spite of the complex entities we have become.

To the model of behaviour built on commitment to the morality of altruism Nietzsche opposes the model of the free and strong person (11[182] 9.509f), who, through self-knowledge, is capable of self-determination. Rather than take the unity of the organism, of the individual, for granted, Nietzsche argues that due to the influence of the community or the species the unity that individuals display is either weak, or is the result of the tyranny of one drive (11[189] 9.515)[577]. Nietzsche is looking for a way to strengthen the unity of the organism in such a way as to promote its ability to act. This means that the focus will be on the empowerment of the internal structure or endogenous force of each individual, while of course not neglecting that fact that it is impossible to think a person in isolation from its social environment. Bridging the gap between what nature and society make of humans and what humans can make of themselves is precisely the job of "thoughtful egoism" (Siemens 2015, pp. 2-3). Contrary to the morality of altruism, thoughtful egoism requires knowledge of what we are and of our self-regulating processes. Knowledge is not merely an instrument or means for

577 The possible problems with self-organisation are: 1) excessive, tyrannical supremacy of one drive over others (11[189] 9.515); 2) ascendancy of social drives over newly emerging individual drives (11[182] 9.509); or 3) the conflict of drives remains unresolved so no unity at all is attained (11[130] 9.488; cf. Siemens 2015, p. 4).

egoism, but a way of life that characterizes the practitioner of thoughtful egoism (Siemens 2015, p. 18). With the help of physiological knowledge we can oppose our understanding of ourselves as a multiplicity of drives to the false concept of personhood on which altruism rests (Siemens 2015, p. 20). Thoughtful egoism involves augmenting or sharpening the struggle between drives (internal richness, including evil impulses or drives 11[9] 9.443) in order to accumulate and orient the accumulated energy towards action and the flourishing or self-transformation of the individual – setting up new goals, ideals and valuations (11[76] 9.470; 11[238] 9.532). Egoism understood in this sense involves the ability to go against the laws of the species (11[126] 9.486), and seeing that pleasure (*Lust*) and (the avoidance of) pain (*Schmerz, Unlust*) are not essential (11[216]9.526) and do not prove anything, i.e. do not provide adequate knowledge (11[116] 9.482). They are composite affects, not immediate givens[578] (11[314] 9.562) and have no connection to the value of life (11[319] 9.565). Pleasure and pain are affects that can blind us: they serve the interests of herd instincts and morality, rather than the interests of the individual. Pain is not necessarily detrimental, insofar as it can serve as a strong stimulant (11[116] 9.482).

Nietzsche's normative thinking in this period presents, at first sight, a great number of similarities with Spinoza's. Both are interested in formulating an account of the model or exemplar of the free human and think freedom as a function of self-determination. Both are interested in mechanisms of self-regulation of organisms that, when performed well, can empower us. While Nietzsche deals with them in greater detail than Spinoza, no doubt due to his readings in the life sciences, we have seen in chapter I (pp.76-80) how the interest in the process of metabolism and self-regulation is evident in the Physical Interlude[579]. The exemplar of the free man works, for Spinoza, as a thought experiment designed to bring out what counts as characteristics that are worth striving for. Due to the specific character of each individual, due to the specific constitution of each body, Spinoza cannot supply a concrete model or ideal we should all strive towards. He can at best

578 "unmittelbaren Thatsachen".

579 A major move on Spinoza's part away from the mechanistic understanding of organisms prevalent in his time, as was argued in chapter I.

offer a number of guidelines according to which we strive to increase our own power to act. His epistemological optimism, the belief that we can gain adequate knowledge of the body, is not reflected in the confidence that he can provide that knowledge for us. We may sometimes, for ourselves, be able to recognize true empowerment. Due to his critique of teleology and of essences, coupled with the emphasis on the variety of types encountered in nature, Nietzsche is in a similar position to Spinoza. He can emphasize a number of elements that, if we pay attention to, can contribute to our qualitative self-transformation. Even if the list of traits might look differently in the two cases, given Spinoza's focus on agreement and reason and Nietzsche's interest in (certain forms of) conflict, they share an important impulse: through the enhancement of our self-knowledge, by turning to the body, we are better able to see what could contribute to the project of liberation and empowerment. Both place great emphasis on understanding and enhancing the specificity of each person while they at the time strive to formulate general accounts of what could count as freedom for all human beings.

Nevertheless, there are references to Spinoza in notebook 11 which are critical in nature and meant to distance Nietzsche's own position form Spinoza's. Nietzsche opposes Spinoza's optimism with regard to the power of reason to eliminate conflict as well as the assumption that eliminating conflict is beneficial (11[132] 9.489). He also argues that the power of passions constitutes a stimulant for knowledge. These criticisms have been discussed above in this chapter, and now it is useful to focus on what appear to be implicit critiques. First and foremost, Nietzsche claims that so far thoughtful egoism has been poorly understood. While Spinoza is not mentioned by name, the following fragment seems to be a critique of the notion of conatus: "Pre-egoism, herd-instincts are older than the "striving-for-self-preservation""[580] (11[193] 9.518). Nietzsche claims Spinoza did not understand to what extent the subject is shaped by the social (the pre-history of herd-existence) and so has failed to provide us with a convincing descriptive account of what human beings are and of the nature and origins of their affects and desires. Nietzsche's attack on Spinoza does not boil down to Nietzsche's mistaken belief that conatus or the drive for self-preservation exists only in individuals, not collectives, as claimed in Sommer

580 "Voregoismus, Heerdentrieb sind älter als das 'Sich-selbst-erhalten-wollen'".

(2012, p. 171). Nietzsche's point is rather about the quality of egoism described by Spinoza: he argues that because Spinoza did not have a developmental account of the individual, he did not see what thoughtful egoism entails. Furthermore, not only is Spinoza's description of us mistaken, his account of normativity is also flawed. Nietzsche contrasts Spinoza's focus on acting according to what is "useful to us", which he takes to be a teleological way of thinking, to his own emphasis, using Roux, on overcompensation and assimilation. This is keeping in line with his description of life as expansion (11[24] 9.451), according to a "non-teleological dynamic of over-compensation, accumulation, boundless growth and reproduction" (Siemens 2015, p. 9). Spinoza's focus on desire or appetite as the essence of humans (11[307] 9.559) was not, according to Nietzsche, enough for him to overcome the teleological view of desire as directed towards preservation of existence and utility. Next to these two points of criticism, we can detect a third: Nietzsche's critique of pain and pleasure as guides for understanding can be read as an implicit critique of the importance they play in Spinoza's *Ethics*, where they are two of the three basic affects (next to desire).

Are these objections to Spinoza justified? Has the lack of a developmental story similar to Nietzsche's made Spinoza blind to the illusions of both altruism and of an un-enlightened or un-thoughtful egoism? Nietzsche claims that Spinoza did not see that the drive for self-preservation, as he reads the conatus, developed out of "pre-egoism", or "herd-instincts", with the consequence that Spinoza underestimated the difficulty of comprehending and acting in the interest of the person, rather than of the social whole. This, however, fails to fully appreciate Spinoza's point that the fact that we are engaged in a process of empowerment does not mean we perform it well. All human beings are engaged in processes of self-regulation, as both Spinoza and Nietzsche see, but that does not mean that in these processes we are not deceived by our social drives and affects into acting according to metaphysical or moral illusions that may be beneficial to society but that do nothing to empower us. The place to look for the fundamental difference between their accounts of thoughtful egoism is in the distinction between Spinoza's ideal of agreement (the interest of the social whole) and Nietzsche's emphasis on struggle, intensification of tension and accumulation of force. The difference does

not stem, as Nietzsche thinks, from Spinoza's conatus doctrine as the expression of an exclusive focus on pure self-preservation. Spinoza's doctrine of conatus, being anti-teleological, does not lead him to understand utility as the fulfilment or satisfaction of a need but as the expression or going out of itself of a body's power of acting. What counts as useful is the action that follows from one's own nature rather than from external influence. The underlying similarity between Spinoza and Nietzsche on this point boils down to their shared view of desire as expression or expansion rather than as need. Furthermore, they are both aware that, given insufficient knowledge of our bodies and of what counts as empowerment, we can be misled in identifying genuine empowerment. In Spinoza this translates into the distinction between *laetitia* (genuine joy) and *titlatio*[581], while for Nietzsche this is seen in the (possible disjunction) between real power and the feeling of power. The possibility of partial or apparent empowerment as well as the importance of detecting this phenomenon is present in Spinoza's thinking, even if he does not connect it specifically to social drives or affects. Following this analysis we can see how close their normative accounts of egoism really are, and that the genuine difference stems from their views on conflict and the power of reason. For both, the striving to seek the enhancement and affirmation of the specificity of each human being is what drives their normative project and makes them interested in detecting the obstacles that may inhibit our pursuit of freedom, understood as self-determination and flourishing.

An important consequence of the structural similarities between their positions on the question of egoism is the similarity in the consequences they draw from this ethical norm for the orientation towards others. Egoism involves the use of others, therefore an instrumental perspective on other human beings (Siemens 2015, pp. 13-14). Nevertheless, using others or exploiting them does not oppose the action of caring for others; the two are not mutually exclusive. The type of egoism advocated by Nietzsche is not the egoism of the robber or the thief, but that of the gardener, who is able to cultivate others (11[2] 9.441). Others can be beneficial to our own growth, but only if their specific power to act is also enhanced. The

581 Focusing on pleasure and displeasure can lead us away from understanding nature according to the order of the intellect (see chapter I, section II.1.).

profoundly Spinozistic thought that "there is nothing more useful to man than man (EIVp35cor1) is also at the basis of Nietzsche's thinking on egoism and its reciprocal nature (Siemens 2015, p. 16). Nevertheless, the difference in the way the two think cooperation surfaces here too. While Spinoza understands agreement as, ideally, harmonious cooperation between two modes according to reason, Nietzsche sees cooperation as a struggle that, under certain circumstances, can be empowering. This serves to explain why Spinoza's commitment to democracy as a political model is not matched by Nietzsche, who, as we shall see below, argues against the mediocritization and levelling of humans in the context of democratic institutions. This critique will be discussed in the context of an analysis of Nietzsche's understanding of the notions of freedom and necessity, to which we will now turn.

2.c. Freedom and necessity

Any discussion of normativity in Nietzsche is bound to run against the following problem: what is the benefit of any normative account if we live in a world governed by necessity? If our actions cannot be otherwise than they are, then what is the point of imagining ethical or normative programs that we would never be able to implement? It seems surprising that, in the light of Nietzsche's radical criticisms of free will, as discussed in chapter II, as well as of the accompanying illusions of 'first or un-caused cause', 'subject', 'will' or 'responsibility' (Richardson 2009, p. 127), he is still willing to engage in normative thinking that demands the exercise of freedom[582]. Furthermore, the exemplar of the strong individual or type, as we have seen above, requires freedom as a fundamental condition[583]. In this sub-section I will argue that Nietzsche has an understanding of freedom that is not opposed to necessity and that in many ways resembles Spinoza's.

> An individual is a piece of fate, from the front and from the back; an individual is one more law, one more necessity imposed on everything

582 There are numerous texts in which Nietzsche praises the "free spirit" (FW 347 3.583), the "sovereign individual" (GM II 2 5.293f), or the creator of values who has some sort of "free will" (Z II Inseln 4.111; JGB 213 5.148; cf. Poellner 2009, pp. 151-2).

583 This also holds true for the overman (Roth 1997, p. 100), as well as for, according to some commentators, the sovereign individual in GM II 2 (Richardson 2009, p. 129).

> that is coming and going to be. To say to an individual: 'change yourself' means demanding that everything change, even retroactively…[584] (GD Moral 6 6.87)

In spite of numerous texts in which Nietzsche uses "symbols of contingency", e.g. the throwing of the dice, and in which he speaks of the indeterminate, unpredictable or the absolutely free, Nietzsche "is revealed as the true poet of the necessary". For Nietzsche, the "world's mode of being" and the conditions for each natural event are best described in terms of necessity (Nabais 2006, p. 65). In the case of the individual, this means that the entirety of the series of its actions, stretching back and forward in time, is necessary and cannot be otherwise. However, the notion of 'necessity' used by Nietzsche should not be seen as an explanation of the fabric of reality, but rather as the best available perspective once free will and determinism have been exposed as illusions[585]. Necessity rules the world and all things are interconnected, but not through causal, mechanistic determinism. Nietzsche sees mechanistic, law-like descriptions of nature as only a(n) (problematic) interpretation of the world, and replaces cause and effect relation with relations of power between different wills (Djurić 1980, pp. 166-7). While for Spinoza the world is rational and its laws can be known, for Nietzsche the inner workings of the world are opaque and unavailable to rational categories (Yovel 1992, p. 106). However, except for the metaphysical grounding and ensuing epistemological optimism characteristic of Spinoza's system, I read 'necessity' in both philosophers to refer to something very similar, namely the interconnectedness of things in nature and the impossibility of thinking anything in isolation, as an "empire within an empire". Nothing could be otherwise without the whole world being otherwise[586]: we find here the same rejection of the modality

584 "Der Einzelne ist ein Stück fatum, von Vorne und von Hinten, ein Gesetz mehr, eine Nothwendigkeit mehr für Alles, was kommt und sein wird. Zu ihm sagen „ändere dich" heisst verlangen, dass Alles sich ändert, sogar rückwärts noch".

585 Nietzsche replaces teleology and mechanism with fatalism, a concept that excludes a sharp opposition between necessity and freedom and is not adverse to human freedom as freedom to create, as will be seen below (Djurić 1980, pp. 168-9).

586 Arguably an elaboration and extension of the Aristotelian thesis that "We say that that which cannot be otherwise is necessarily so. And from this sense of necessary all the others are somehow derived" (Metaphysics 1015a33-35).

of possibility as in Spinoza. As a consequence, they both deny that we could be complete causes of any event in the world, independently of our environment. The necessity of the world, and of each thing in the world, is for Nietzsche the result of the various power relations that obtain between intensities or quanta of power (14[79] 13.258), between strong and weak wills (JGB 21 5.36). These relations take the form of struggle between centres of will to power that command and obey, and that strive for mastery (GM II 12 5.314; 11[77] 13.38). While acknowledging the lack of a systematic elucidation in the secondary literature of the central, yet indeterminate concept of necessity in Nietzsche (Nabais 2006, p. 66), we will focus in the subsequent discussion of freedom on understanding it against the background of the constellation of relations of commanding and obeying obtaining between quanta of power: this offers us a good perspective for making sense of how freedom and necessity can coexist in Nietzsche. Nietzsche, just like Spinoza, "believes that only from the perspective of the *necessary* will we be able to conceive of a world beyond good and evil" (Nabais 2006, p. 65).

What sort of notion of 'freedom' can be compatible with necessity? It must be a naturalised, de-moralised notion of freedom and so radically different from metaphysical freedom (Richardson 2009, p. 129). In the following we will focus on two key ways in which freedom is present in Nietzsche's thinking: 'freedom from' (*Freiheit von*) and 'freedom for/to do' (*Freiheit für/zu*) something (Schank [forthcoming], cat. 2). On a number of occasions (GM III 24 5.399; AC 54 6.236) Nietzsche speaks of freedom as release from belief in traditional values, particularly the belief in truth[587]. The critique of traditional values serves as the propaedeutic to the pursuit of freedom in the second, more substantial sense. In order to further elucidate this second sense, I will focus on GD Streifzüge 38 6.139f, a section titled "My idea of freedom" (*Mein Begriff von Freiheit*):

> And the war is what teaches people to be free. Because, what is freedom anyway? Having the will to be responsible for yourself. Maintaining the distance that divides us. Becoming indifferent to hardship, cruelty,

587 "Das sind noch lange keine freien Geister: denn sie glauben noch an die Wahrheit…" (GM III 24 5.399); "Überzeugungen sind Gefängnisse." (AC 54 6.236)

> deprivation, even to life. Being ready to sacrifice people for your cause, yourself included. Freedom means that the manly instincts which take pleasure in war and victory have gained control over the other instincts, over the instinct of 'hapiness', for instance. […] a free human being is a *warrior*.[588]

Freedom, for Nietzsche, is not a given, a condition for moral agency and responsibility as the "intelligible freedom" he criticizes in Kant and Schopenhauer, but it is something to be achieved and to be valued for its own sake[589] (Pippin 2009, p. 79; Rutherford 2011, p. 514). The continuous striving for freedom, pursued within the horizon of immanence and free of all transcendence (Roth 1997, p. 102), goes hand in hand with the striving for autonomy, or self-determination of the self and consists in creation and in the affirmation of nature[590], fate or necessity. Freedom, as a value or aspiration, is associated with the process of self-overcoming (Pippin 2009, p. 69). Nietzsche writes that "There is freedom only in creation"[591] (12[19] 10.403) and that "in order to be able to create, we must give ourselves greater freedom than we were ever given"[592] (21[6] 10.602). We can understand the process of creation to consist in self-legislation, the creation of a new structure of drives[593], which leads to the creation of new values or ideals. In order to understand what kind of structure of drives is associated by Nietzsche with freedom, we must look at the condition for freedom, viz 'war'.

588 "Und der Krieg erzieht zur Freiheit. Denn was ist Freiheit! Dass man den Willen zur Selbstverantwortlichkeit hat. Dass man die Distanz, die uns abtrennt, festhält. Dass man gegen Mühsal, Härte, Entbehrung, selbst gegen das Leben gleichgültiger wird. Dass man bereit ist, seiner Sache Menschen zu opfern, sich selber nicht abgerechnet. Freiheit bedeutet, dass die männlichen, die kriegs- und siegsfrohen Instinkte die Herrschaft haben über andre Instinkte, zum Beispiel über die des 'Glücks'. […] Der freie Mensch ist Krieger".

589 What is to be achieved? To use a useful simplification, the "capacity both to sustain a whole-hearted commitment to an ideal" and "a willingness to overcome or abandon such a commitment in altered circumstances or as a result of some development" (Pippin 2009, p. 80).

590 More on affirmation below.

591 "Nur im Schaffen giebt es Freiheit.".

592 "Um schaffen zu können, müssen wir selber uns größere Freiheit geben als je uns gegeben wurde".

593 For an account of freedom at the level of drives, together with its roots in animality, see Richardson 2009, pp. 132-6.

Should we understand "war" as the striving to annihilate the opponent, a case in which freedom would involve the overcoming of struggle through elimination, or is "war" the enhancement or sharpening of struggle that does not aim at the eradication of the other? In the discussion of Nietzsche's theory of drives in chapter II, we have already seen the importance he places on incorporating the greatest amount of struggle possible in his discussion of the nature and quality of the organisation of drives. Nietzsche is mostly interested in the second meaning of war or conflict[594] suggested above, and the section from *GD* under discussion here is no exception:

> How is freedom measured in individuals and in people? It is measured by the resistance that needs to be overcome, by the effort that it costs to stay on *top*. Look for the highest type of free human beings where the highest resistance is *constantly*[595] [my italics] being overcome[596] (GD Streifzüge 38 6.140)

Eliminating the resistance that acts as a stimulus for struggle leads to the "mediocritization" (*Vermittelmässigung*) and "levelling" (*Ausgleichung*) Nietzsche criticizes as consequences of democracy (JGB 242 5.183) or liberalism (GD Streifzüge 38 6.139) The focus is not on the opposition between freedom and necessity, but on the various degrees of freedom one can achieve, depending on the effort spent in overcoming resistance.

Rutherford is undoubtedly correct in arguing for a number of crucial similarities between Nietzsche's and Spinoza's accounts of freedom[597]. First, both criticize the notion of free will (the unconditional power of choice of an agent), a crude error

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594 For an analysis of cases where Nietzsche seems to advcoate a struggle aimed at the elimination or overcoming of struggle see Ioan (2014).

595 Freedom needs to be constantly overcome; there is no settled end state (Pippin 2009, p. 76).

596 "Wonach misst sich die Freiheit, bei Einzelnen, wie bei Völkern? Nach dem Widerstand, der überwunden werden muss, nach der Mühe, die es kostet, oben zu bleiben. Den höchsten Typus freier Menschen hätte man dort zu suchen, wo beständig der höchste Widerstand überwunden wird".

597 Spinoza and Nietzsche come close not only in their rejection of 'free will', but also in their critique of the belief in a single, unitary faculty of will: both argue that we should speak of a multiplicity of volitions or wills (see ch. I and II).

defended by those who believe in a moral world order in order to promote the fiction of moral responsibility (Rutherford 2011, p. 512). Second, both value freedom for its own sake, rather than as condition for moral action, and understand it as "the condition of *autonomy*, which presupposes *knowledge* of nature and the truth of *fatalism*" (Rutherford 2011, pp. 514, 524). Freedom is an ideal attainable by the philosopher and expressive of one's degree of power (Rutherford 2011, pp. 523, 532). Nietzsche differs from Spinoza insofar as the latter has not fully de-deified nature: due to his confidence in reason, Spinoza still upholds the "*intelligibility* of nature" (Rutherford 2011, p. 522).

My account differs from Rutherford's on four points. First, Rutherford does not bring out what we have seen above to be the substance of freedom for Nietzsche, namely "war". Struggle and tension are constitutive of freedom for Nietzsche in a way they are not for Spinoza, for whom overcoming resistance can at best be an instrumental good and for whom the ethical ideal consists quintessentially in agreement. Second, freedom for both does not depend on knowledge of nature *tout court*: that would be too ambitious and therefore an impossible target. Both Spinoza and Nietzsche argue in favour of focusing our search for knowledge on our body and on the interactions between it and the environment. We cannot hope to know anything, including ourselves, in isolation, but we can try to decipher the way we are affected. In this respect, Nietzsche's "perspective knowing" closely resembles Spinoza claim that "the ideas which we have of external bodies indicate the condition of our own body more than the nature of the external bodies" (EIIp16cor2). Third, and as a consequence of the second point, we must place greater emphasis on understanding, in our account of freedom, the endogenous power of each body. While no doubt knowing external presences and influences is essential (Rutherford 2011, pp. 531-2), it is again too ambitious to attempt an identification with "existence as a whole" (Rutherford 2011, p. 534). The emphasis should rather be on the specificity of each life-form and how its various expressions of power interact with the environment and could be enhanced. In Spinoza's terms, we must strive to know the "proximate cause" for each of our abilities, insofar as we act and are acted on "in a great number of ways". Fourth, as tempting as it may be to argue that Nietzsche and Spinoza conspire towards

the same ethical ideal, of freedom conceived as "pleasure and power of self-determination"[598] (FW 347 3.583; cf. Rutherford 2011, p. 513) and enhancement of power, I will argue in the following that this conjecture is undermined by an interesting complication in Nietzsche's account of how power can be expressed.

It appears that the striking similarities between Spinoza's and Nietzsche's understanding of freedom as (degrees of) power is best summarised in the following text:

> What is good? – Everything that enhances people's feeling of power, will to power, power itself.
>
> What is bad? – Everything stemming from weakness.
>
> What is happiness? – The feeling that power is *growing,* that some resistance has been overcome
>
> *Not* contentedness, but more power;[599] (AC 2 6.170)

While it may be tempting to conjecture that freedom may serve as an ethical ideal in a way similar to Spinoza, Nietzsche appears to run into a difficulty here. Normative questions are always questions of value, and it seems hardly satisfying to claim that our valuations should depend solely on the quantitative measure or degree of resistance. If this were the case, we would be in a position to seek the most difficult challenges available purely on the basis of the difficulty they present, rather than care about their content. This view would lead us to miss the importance of the signification and value of the specific challenges we set for ourselves outside considerations about the level of resistance. Nietzsche's ethical stance, insofar as it can be deduced here, implies that an individual or a people "*became* valuable"[600] or "deserving of respect"[601] insofar as they were faced with

598 "eine Lust und Kraft der Selbstbestimmung".

599 "Was ist gut? – Alles, was das Gefühl der Macht, den Willen zur Macht, die Macht selbst im Menschen erhöht. / Was ist schlecht? – Alles, was aus der Schwäche stammt. / Was ist Glück? – Das Gefühl davon, dass die Macht wächst, dass ein Widerstand überwunden wird. / Nicht Zufriedenheit, sondern mehr Macht;".

600 "werth wurden".

601 "das Ehrfurcht verdient".

"great danger"[602] (GD Streifzüge 38 6.140) that they constantly overcame, but it cannot tell us towards what the strength accumulated through the intensification of struggle should be directed[603].

Before focusing on the qualitative dimension of empowerment, it is helpful to ask whether the possession and exercise of power constitutive of freedom is accompanied by a "feeling of power". Is the "feeling of power" always a credible indication of empowerment? Nietzsche expresses scepticism in the following text:

> In short, the one who wills believes with a reasonable degree of certainty that will and action are somehow one; he attributes the success, the performance of the willing to the will itself, and consequently enjoys an increase in the feeling of power that accompanies all success.[604] (JGB 19 5.33)

This "feeling of power" is, in this case, based on a number of illusions that Nietzsche debunks in this section of *JGB* and that have been discussed in more detail in chapter II: the hypothesis that the will is known to us, that it is a simple thing, that we possess free will and that we are an originary unity – "the synthetic concept of the 'I'"[605] (JGB 19 5.33). The agent feels an increase in the feeling of power and the associated pleasure because she is subject to a number of metaphysical illusions. Nietzsche's project is to understand empowerment without employing the illusions he criticizes, to make the feeling of power "more substantial and not illusory"[606] (4[216] 9.154). Because we do not have an adequate understanding of ourselves we can be deceived regarding our empowerment by our unreflected commitment to the values of the community, values created and used by the

602 "die grosse Gefahr".

603 The same problem, of the quality of our values and actions, has been raised by Nehamas (1985, pp. 276-7) and Poellner (2009, p. 154) among others. This is one of the reasons why, in the next section,we must discuss the notion of life-affirmation as closely related to, but not identical with, empowerment.

604 genug, der Wollende glaubt, mit einem ziemlichen Grad von Sicherheit, dass Wille und Aktion irgendwie Eins seien –, er rechnet das Gelingen, die Ausführung des Wollens noch dem Willen selbst zu und geniesst dabei einen Zuwachs jenes Machtgefühls, welches alles Gelingen mit sich bringt.

605 "des synthetischen Begriffs 'ich'".

606 "immer mehr substantiell und nicht illusionär".

priest or philosopher to its own benefit. We need to understand the (possible) dissociation between power and the feeling of power as a characteristic of human beings (Siemens 2017, pp. 14, 18-9; Patton 1993, p. 155). The development of consciousness has generated the possibility of error in our assessment of our own power, through the misinterpretation of our physiology. This complicates the identification of empowerment with freedom because it makes it harder to detect the presence of authentic empowerment.

2.d. Empowerment and affirmation in Nietzsche's late work

We have seen in the beginning of chapter II that much of Nietzsche's thinking after 1880, and by consequence his turn to the body, can be understood as a reaction to his critique of nihilism. Physiologically, Nietzsche's diagnosis of nihilism reads as the claim that the body turns against itself and inhibits its own power to act. Starting with 1887, particularly the Lenzer Heide note of June 10th 1887 and the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche thinks nihilism in the following manner: certain people or classes are engaged in the process of "*self-ruination*"[607] (5[71] 12.215) or "self-destruction"[608] (5[71 12.215). This means that certain people, "who turned out badly"[609] (5[71] 12.215), pursue, instinctively, actions that undermine them: "self-vivisection, poisoning, intoxication"[610] (5[71] 12.215) as symptoms of the "instinct of self-destruction"[611] (5[71] 12.215). Certain people have turned out badly because they "were violated and oppressed by *people*"[612] (5[71] 12.214), and not, as previously, by "powerlessness in the face of nature" "[613] (5[71] 12.214; cf Nabais 2006, p. 141). The "embitterment against existence"[614] (5[71] 12.214) is not produced by nature and is therefore not universal. This claim is unpacked in the *Genealogy*, in the context of Nietzsche's discussion of his "own hypothesis on the origin of 'bad conscience'"[615] (GM II 16 5.321). Under the "repressive and

607 "Sich-zu-Grunde-richten".
608 "Selbstzerstörung".
609 "Schlechtweggekommenen".
610 "Die Selbstvivisektion, die Vergiftung, Berauschung".
611 "Instinkts der Selbstzerstörung".
612 "von Menschen vergewaltthätigt und niedergedrückt wurden".
613 "nicht die Ohnmacht gegen die Natur".
614 "Verbitterung gegen das Dasein".
615 "meiner eignen Hypothese über den Ursprung des 'schlechten Gewissens'".

ruthless machinery"[616] of the "state", i.e. the violent actions of a "conqueror and master race"[617] (GM II 17 5.324), people were shaped, i.e, "imprisoned within the confines of society and peace"[618] (GM II 16 5.322). Without analysing the details of this process here, we must emphasize its salient feature, namely the "*internalization* of man"[619]: the instincts which used to be discharged outwardly now turned "*inwards"*[620]. The obstruction of the "external discharge of man's instincts" resulted in "the human's sickness of the *human,* of *itself"*[621]: "the human impatiently ripped itself apart, persecuted itself, gnawed at itself, gave itself no peace and abused itself"[622] (GM II 16 5.322f). This state of degeneration, of physiological inhibition and exhaustion, has been exploited[623] by the ascetic priest. The ascetic priest managed to *"exploit* the bad instincts of all sufferers for the purpose of self-discipline, self-surveillance and self-overcoming"[624] (GM III 16 5.375) by creating a number of methods for alleviation suffering, for consoling the sick[625] (GM III 17 5.377). This type of morality, i.e. the practices developed by the priest, has a crucial drawback: it produces analgesia, but it fails to address the real problem of physiological inhibition and exhaustion. The cure offered by the ascetic priest is superficial because it is not based on physiological understanding of the problem he is facing (GM III 13 5.365). Furthermore, not only do the cures proposed by the priest not address the cause or nature of the sickness, they can make the sick person even sicker (GM III 20 5.388). Nietzsche claims that this is confirmed by the fact that everywhere where the ascetic priest prevailed sickness has increased in depth and breadth (GM III 21 5.391). While the

616 "Eine zerdrückende und rücksichtslose Maschinerie".
617 "eine Eroberer- und Herren-Rasse".
618 "in den Bann der Gesellschaft und des Friedens eingeschlossen".
619 "die Verinnerlichung des Menschen".
620 "Nach Ihnen".
621 "das Leiden des Menschen am Menschen, an sich".
622 "Der Mensch […] ungeduldig selbst zerriss, verfolgte, annagte, aufstörte, misshandelte".
623 An expression of the priest's will to power, as we will see later.
624 "die schlechten Instinkte aller Leidenden dergestalt zum Zweck der Selbstdisciplinirung, Selbstüberwachung, Selbstüberwindung auszunützen".
625 These methods included 'the hypnotic dampening of sensibility', the promotion of 'mechanical activity' or of 'doing good' (GM III 18 5.382) and, critically, producing and using an "excess of feeling" in order to dull pain (GM III 19 and 20 5.384ff).

ascetic priest is the main target of Nietzsche's criticisms in the third essay of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche detects the same commitment to the ascetic ideal in science or philosophy[626]. Nietzsche presents the type of morality invented by the priest, namely the morality of compassions, as a poison (GM Vorrede 6 5.253), that may turn out to be more dangerous that the disease it supposed to cure (GM I 6 5.265). What is so dangerous about this cure, why is it that Nietzsche so vehemently protests against the morality of compassion? Nietzsche argues that the greatest danger is that it prevents the human from reaching its "*highest potential power and splendour"*[627]. Not questioning the value of the morality of compassion is to run the risk of living *"at the expense of the future"*[628] (GM Vorrede 6 5.253). Nietzsche argues that

> Today we see nothing that wants to expand, we suspect that things will just continue to decline, getting thinner, better-natured, cleverer, more comfortable, more mediocre, more indifferent, more Chinese, more Christian[629] (GM I 12 5.277)

The danger presented by the morality of compassion, namely the inhibition of growth and development of the human, is possible due to the lack of physiological knowledge of the presuppositions that have generated this type of morality. The problem Nietzsche detects here is that the sufferer, insofar as she believes in morality[630], fails to realise that it is concealed hatred, that behind the mask of a "will to morality", there is nothing but "will to power". The difference between "masters" and the oppressed cannot be found in the absence of will to power,

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626 Nietzsche's argument is based on the notion that the "will to truth", the kernel of the ascetic ideal, is at the heart of science and philosophy (GM III 24 5.398-401) and that they all have the same physiological presupposition: "a certain *impoverishment of life*" (eine gewisse Verarmung des Lebens – GM III 25 5.403).

627 "höchste Mächtigkeit und Pracht".

628 "auf Kosten der Zukunft".

629 "Wir sehen heute Nichts, das grösser werden will, wir ahnen, dass es immer noch abwärts, abwärts geht, in's Dünnere, Gutmüthigere, Klügere, Behaglichere, Mittelmässigere, Gleichgültigere".

630 Morality still has its uses insofar as it protects the sufferer from "hopeless desperation" in the face of the realisation that the oppressed and the oppressor are "*in the same boat"* ("auf gleichem Boden steht") and that the sufferer has no "*right* to his contempt for the will to power" ("ein Recht zu seiner Verachtung des Willens zur Macht" – 5[71] 12.215).

because "life itself is the will to power"[631] (5[71] 12.215). The distinction lies in the nature or quality of the expression of power in the two cases. Morality may have protected the sufferers, may have "*encouraged, strengthened*"[632] (5[71] 12.214) them, but only in a superficial sense. It acted as an analgesic rather than as cure for drives and instincts turning against themselves in the body of the sufferer, and so undermining or inhibiting her power to act.

If this reading of Nietzsche is accurate, then it seems insufficient for him to write that "there is nothing about life that has value except the degree of power"[633] (5[71] 12.215). The sufferers manifest their power in a way that turns it against themselves and a great degree or intensity of power is not enough to stop this processes. Furthermore, this reading makes it possible to understand why Nietzsche would be interested in detecting whether a certain type of morality is the sign of ascending or declining life: he is interested in whether various expressions of power can avoid going against and undermining themselves. Building on the analysis in chapter II we need to add a further dimension to the investigation of how power expresses itself. We have seen that Nietzsche moves away from the action / reaction paradigm in *GM* to a model of thinking power predicated on the distinction between reacting immediately and reacting slowly to stimuli. Perhaps we can read Nietzsche's interest in developing a reading of power in terms of excess and explosion of force that follows a period of accumulation in light of his interest for finding ways to build a dynamic of empowerment that avoids the peril of power turning against itself. But using the category of activity *tout court* does not do enough to avoid the pitfalls characteristic of nihilism, i.e. life-forms turning against themselves. The stress must be on analysing what accumulation through sharpening of inner tension may mean if empowerment is to be consonant with affirmation. By my lights, it is affirmation that constitutes the 'criterion' of qualitatively good power, i.e. it is the criterion we need to use in order to distinguish between good and bad (self-undermining) expressions of power. While *GM* offers us important clues to thinking about the nature and importance of affirmation, it is

631 "daß Leben selbst der Wille zur Macht ist".
632 "ermuthigt, gestärkt".
633 "Es giebt nichts am Leben, was Werth hat, außer dem Grade der Macht".

after *GM* that the problem of the quality of empowerment can be said to be truly central to Nietzsche's thinking on normativity.

We must therefore inquire, using Nietzsche's late texts, about the relation between empowerment and affirmation. Identifying and promoting affirmation may, hopefully, contribute to the "self-overcoming" of the human and of the "European form of Buddhism"[634], namely "*doing no,* after all existence has lost its "sense"[635] (5[71] 12.216).

In the *Moral als Widernatur* section of *GD*, which I will use as my guide for the rest of discussion, Nietzsche focuses on the development of a fertile life, which means a life rich in contradictions. Why does he do this, in what context and what are the benefits?

The discussion is placed in the context of Nietzsche's account of two ways of dealing with passions. First, we have excision or castration, characteristic of the moralists' or priests' way of handling the passions: "The church combats the passions by cutting them off in every sense: its technique, its 'cure', is *castration*."[636] (GD Moral 1 6.83). This treatment is symptomatic of degeneration, of life turning against itself, of sickness: "the practices of the church are *hostile to life …"*[637] (GD Moral 1 6.82).

Second, we have spiritualisation, based on the stimulation or amplification of internal struggle between drives or passions[638]:

> Another triumph is our spiritualisation of *hostility*. It involves a deep appreciation of the value of having enemies; […] We act the same way towards the 'inner enemy': we have spiritualized hostility there too, and

634 "die europäische Form des Buddhismus".
635 "das Nein-thun, nachdem alles Dasein seinen 'Sinn' verloren hat".
636 "Die Kirche bekämpft die Leidenschaft mit Ausschneidung in jedem Sinne: ihre Praktik, ihre 'Kur' ist der Castratismus".
637 "die Praxis der Kirche ist lebensfeindlich …".
638 On this topic see also Conway (2014, p. 293).

> have come to appreciate its *value.* The price of *fertility* is to be rich in contradictions;[639] (GD Moral 3 6.84)

We see here Nietzsche rehearsing the importance of the type of conflict he advocates in the 1881 notebook analysed above. The interest in the notion of egoism, while still present, no longer plays a dominant role, and its centrality is replaced by the question of values, in this case the value of egoism (GD Streifzüge 33 6.131f). The question of values, i.e. the task to revaluate all values[640] (GD Vorrede 6.57), needs to be considered using the following parameters, encapsulated in Nietzsche's use of the notion of 'fertility' (*Fruchtbarkeit*): one must be creative, not be subject to the absolutist claims of one type of morality, and evaluate the values generated according to whether they are the symptom of exhausted, weakened types of life or not (GD Moral 5 6.86). The ideal is to cultivate and endure as tense a plurality of drives or instincts as possible without reducing it according to the ascetic ideal (van Tongeren 2006, p. 401). While, as living beings, humans cannot help positing values (GD Moral 5 6.86) they can do so either by turning against nature (what Nietzsche calls "*anti-natural* morality"[641] – GD Moral 4 6.85) or by being affirmative. While it is not easy to pin down what exactly affirmation means, we find a clue to the normative task as Nietzsche sees it in the following text:

> But we who are different, we immoralists, have opened our hearts to all types of understanding, comprehension, *approval*. We do not negate easily, we stake our honour on being *affirmative.* We are increasingly opening our eyes to that economy that both needs and knows how to make use of everything rejected by the holy insanity of the priests, the *sick* reason of the priests – to that economy in the law of life that can take advantage of even the disgusting species of idiot, the priests, the virtuous, – *what*

639 "Ein andrer Triumph ist unsre Vergeistigung der Feindschaft. Sie besteht darin, dass man tief den Werth begreift, den es hat, Feinde zu haben: [...] Nicht anders verhalten wir uns gegen den 'inneren Feind': auch da haben wir die Feindschaft vergeistigt, auch da haben wir ihren Werth begriffen. Man ist nur fruchtbar um den Preis, an Gegensätzen reich zu sein;".

640 "Eine Umwerthung aller Werthe".

641 " Die widernatürliche Moral".

> advantage? – But we ourselves, we immoralists, are the answer to this …[642] (GD Moral 6 6.87)

The detection of metaphysical and moral errors and prejudices (soundings out old idols – GD Vorrede 6.58) is the springboard for affirming life, i.e. affirming the "enchanting abundance of types, a lavish profusion of forms in change and at play" that "reality shows us" [643](GD Moral 6 6.86). First, by seeing through moral illusions and understanding that they are the symptom of concealed hatred, we make available for ourselves a great number of passions or drives whose force can be used in the project of revaluation of values and which the morality of compassion tried to disempower or excise. Second, it implies recognizing the will to power that animates the actions of the ascetic priest, namely the creation of the ascetic ideal (GM III 1 5.339). The ascetic ideal is only superficially an ideal that goes against life. In fact, it is an instrument of the "really great *conserving* and *yes-creating* forces of life"[644] with a view to preserving a certain type of life. The ascetic ideal springs from the "*protective and healing instincts of a degenerating life*"[645], which indicates partial inhibition and exhaustion (GM III 13 5.366). The task now is to use the active, productive forces that created the ascetic ideal and, instead of channelling them in the direction of *ressentiment* and hatred, to make them engage in a productive inner struggle. Rather than wishing to excise the instincts behind the ascetic ideal, an exercise in the stifling of our power to act and therefore in the stymieing of the expression of human potential, Nietzsche is looking for the formula for being "affirmative". This implies not only the increase in our capacity to possess "all types of understanding, comprehension, *approval"*, but to include among these types, and to use, even the "*sick* reason of the priest".

642 "Wir Anderen, wir Immoralisten, haben umgekehrt unser Herz weit gemacht für alle Art Verstehn, Begreifen, Gutheissen. Wir verneinen nicht leicht, wir suchen unsre Ehre darin, Bejahende zu sein. Immer mehr ist uns das Auge für jene Ökonomie aufgegangen, welche alles Das noch braucht und auszunützen weiss, was der heilige Aberwitz des Priesters, der kranken Vernunft im Priester verwirft, für jene Ökonomie im Gesetz des Lebens, die selbst aus der widerlichen species des Muckers, des Priesters, des Tugendhaften ihren Vortheil zieht – welchen Vortheil? – Aber wir selbst, wir Immoralisten sind hier die Antwort …".

643 "Die Wirklichkeit zeigt uns einen entzückenden Reichthum der Typen, die Üppigkeit eines verschwenderischen Formenspiels und -Wechsels".

644 "ganz grossen conservirenden und Ja-schaffenden Gewalten des Lebens".

645 "dem Schutz- und Heil-Instinkte eines degenerirenden Lebens".

Nietzsche's ideal, insofar as we can understand it from this text, is an inclusive formula that promotes the project of the 'self-overcoming of the human' through the incorporation and use of the power that, when harnessed by the priest, goes against itself. To be an affirmative being means, on this reading, to be able to understand, detect and later to employ, the degree of power or force present in a) all drives and passions, even those deemed 'evil' and b) in the drives that generate 'slave morality' and that end up, when misdirected, destroying or hurting the pulsional economy of the human being who manifests them[646].

2.e. The politics of the turn to the body

A useful simplification of the overall structure of Spinoza's thought is to argue that for him to do ontology is to do ethics and politics (Schrift 2013, p. 113). A body can be anything for him: an animal, a social body, a collectivity, a body of sounds or a linguistic corpus (Schrift 2013, p. 115). Nietzsche, just like Spinoza, undermines the traditional notion of subject, but does not develop his "expansive notion of the subject" in the same "overtly political direction" as Spinoza does (Schrift 2013, p. 116). Nevertheless, in the context of this thesis, we must ask whether we can identify in Nietzsche's comments on politics any (privileged) role for philosophical physiology.

Unlike Spinoza, Nietzsche never formulates a systematic account of his political thought in the mould of the *TTP* or *TP*. Nevertheless, he does offer us a number of insights into his political philosophy that connect to his turn to the body. I will take as Nietzsche's primary concern the development and flourishing of self-determining, free individuals. The question of politics then becomes one of knowing whether a community or a body politic stimulates or creates favourable conditions for such developments. Due to his understanding of normativity as the pursuit of empowerment and affirmation of each unique individual within a radically immanent and open future, Nietzsche cannot appeal to ready-made

646 This is a "physiological" elaboration of the thesis that the project of revaluating all values 1) requires fine-tuning our ability to understand that sometimes what has been called "evil" by tradition masks vitality so that 2) we can use our judgement in order to overcome the traditional "visceral" rejection of certain impulses considered morally reprehensible. This helps us overcome the obstacles that stunt our growth (Higgins 2006, pp. 410-2).

imperatives or systems that can guide one towards pre-determined teloi. He can encourage us to develop the tools necessary in order to evaluate for ourselves the best means for the development, within society, of each particular individual. In the section on Spinoza (p. 218) we have seen how his philosophical physiology enables him to think the state as a body whose reality, i.e. power, is a function of the agreement of bodies composing it in virtue of their common affects. In the interest of the comparative project, we must ask whether we can find in Nietzsche similar considerations about the composition of the body politic.

Towards the end of his first speech to the people, Zarathustra tries to persuade them that the human should "set itself a goal"[647], and that its "soil is still rich enough for this"[648] (Z Vorrede 5 4.19). He argues that this situation, characterised by the possibility of growth "beyond the human"[649], is not perennial. Humanity is faced with a moment of crisis and humans can choose to strive for the ideal of the "overman" (*der Übermensch*) or turn into the "last human being"[650], the most contemptible human (Z Vorrede 5 4.19). In order to persuade the people to choose the overman, the self-determining individual that he announces, Zarathustra presents a bleak picture of the prospect of a community populated by the last human beings.

> One no longer becomes poor and rich: both are too burdensome. Who wants to rule anymore? Who wants to obey anymore? Both are too burdensome.
>
> No shepherd and one herd! Each wants the same, each is the same, and whoever feels differently goes voluntarily into the insane asylum. [651] (Z Vorrede 5 4.20)

The last human strives for equality in the sense of sameness. It fails to uphold any specific difference within the herd because there is no more desire for hierarchy

647 "sich sein Ziel stecke".
648 "Noch ist sein Boden dazu reich genug".
649 "über den Menschen".
650 "der letzte Mensch".
651 "Man wird nicht mehr arm und reich: Beides ist zu beschwerlich. Wer will noch regieren? Wer noch gehorchen? Beides ist zu beschwerlich. / Kein Hirt und Eine Heerde! Jeder will das Gleiche, Jeder ist gleich: wer anders fühlt, geht freiwillig in's Irrenhaus.".

(*Rangordnung*) or willingness to engage in relations of commanding and obeying that can promote diversity. The herd will have no shepherd precisely because it strives to cancel any and all difference and "makes everything small"[652] (Z Vorrede 5 4.19). Much to his dismay, Zarathustra discovers that the people are not at all bothered by this prospect. The "happiness" (*Glück*) or "little pleasure" (*Lüstchen*; Z Vorrede 5 4.20) that the condition of the last humans promise are enough for them to dismiss the ideals of growth and expansion and pay the price of becoming small. Zarathustra's conclusion is that the crowd is not ready for his speech ("I am not mouth for these ears"[653]; Z Vorrede 5 4.20) and that his prolonged solitude, together with the nature of his message, has made him unable to communicate to the people[654]. Zarathustra decides to alter the initial nature of his project, namely to "bring humankind a gift"[655] (Z Vorrede 2 4.13) from the solitude of the mountains (Z Vorrede 1 4.11). He now comes to believe that he needs to "speak not to the people, but instead to companions!"[656] (Z Vorrede 9 4.25). In other words, he must leave the arena of the community and never "even speak again with the people"[657], but only to a few[658].

> Give us this last human being, oh Zarathustra" – thus they cried – "make us into these last human beings! Then we will make you a gift of the overman![659] (Z Vorrede 5 4.20)

The way the crowd embraces the last human raises the question of how to understand the "gift of the overman" that Zarathustra is promised. Is it a mockery

652 "Alles klein macht".

653 "ich bin nicht der Mund für diese Ohren".

654 This is followed by an even more radical rejection of the "state" (*Staat*) in Z I Götzen (6.61-4).

655 "Ich bringe den Menschen ein Geschenk".

656 "nicht zum Volke rede Zarathustra, sondern zu Gefährten!". Whether Zarathustra fares much better when he focuses on his companions is beyond the scope of this argument.

657 "Nicht reden ein mal will ich wieder mit dem Volke".

658 Zarathustra never abandons his orientation towards humankind completely, and is constantly moving between his solitude in the mountains, his friends or disciples and the people. This suggests that his pronouncements on the community, insofar as politics is concerned, remain inclonclusive.

659 "Gieb uns diesen letzten Menschen, oh Zarathustra, – so riefen sie – mache uns zu diesen letzten Menschen! So schenken wir dir den Übermenschen!".

of Zarathustra – and of the ideal he presents – by the people, who both laugh at him and hate him (Z Vorrede 5 4.21)? Or is there a deeper connection between the mediocritization of humanity in the last human and the emergence of a strong, self-determining individual? While Zarathustra is not clear on this, the topic is taken up later in JGB 242 (5.182f).

On the surface, we are faced with a very similar argument. The recent "*democratic* movement"[660] in Europe leads to "increasing similarity between Europeans"[661] and, ultimately, to the "levelling and mediocritization of the human"[662]. Nevertheless, there is an important change in the way Nietzsche understands this process. He now argues that the "moral and political foregrounds"[663] he describes are the signs of "an immense *physiological* process"[664]. Nietzsche explains the increasing similarity of humans in terms of an increase in the physiological degree of force and art of adaptation (see chapter II, p.158). Humans are becoming independent from their determinate environments and detached from specific conditions. As a consequence they are increasingly more able to adapt to any conditions. This, Nietzsche believes, will make Europeans "garrulous, impotent and eminently employable workers"[665]. The need to adapt to ever-changing circumstances is not suitable, in his opinion, to the development of the "*powerfulness* of the type"[666]. The Europeans are no longer able to command.

This is the point where the analogy between the two texts breaks down. The cryptic allusion to the "gift of the overman" is replaced by the claim that the future Europeans "*need* masters and commanders like they need their daily bread"[667] (JGB 242 5.183). The physiological processes and circumstances that Nietzsche describes create a type "prepared for *slavery* in the most subtle sense"[668], but also

660 "demokratische Bewegung".
661 "Prozess einer Anähnlichung der Europäer".
662 "eine Ausgleichung und Vermittelmässigung des Menschen".
663 "moralischen und politischen Vordergründen".
664 "ein ungeheurer physiologischer Prozess".
665 "ein nützliches arbeitsames, vielfach brauchbares und anstelliges Heerdenthier Mensch".
666 "die Mächtigkeit des Typus".
667 "des Herrn, des Befehlenden bedürfen wie des täglichen Brodes".
668 "Sklaverei im feinsten Sinne".

favour the development of "*tyrants*" (*Tyrannen*), of the "*strong* person"[669] that is "stronger and richer than he has perhaps ever been so far"[670] (JGB 242 5.183). This development may be "an involuntary exercise in the breeding of *tyrants*"[671], but it nevertheless is "to the highest degree suitable for giving rise to exceptional people"[672]. The obscure, perhaps even mocking, possibility of the overman has now been transformed into the very real possibility of the appearance of a stronger, richer type than ever before[673]. How should we understand this development?

Let us recapitulate the argument. Diversity has so far been produced in Europe by virtue of the different conditions under which the breeding of various peoples took place. Once the difference in conditions is taken away, humans start being more and more similar. This implies that they do not have sufficient endogenous power to shape themselves and are determined by their environment. What Nietzsche introduces in JGB 242, with the help of physiology, is the argument that the mediocre human *needs* masters and commanders. The weakness of humans is understood as their incapacity to "want", to create for themselves a will[674]. If previous exogenous determinations are no longer in play then it falls to the "tyrants" to take their place. The strong, autonomous individual manifests a great degree of creative endogenous force, which finds its expression in relation to the community at large. Instead of Zarathustra's choice of solitude, or of a small number of companions, we now see the importance of understanding the strong individual within a broader, societal context.

Three things need to be emphasized about the figure of the "tyrant". First, Nietzsche's concern is primarily with individuals and their flourishing. Growth and enhancement is pursued by individuals, but we must acknolwedge that Nietzsche sometimes speaks of a community, or a "caste", that can create a "*single will*"[675]

669 "starke Mensch".
670 "stärker und reicher [...] als er vielleicht jemals bisher gerathen ist".
671 "eine unfreiwillige Veranstaltung zur Züchtung von Tyrannen".
672 "im höchsten Grade dazu angethan, Ausnahme-Menschen [...] zu geben".
673 For an analysis of the various ways in which Nietzsche understands the relation between diverse human types throughout his work, see Siemens 2008.
674 See also JGB 208 5.138f.
675 "Einen Willen".

for Europe and "could give itself millennia-long goals"[676] (JGB 208 5.140), a task presumably too great for a single human. Second, Nietzsche's interests are philosophical, ethical and cultural, not primarily political or economic[677]. The strong type is characterised by its capacity to create a will and new values. This is the "spiritual" sense in which the tyrant must be understood according to Nietzsche. The creation of values has so far been conducted within the bounds of specific circumstances, whereas now the challenge of the new type of human in Europe is much greater. Third, the tyrant enters into a relation with the community while at the same time maintaining the distance implicit in relations of commanding and obeying. We have seen in chapter II (p. 141) that Nietzsche's notion of 'disgust' (*Ekel*) implies both close proximity and the distance constitutive of social rank. Societies, as Nietzsche sees them, must be built on this ambivalent relation if they are to be conducive to empowerment and affirmation. It is telling that when Zarathustra descends from the mountain the old man he first meets says that there is "no disgust visible around his mouth"[678] (Z Vorrede 2 4.12). Perhaps this is the reason why Zarathustra cannot speak to the people, is "not the mouth for these ears": he does not know how to establish the ambivalent relation necessary for communal living aimed at self-overcoming.

But how exactly does Nietzsche envisage the workings of a community? In order to facilitate a comparison with Spinoza, I will focus on Nietzsche's pronouncements on the nature and function of institutions in society, while acknowledging that his analysis and critique of politics, and democracy especially, focuses first and foremost on values such as equality of rights, popular sovereignty and universal well-being or happiness, rather than on political institutions (Siemens 2008, pp. 231, 233). This comes as a consequence of what we have seen to be Spinoza's belief that the common good is best served by rational institutions.

> Because there is one thing you need to understand: the parasitism of the priests (or of the 'moral world order') takes every natural custom, every natural institution (state, judicial order, marriage, care for the sick and

676 "sich über Jahrtausende hin Ziele setzen könnte".
677 See Brobjer 2008a or Siemens 2008 (p.263).
678 "an seinem Munde birgt sich kein Ekel".

> the poor), everything required by the instinct of life, in short, everything *intrinsically* valuable, and renders it fundamentally worthless, of *negative* value: these things now require some extra sanction, – a power is needed *to lend value to things*, to negate what is natural about them and in so doing create value…[679] (AC 26 6.196)

The value of an institution is evaluated by Nietzsche depending on its physiological foundations. Using the example of marriage (discussed in both the published and the unpublished material), Nietzsche argues that institutions need to be based on "drives", not on idiosyncrasies such as "love" (GD Streifzüge 39 6.142; 10[156] 12.544). Moral interpretations cover up and distort the physiological, 'natural' substratum that permits one to evaluate the affirmative or detrimental effects of an institution. The "lie" is precisely this mendacious distortion of the nature of institutions. Institutions, understood in a broad sense, as both political institutions (the state, the judiciary) and customs, can be beneficial or they can be corrupted and detrimental, of "*negative* value". How does Nietzsche think these two possibilities?

An important claim made by Nietzsche is that institutions impose order that inhibits diversity and promotes sameness (10[109] 12.518). This needs to be understood in the context of Nietzsche's claim that life is characterised by richness in the production of various types and individuals (14[75] 13.256). More specifically, Nietzsche goes on to criticize institutions if they have been taken over by the priest and justified through a belief in transcendence. This critique is a natural continuation of Nietzsche's rejection of moral and metaphysical illusions. He claims that institutions justified by the belief in a divine, higher sphere beyond our world, produce a "loss" (*Einbuße*; 10[152] 12.541). This consists in the loss of differences and order of rank in favour of the drive for mediocrity, for the levelling that democratic institutions promote. The democratic movement is heir to

679 "Denn dies muss man begreifen: jede natürliche Sitte, jede natürliche Institution (Staat, Gerichts-Ordnung, Ehe, Kranken- und Armenpflege), jede vom Instinkt des Lebens eingegebne Forderung, kurz Alles, was seinen Werth in sich hat, wird durch den Parasitismus des Priesters (oder der 'sittlichen Weltordnung') grundsätzlich werthlos, werth-widrig gemacht: es bedarf nachträglich einer Sanktion, – eine werthverleihende Macht thut noth, welche die Natur darin verneint, welche eben damit erst einen Werth schafft …".

Christianity (JGB 202 5.125) and so democratic institutions inherit the corruption of the community set in motion by the priest. The inhibition of diversity is built on the "lie" (*Lüge*) hidden in institutions (10[109] 12.518).

In spite of his radical critique of "democratism" (*Demokratismus*) and liberal insitutions under the heading of a "*Critique of modernity*"[680] (GD Streifzüge 39 6.140) Nietzsche does allow for the existence of beneficial institutions that promote freedom. These institutions are required by the "instinct of life" (AC 26 6.196) and cultivate difference through an intensification of struggle. They are based on the sort of instincts "from which future grows"[681] (GD Streifzüge 39 6.140). Furthermore, they are built on the recognition of the need to be aware of drives, rather than taking problematic moral interpretations and valuations for granted. An important aspect of 'natural', "*intrinsically* valuable" institutions is the stability they promote and that makes possible the (physiological) accumulation of power needed in order "to prepare for long tasks"[682] (GD Streifzüge 39 6.142). Growth depends on the accumulation of strength based on solidarity through generations and centuries by means of "the will to tradition, to authority, to a responsibility that spans the centuries, to *solidarity* in the chain that links the generations, forwards and backwards ad infinitum"[683]. The "most enduring form of organization"[684] (GD Streifzüge 39 6.142) is required, according to Nietzsche, if we are to succesfuly engage in the task of overcoming nihilism through the revaluation of all values. We find here an example of Nietzsche's commitment to the thesis of "selective conservation" (see p.199 above): the will to power consists fundamentally in self-overcoming, but it does sometimes slow down its tempo. Human flourishing depends on the accumulation of power during these periods of relative stability, accumulation pursued through a selective engagement with the environment meant to identify the best resources available to be used in self-overcoming.

680 "Kritik der Modernität".
681 "aus denen Zukunft wächst".
682 "um lange Aufgaben [...]vorzubereiten".
683 "den Willen zur Tradition, zur Autorität, zur Verantwortlichkeit auf Jahrhunderte hinaus, zur Solidarität von Geschlechter-Ketten vorwärts und rückwärts in infinitum".
684 "der dauerhaftesten Organisationsform".

We must observe that regardless of whether institutions (or customs) are beneficial or not, Nietzsche places them in a subordinate role to the humans and the instincts that animate and employ them. He opposes his 'naturalism' to the de-naturalization of institutions by the priest and his liberal or democratic heirs through their harmful moral interpretations. The value of institutions is given by their suitability to the humans that constitute and use them (GD Streifzuge 39 6.140; 10[76] 12.499). Given Nietzsche's criticisms of the 'herd' and the emphasis he places on the value of distinction and hierarchy, his ambivalence regarding the benefits of communal agency through institutions is no surprise. If we consider the opposition, mentioned on p. 218 (note 550), between those who argue that a flourishing political association depends on institutions (Spinoza, Hume), and those who hold that it depends on the individuals who control institutions (Machiavelli, Montesquieu), we can see that Nietzsche falls squarely in the second camp.

Next to the links between politics and the turn to the body considered above, Nietzsche also explicitly connects what he calls "Great Politics" (Die große Politik; 25[1] 13.637f) to his philosophical physiology. The context of this appeal to physiology is a state of physiological decay Nietzsche claims to be characteristic of his day:

> what is on top today in society is physiologically doomed and moreover –which is proof for it – has become so impoverished in its instincts, so unsure, that it confesses without scruples the *counter principle* of a higher type of human[685].

The causes of this deplorable state can be traced back to the physiological mishandling of humanity for the past two thousand years[686]. In an argument

685 "was heute in der Gesellschaft obenauf ist, ist physiologisch verurtheilt und überdies – was der Beweis dafür ist – in seinen Instinkten so verarmt, so unsicher geworden, daß es das Gegenprincip einer höheren Art M<ensch> ohne Scrupel bekennt".

686 "Nachdem man zwei Jahrtausende die Menschheit mit physiologischem Widersinn behandelt hat, muß ja der Verfall die Instinkt-Widersprüchlichkeit zum Übergewicht gekommen sein".

reminiscent of the *GD* section discussed above, Nietzsche places the blame for this squarely on the shoulders of the "Christian priest"[687], who played the prominent role in bringing about this state of affairs by teaching "anti-nature"[688]. Nietzsche sets up "Great Politics" as an attempt to overcome the crisis he is confronting. He presents his project as a "war" (*Krieg)*, to wit "a war as between ascent and decline, between will to life and *revengefulness* against life, between integrity and treacherous mendacity"[689]. The contrast Nietzsche sets up is between, on the one hand, "that which corrupts, poisons, vilifies, ruins"[690] life, in brief "the degenerate and parasitic"[691], and on the other hand, a "higher type"[692], a human who is measured "according to its future -[–], according to its guarantee for life, that it carries in itself" [693].

How is it possible to identify and evaluate the "higher type"? How do we come to know and understand the crisis Nietzsche discusses here, together with the means to overcome it? The method used by "Great Politics", and which Nietzsche repeats twice in this fragment, is to "make physiology mistress over all other questions"[694]. The role of physiology is twofold. It must first evaluate "races, peoples, individuals" and, crucially, it must "*breed* humankind as a whole and higher, with ruthless harshness against the degenerate and parasitic on life"[695]. While there is no denying the highly abstract and general character of the concerns of Nietzsche's project, we must be sensitive to the nature of the 'nearest' and 'most important' questions[696] that concern physiology and that make it possible

687 In a somewhat less central role in the development of physiological décadence we find the "execrable interest-politics of European Dynasties" (*die fluchwürdige Interessen-Politik europäischer Dynastien*). See also the fragment on "Todkrieg dem Hause Hohenzollern" (25[13] 13. 643) in the same notebook.

688 "Der christliche Priester ist die lasterhafteste Art Mensch: denn er lehrt die Widernatur".

689 "ein Krieg wie zwischen Aufgang und Niedergang, zwischen Willen zum Leben und Rachsucht gegen das Leben, zwischen Rechtschaffenheit und tückischer Verlogenheit".

690 "das, was verdirbt, vergiftet, verleumdet, zu Grunde richtet".

691 "as Entartende und Parasitische".

692 "einer höheren Art M<ensch>"

693 "nach ihrer Zukunfts-[–], nach ihrer Bürgschaft für Leben, die sie in sich trägt".

694 "die große Politik macht die Physiologie zur Herrin über alle anderen Fragen".

695 "die Menschheit als Ganzes und Höheres zu züchten, mit schonungsloser Härte gegen das Entartende und Parasitische am Leben".

696 "nächstwichtigen Fragen".

to envisage "Great Politics". These questions concern "nutrition, clothing, food, *health,* reproduction"[697], and, in Nietzsche's estimate, had only been "treated with rigour, seriousness, and integrity"[698] for the past 20 years. This concern, reminiscent of some of the questions raised in the 1881 notebook discussed above, clearly delineates Nietzsche's interest in the "nearest things" as a constant, major impetus behind his turn to the body.

Formulating these questions allows Nietzsche to inquire into what counts towards the project "to *breed* humankind as a whole"[699], and we must now, in the end of this section, signal out some of the salient features of the highly complex notion of 'breeding' (*Züchtung*).

The concept of 'breeding' must not be understood in a purely biological or scientific sense. In support of the arguments presented in section II.3. against the thesis that Nietzsche's physiology is a scientific one, we can invoke Schank's analysis of the concept of 'breeding'. As he has convincingly shown, for Nietzsche a 'breeder' can also have the meaning of teacher and can either promote disempowerment, weakness and decadence as the priest does, or can breed aristocratic morality and virtues (Schank 2000, pp. 337, 342-3). The thesis that Nietzsche does not think of breeding in a strictly biological sense is further strengthened by the fact that when he discusses the strong or higher type he uses language that can hardly be characterised as biological: the strong type is self-conscious, capable of making promises, capable of judgment (Schank 2000, p. 354). Schank makes it very clear in his analysis that in Nietzsche the notion of 'breeding' does not have the same meaning as in certain 19th Century writers like Chamberlain, who advocated the creation of a single, worthy and pure race (Schank 2000, pp. 335-6). The 'breeding' that the priest has conducted results in the degeneration discussed in chapter II: an anarchy of instincts that is incapable of self-organization and, therefore incapable of directing itself towards the creation of new values. The alternative, as Nietzsche sees it, is to focus on sharpening the agonal tension between various drives in a manner apt to making the agent channel her creative energy in acts

697 "der Ernährung, der Kleidung, der Kost, der Gesundheit, der Fortpflanzung".
698 "mit Strenge, mit Ernst, mit Rechtschaffenheit behandelt werden".
699 "die M<ensch>h<eit> als Ganzes züchten".

that manifest the energy or resources at her disposal. Because Nietzsche argues that the unity of the subject is an illusion and that we are a plurality of drives, he must ask how we can deal with this plurality. One way is to try to reduce the antagonism between drives, and the accompanying suffering, to a minimum and accept the danger that this creates uniformity: Socrates' solution (GD Sokrates 9-11 6.71f). Nietzsche's answer is to argue that we should promote antagonism by connecting the drives through strong inner tension. In this way we become free to express our particularity and our creative capacity and to posit 'credible goals' towards which we can direct our creative energy: "This strategy promotes the uniqueness of each being in its difference from others" (Siemens 2009, pp. 450-1). In the case of the strong or higher type, the resources are enormous and the channelling of the tension between conflicting impulses representing a maximal range of perspectives will enable the higher type to create new values (Siemens 2002, pp. 86-7).

Conclusion

The fundamental difference in orientation between Spinoza's and Nietzsche's philosophies stems from that fact that Nietzsche is responding to what he diagnoses as a crisis of the present. The focus on nihilism and décadence as the result of historical processes has no parallel in Spinoza's philosophy, for whom ethical or political difficulties and puzzles are consequences of eternal, metaphysical problems.

The fact that Nietzsche understands nihilism as a symptom of declining life, i.e. he understands it physiologically as the expression of a form or type of life turning against itself, leads him to think about normative questions using a category that does not occur in Spinoza, namely affirmation. For Spinoza, the structure of his ethics runs along the following lines: the objective is to transform passive affects into active or joyful ones, i.e. to move from lesser to greater power. For Nietzsche the story is complicated by the fact that he considers cases in which genuine power, while affirming or expressing itself, could still be cases of life-negation (i.e. the priest or the slave in certain cases). Nietzsche must take into account not only empowerment, but also its quality. This difference is consistent with a number of contrasts outlined in section III of this chapter. First, Spinoza understands power as always positive or affirmative. Genuine power, for the Dutch thinker, always involves the guarantee of its beneficial expression for the mode manifesting it and its full cooperation with other essences. His account, which excludes ambivalence from the nature of power, does not open up the possibility of asking the question of the quality of empowerment: more is always better. Nietzsche's notion of power, which includes conflict as ontologically constitutive, is well suited to help him ask the question of whether a given value serves the interests of specific life forms. Second, the diagnosis of life-negation is possible only due to the existence

of inner conflict. Spinoza excludes the possibility of inner conflict within a subject while this is the norm for Nietzsche.

The analysis of the notion of (inner) conflict points us towards another fundamental difference between the two. While both acknowledge the existence of conflict, Nietzsche argues both that it cannot be eliminated, and that we should not strive to do so: conflict can serve a positive role insofar as it can be a stimulus for empowerment and can lead to life affirmation. Resistance, insofar as it serves as a stimulus, is highly valued by Nietzsche, as we have seen in the case of 'war'. Due to his commitment to a rationally ordered universe in which essences are in agreement in spite of chance encounters in the order of nature, Spinoza sets up the elimination of conflict through agreement as the objective of both his ethics and politics.

We are now better able to understand a pivotal passage, in the Lenzer Heide note, in which Nietzsche criticizes what he takes to be Spinoza's affirmative stance:

> Spinoza attained an affirmative stance, insofar as every moment has a *logical* necessity: and with his fundamental instinct for logic he felt a sense of triumph about the world's being constituted *thus*[700]. (5[71] 12.217)

Sommer sees this rejection of Spinoza's affirmative stance in the Lenzer Heide note as weak, because it amounts to saying only that "sein Fall ist nur ein Einzel-Fall" (Sommer 2012, p. 167). Stegmaier (2012, p. 531) also emphasizes this point and writes that it is not clear why Nietzsche objects and that the problem is unsolved in the note. Nabais argues that Nietzsche rejects it because Spinoza's response is too particular and too artificial: it supposes an "immense conceptual machinery" (Nabais 2006, pp. 151-2) If, however, we consider this critique in the broader context of Nietzsche's analysis of the specific 'sickness'[701] that Spinoza's thinking is symptomatic of, we can begin to appreciate its very deep origins in Nietzsche's diagnosis of the crisis of the present. There is no obvious reason

700 "Spinoza gewann eine solche bejahende Stellung, insofern jeder Moment eine logische Nothwendigkeit hat: und er triumphirte mit seinem logischen Grundinstinkte über eine solche Weltbeschaffenheit.".

701 Consumption, see pp. 171-2.

why the simplicity of "conceptual machinery" should be valued and count as the guiding principle for Nietzsche in this matter.

My conjecture is that the key to interpreting this passage is to recognize the kind of 'logic' that Nietzsche criticizes Spinoza for employing. This is the logic of Spinoza's power dynamic in which a conatus cannot turn against itself. Nietzsche agrees with Spinoza that power is primarily an active process of expenditure and growth and that it cannot be understood retroactively according to what it lacks, a telos, but differs insofar as he explores the dimensions of accumulation and discharge of power, and of affirmation. Spinoza affirmed this world view without contemplating the possibility of 'affirming' (qualitatively good) or 'negating' (qualitatively bad) manifestations of power. Spinoza's 'sickness' is rooted in his lack of awareness of the possibility of power turning against itself and inhibiting one's power of acting: Spinoza was 'consumptive' because he failed to see this problem and so strive for a 'great health' that incorporates sickness. In other words, Nietzsche's critique is that Spinoza did not do enough in the pursuit of (self-) knowledge.

Whether or not Nietzsche is successful in giving a convincing account of affirmation, his arguments have the merit of showing how, when we pursue a radically de-deified understanding of reality, we are faced with questions about the nature of power and freedom to which Spinoza's philosophy is not attuned. In conclusion, it is worth stressing that focusing on the analyses of 'war' or conflict in the study of the normative thought of these two philosophers, coupled with the emphasis on physiology, puts us in a better position to see important implications of defining freedom as an exercise in embodied power.

These fundamental differences should not blind us to a number of profound similarities in their normative stances. First, both develop normative claims within the horizon of immanence and must, as a consequence of their respective critiques of metaphysics, discuss ethics and politics against the background of their projects of naturalisation. Both argue that we find ourselves in a position in which we are faced with the task of searching for ways to ground normativity in immanence and that we cannot appeal to a transcendent source of justification for our ethical

or political claims. Second, this starting point leads both to formulate an account of freedom compatible with necessity. In spite of the differences in the ways they understand necessity, they both position their concepts of freedom against the doctrine of free will. This compatibilist view means that they understand freedom as self-determination and that the focus is on what it means to increase or amplify our freedom. Rather than considering human autonomy as a starting point, they are interested in understanding how autonomy can be gained and what it means to speak of degrees of freedom. Third, as we have seen at various junctures throughout this chapter, the orientation of their ethical projects is surprisingly similar.

The empowerment of the individual in Spinoza cannot be conceived outside the community. The enjoyment of freedom by other rational agents in society is indispensible to and constitutive of my own liberation. That is why a human is always freer in a well-ordered state than in isolation: the sovereign good belongs to all and consists in the rational pursuit of agreement on the basis of shared affects. Among the various configurations the body politic can have, Spinoza privileges democracy and democratic institutions because they offer the best chance to pursue what is fundamentally a communal endeavour.

Nietzsche agrees with the stress placed on the importance of individual flourishing and acknowledges the radical openness and vulnerability of any life-form in the face of its environment. Nevertheless, this does not lead him to draw the same conclusions about the importance of communal life and the benefits of democracy and cooperation. We have seen the example of Zarathustra, who shuns interactions with the people. In later texts Nietzsche revisits the topic and rethinks the status of the free, self-determining individual within the broader context of the community. The relation between the (community of) free individuals and the people is conceived as one of proximity, in which distance and tension are never annulled. Empowerment and affirmation can be pursued only within the community, but in a way that emphasizes difference and distinction of rank rather than agreement. The analysis of Nietzsche's ambivalent views on institutions has shown how he rejects 'anti-natural', democratic institutions without ignoring the value of 'natural' institutions for the enhancement of the human. The precise nature of the

institutional framework suited to the body politic, and more specifically to the community of free spirits, remains unclear, but it must be guided by the imperative to create a strong enough will across generations.

The common impetus to deal with political matters in a way that affirms individual difference and 'evil' passions, rather than ignoring or trying to exorcize them, is counterbalanced by their radical opposition on the means best suited to cultivate difference. This stems from their opposing views on the origin and nature of difference. Spinoza understands diversity as the product of a rationally-structured reality. While conflict and struggle exist in the order of nature, all the different essences are ultimately compatible and in agreement. Nietzsche understands diversity in a historical context, as the result of a process leading away from the demands of communal life. Individuals and individual drives develop against the background of the relative weakening of the demands of social drives that keep the social organism together. The tension and opposition between social instincts and individual drives within individuals risks being decided in favour of uniformity and at the expense of the future due to the harmful influence of Christianity and its political heir, democracy. The greatest threat that the democratic movement and the morality of compassion pose is the levelling of humans in the name of transcendent, nihilistic values that promote agreement. We are now in a position to consider the sharpest formulation of Nietzsche's criticism of Spinoza: Because he does not recognise the complex, historical fate of the differences between humans, differences that do not obey a rational principle, Spinoza is not aware of the dangers of democracy and the focus on the common good.

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Summary

This thesis is a comparative study in the History of Modern Philosophy focused on the recourse to physiology on the part of two key figures, Spinoza and Nietzsche. This involves comparative research into their emphatic appeal to the body as the key to solving fundamental philosophical problems. While the groundwork for comparative research has already been laid in studies of a number of key concepts, a comparative study of Spinoza and Nietzsche focused on physiology has not yet been conducted. I argue that, in spite of tremendous differences, these two thinkers come close in their rejection of moral and metaphysical illusions they claim are characteristic of the philosophical tradition they respond to, and in their focus on self-knowledge understood as knowledge of the body's endogenous power to act. This leads them to formulate strikingly similar normative programs informed by their shared commitment to naturalism and immanence.

In the first chapter, I argue that Spinoza turns to the body in order to show the path towards empowerment and liberation. This task requires dispelling a number of key philosophical errors and promoting adequate knowledge of the body. In the first section the focus is on Spinoza's reaction to his philosophical and scientific context, with particular attention to how this context influences his philosophical physiology. First, I discuss Jewish Medieval views on matter and on the body, together with debates on key metaphysical notions: teleology, free will, the moral world order, the existence of evil, and altruism. This overview helps contextualise Spinoza's views and better understand his revaluation of the concept of 'substance'. This revaluation guarantees the autonomy of the physical, and denies the subordination of the body to the soul, or to any immaterial principle. Second, I investigate Spinoza's reaction to his contemporaries, most notably Descartes and Hobbes, and their scientifically-informed views on the body. This requires an

understanding of the changes in the philosophical and scientific outlook taking place in the 17th Century, particularly in the development of a mechanistic understanding of nature. While Spinoza is undoubtedly influenced by numerous elements characteristic of mechanism, he is also critical of the teleological implications of mechanistic doctrines, as well as of what he sees as unjustified claims to adequate knowledge on the part of the newly-developing natural philosophy. In the case of Descartes, I study the transition in his understanding of the body from the *Meditations* to the later *Passions of the Soul*. In the latter treatise, Descartes formulates a physio-psychological account of passions that serves as an important precursor to Spinoza's doctrine of affects. In the case of Hobbes, I claim that in spite of major differences in their respective accounts of God and of 'power', he is doubly important as a precursor to Spinoza's turn to the body because he strives for a naturalistic understanding of humans with emphasis placed on efficient causation, and because his interest in method opens up important avenues for investigating the constitution of the body politic.

The second section deals with Spinoza's own account of the body and of the ways in which it can be known. Firstly, I highlight the importance of the turn to the body for Spinoza's epistemology: we have inadequate knowledge because we misunderstand our body and, if we want adequate knowledge, we must have an adequate understanding of our body. A discussion of the physiological correlate of inadequate knowledge shows that our epistemic failures can be explained starting from the limits of our body's power to act, form distinct images, and arrange its experiences according to reason. Nevertheless, the simplification inherent in inadequate knowledge is useful in the survival of individuals and is a theme that resonates strongly with Nietzsche's critique of knowledge. Conversely, adequate knowledge starts from a naturalised, immanent account of the affections of the body that leads to knowledge of common notions and essences. While adequate self-knowledge can in principle be obtained either under the attribute of thought or of extension, the focus on the body provides important strategic advantages in allowing us to navigate around various moral and metaphysical illusions. Secondly, I argue that there are three ways Spinoza talks about the body (the object of the idea that constitutes the mind; cf. EIIp13) throughout the *Ethics:* 1)

In a manner close to mechanism, in the Physical Interlude, 2) As a multiplicity of affects, in books III, IV and the first half of book V and 3) as an essence, in the second half of book V. While all three give us important clues about how we should understand the body, I claim that the first method of knowing the body is inadequate, whereas the third does not do enough to illuminate the dynamic nature of Spinoza's notion of 'power'. It is to the second hat we must turn if we want to better understand the complex, dynamic nature of the body and its endogenous power to act (the *conatus*), and also how Spinoza's turn to physiology provides the impetus for his practical philosophy.

In the second chapter, I argue that Nietzsche turns to the body in order to uncover a path towards empowerment and life-affirmation via a critique of metaphysics and morality and their manifestations in nihilism, décadence. His claim is that physiology, while not offering adequate knowledge of the body in Spinoza's sense, can serve as the guiding thread in the striving for empowerment and life-affirmation. We need to situate Nietzsche's turn to the body within the context of his overall philosophical project (from 1880 onwards) of overcoming nihilism and décadence and within the growing interest in the critique and revaluation of all values. This enables us to identify the key elements that motivate Nietzsche's project of naturalization and, consequently, his turn to the body: his critique of Christian-Platonic values and their deleterious effects.

In the first section, I argue that Nietzsche reacts to a crisis of the present, in the form of a diagnosis of nihilism. Nihilism is interpreted by Nietzsche as an expression of physiological degeneration. The structure of the great multiplicity of drives that constitutes the modern human can be disempowering and therefore decadent, according to Nietzsche, in two cases: either it is too loose and there is no organizing force, or it is too rigid and there is one drive that tyrannizes the pulsional economy in such a way that it inhibits the expression of other drives. I then go on to discuss a number of key metaphysical and moral illusions conducive to nihilism that are best understood in the context of Nietzsche's critique of substance metaphysics. Contrary to Spinoza, Nietzsche does not wish to offer a new understanding of substance, but to criticize and think against it from the standpoint of becoming and to diagnose its underlying assumptions as life-negating. In discussing each of

these illusions (teleology, free will, the moral world order, the existence of evil and altruism) in a way that prepares the comparison with Spinoza in chapter III, I focus on two strategies used by Nietzsche in his critique: 1) to argue that these illusory values are an absurdity resting on faulty assumptions, and 2) to expose their origins, together with the purpose for which they are used, and to argue that this shows how these life-negating values inhibit one's power to act and create.

In the second section, I discuss the content of Nietzsche's turn to the body. First, I analyse the richness of the conceptual structure of Nietzsche's philosophical physiology. This requires a better understanding of what he means by 'body', and my thesis is that there are three ways in which Nietzsche uses this concept: interpretative (descriptive), diagnostic and normative. The key questions for Nietzsche are what kind of body has created various moralities and values, especially the nihilistic values that he tries to combat, and how to recreate oneself and one's body in a way that maximizes one's creative capacity. Through a comparison with Schopenhauer's views on the body, I argue that in spite of important similarities Nietzsche problematizes our epistemic access to our body, but believes it enjoys methodological primacy in interpreting various phenomena. I then go on to discuss the way Nietzsche understands the nature of the discipline of philosophical physiology and argue that, while he sees important advantages for physiology as a continuously changing art of interpretation of the dynamic morphology of will to power, he rejects any claims that physiology can provide an explanation of reality. Next, I argue that we should understand various moralities as either symptoms or signs of physiological states, or within an order of causes in which various moralities are effects or consequences of physiological conditions, but that, in turn, can influence physiological structures. The section ends with a historically informed discussion of a number of key concepts crucial to Nietzsche's philosophical physiology: type, force, action/reaction, hierarchy, struggle and affect. Second, I investigate the philosophical functions of physiology, a discipline that is in a privileged position to expose the most fundamental errors and undermine them. The attempt to overcome our most deeply rooted errors explains the attention Nietzsche pays to the concept of breeding (given that these errors are not responsive to traditional philosophical argumentation). Third, I

substantiate my claims on the role played by physiology through a study of its use by Nietzsche in his study of three key topics: art, morality and conscious thought.

In the third section, my thesis is that Nietzsche's physiology must be understood as a philosophical physiology and that the accusation that he abandons philosophy for natural science through his use of physiology does not hold. I use as my starting point Heidegger's discussion of 'biologism' and his claim that Nietzsche grounds his insights into life metaphysically, not biologically. I argue that we do not have to understand Nietzsche's philosophy as metaphysics in order to extricate him from the charge of biologism. What we need is to understand well the nature of philosophical physiology and its differences to natural science. According to Nietzsche, the success that natural science has is not the result of uncovering the hidden fabric of reality, but of its usefulness. He is critical of natural sciences, and of life sciences in particular, because he believes they are grounded in substance metaphysics and so fail to do justice to the dynamic character of reality. While acknowledging that Nietzsche appreciates many scientific insights, I outline his sharp critiques of mechanism (to which he opposes his doctrine of will to power) and of important scientific notions and assumptions of his day: causal determinism, atomism, teleology and progress. I then go on to argue that philosophical physiology avoids these illusions through the recognition that it is only a perspective, an interpretation, and not an explanation as scientific physiology claims to be. Philosophical physiology is one (albeit privileged) among many philosophical perspectives, and, through its commitment to immanence and naturalism, is an important tool in the hands of the philosopher who, as commander and legislator, has the task of creating new values. The chapter ends with an argument against the thesis (suggested by a few of Nietzsche's pronouncements) that he is a reductionist.

The third chapter consists in a comparative study of Spinoza's and Nietzsche's respective turns to the body. Both Spinoza and Nietzsche are thinkers of immanence and for both the turn to the body, which is part of their projects of naturalisation, is motivated by theoretical and practical goals. The first two sections discuss Nietzsche's explicit and implicit reception of Spinoza and ask whether his critique is justified. After considering the most probable and influential sources for Nietzsche's knowledge of Spinoza I argue 1) that Nietzsche's focus is mainly

on the concepts of reason, (self-)knowledge, affects, conatus and egoism, while the metaphysical intricacies of Spinoza's philosophy are not of great interest to him, and 2) that we must understand Nietzsche's engagement with Spinoza as an attempt to uncover the hidden presuppositions behind Spinoza's thinking, with the resulting diagnosis changing significantly with time. Nevertheless, against various claims presented in the literature, I hold that we can detect important continuities throughout Nietzsche's engagement with Spinoza if we focus on his critique of Spinoza's understanding of 'power'. This offers an important clue as to the best way to pursue a systematic comparison of their philosophical physiologies.

The third section begins with an evaluation of the validity of Nietzsche's criticisms of substance ontology when applied to Spinoza's concept of 'substance'. Spinoza's understanding of 'substance' differs significantly from that found in most of the philosophical tradition in that he does not see it as a subject or a self-identical substratum that perdures. Instead, he thinks 'substance' as absolutely infinite productive power expressed through its modes. This leads to a view of 'substance' that entails the existence of genuine multiplicity, of the endogenous power of modes, and includes a relational account of power. Nevertheless, Spinoza does not fully escape Nietzsche's critique because, considered under the third type of knowledge, the production of individual essences that are in agreement can only be explained if the activity of substance is governed by reason. I then go on to argue that a key difference between Spinoza and Nietzsche is the fact that Spinoza sees his project as dealing with eternal philosophical problems, while Nietzsche is reacting to a crisis of the present. Nietzsche places his philosophical discourse in the context of a historical and developmental account of individuals and societies that does not have a parallel in Spinoza's philosophy. Both, however, believe that the turn to the body, with its emphasis on self-knowledge, is the best way to undermine metaphysical illusions and values that have enabled theologians and moralists to maintain their power and inhibit authentic self-transformation on both individual and societal levels. Next, I discuss Deleuze's claim that the turn to the body in both Spinoza and Nietzsche amounts to the discovery of the unconscious. While this reveals much that is of importance for better clarifying the nature of their respective philosophical physiologies, I argue that it also ignores important

differences between their accounts of consciousness, their views on how we can know the body, and between the various practical implications of their claims.

Finally, I discuss to what extent Nietzsche's conceptualisation of the body is comparable to Spinoza's. Both argue that we do not have or possess a body, but that we are our body, and so focus on the notions of endogenous power and activity. The way they think power is remarkably similar and sets them apart from many of their predecessors. Both place great emphasis on discussing the multiplicity that constitutes the body, but differ when it comes to the value they assign to conflict in their physiologies and in their power ontologies more broadly.

The last section of the comparative chapter consists in an analysis of the similarities and differences between Spinoza's and Nietzsche's ethics and politics as they follow from their respective turns to the body. This task requires a discussion of how their normative commitments relate to their philosophical physiologies, and of what the salient features of their ethics and politics are with a view to showing how they fit in their overall philosophical thought.

For Spinoza, the turn to the body shows that all human beings (in fact all finite modes or things) strive for empowerment or freedom. The striving for an increase in power is not a goal that humans can set themselves, it is inevitable. The difference between human beings lies in the various ways in which they understand empowerment (adequately or not) and in the methods they employ in striving for empowerment. Spinoza's practical philosophy is animated by the struggle against the oppression of theologians and secular authorities who are driven by a desire to dominate through the perpetuation of moral and metaphysical illusions. The goal of ethics and politics is the virtuous pursuit of self-interest, aimed at maximizing our freedom and specific power of acting, i.e. empowering the specific constitution of our bodies without destroying the ratio of motion and rest. This empowerment can be obtained either by following a number of maxims or dictates of reason that do not require the possession of adequate knowledge or by arranging the affections of the body according to the order of the intellect. The second path does require adequate knowledge. Any practical program must be formulated according to the realist insight that all human are, to some extent, guided by passions and they

necessarily differ and are in conflict with regard to their passions. Spinoza values the proliferation of "agreement", but this does not mean uniformity (conformism). He views agreement as the cooperation between fundamentally different beings (each with its own specific structure) that increases each human being's specific capacity to act without erasing the differences. A well-ordered society provides the means to preserve the body so that it can act and be acted on in a great number of ways. It also enables us to experience and gain knowledge of many things, as well as alter them to our advantage. In a well-order society (guided by reason) humans compose a power greater than that of any single individual.

The fundamental question for Nietzsche's normative thinking is: how can a philosophy steeped in immanence produce norms or values and how can it justify them? I argue that, similarly to Spinoza, Nietzsche believes that we are life-forms already always engaged in the process of empowerment, but that we constantly run the risk of going astray in the attempt at self-empowerment. We can understand his philosophy as an attempt to provide the impetus for the revaluation of all values in the face of the harmful errors promoted by priests and moralists, but without the promise of identifying "true" or "absolute" values that various moralities postulate. Philosophical physiology provides a number of clues as to the best way to evaluate various normative 'ideals' or values. In order to better understand the nature and status of normativity in Nietzsche's thinking I first discuss the way he thinks "thoughtful egoism" in his 1881 notes. This is particularly important because Nietzsche engages with a number of Spinoza's claims here. Next, I turn to Nietzsche's critique of free will and his advocacy of necessity, and discuss the differences but also the remarkable similarities with Spinoza's thinking. Against much of the philosophical tradition, Spinoza and Nietzsche defend an understanding of freedom opposed to free will and formulated as an ethical ideal consisting in a transition from a smaller to a greater power of acting. Starting from a shared commitment to necessity and radical immanence, they present freedom as a passage to a greater power of self-determination and self-expression of the body. Nevertheless, the continuities between their power ontologies and their respective commitments to a life of knowledge break down in their discussion of the various possible manifestations of power. I argue that Nietzsche's distinctive formulation

of power as struggle between wills to power enables him to formulate the question of the qualitative dimension of empowerment in a way that is foreign to Spinoza's rational determinism. While acknowledging the profound similarities, I claim that we must see Nietzsche's discussion of affirmation as the culmination of his disagreement with his predecessor on the topic of freedom and empowerment.

While Nietzsche never articulates a systematic account of his political philosophy, he does offer us a number of insights that connect to the turn to the body. The question of politics is one of knowing whether a community or a body politic stimulates or creates favourable conditions for the development, within society, of the higher type. I argue that the role of physiology, and especially its interest in the "nearest things", is twofold. It must first evaluate peoples and individuals and, in accordance with these findings, it must show us how to *breed* or cultivate humankind as a whole. Furthermore, I argue that physiology plays a privileged role in Nietzsche's analysis of institutions, and the beneficial or harmful role they can play in promoting growth and diversity.

In the conclusion, I argue that we can best understand the similarities and differences between their respective philosophical physiologies, and their broader philosophical positions, starting from their shared interest in power ontologies and their commitment to immanence and naturalism. Unlike Nietzsche, however, Spinoza did not consider the existence of manifestations of power that are potentially disempowering for the agent. Both understand the importance of affirming 'evil' passions or affects for the enhancement of life, and think authentic flourishing possible only within a community. Nietzsche, however, stresses the importance of conflict and distinctions of rank in a way not found in Spinoza. According to Nietzsche, because Spinoza does not recognise the complex, historical fate of the differences between humans, differences that do not obey a rational principle, he is not aware of the dangers of democracy and of the focus on the common good.

Samenvatting

Dit proefschrift is een vergelijkende studie in de geschiedenis van de moderne wijsbegeerte en richt zich op de wijze waarop twee sleutelfiguren, Spinoza en Nietzsche, zich beroepen op de fysiologie. Deze studie behelst vergelijkend onderzoek naar hun nadrukkelijk beroep op het lichaam als de sleutel tot het oplossen van fundamentele filosofische problemen. Hoewel de basis voor vergelijkend onderzoek al eerder werd gelegd in studies van een aantal centrale concepten ontbrak nog een studie van Spinoza en Nietzsche gericht op de fysiologie.

Ik betoog dat deze twee denkers ondanks hun enorme verschillen dicht bij elkaar komen in, ten eerste, hun afwijzing van morele en metafysische illusies die volgens hen kenmerken zijn van de filosofische traditie waarop zij reageren, en, ten tweede, in hun focus op zelfkennis begrepen als kennis van de intrinsieke macht van het lichaam tot handelen. Dit brengt hen tot verrassend vergelijkbare beschrijvingen van vrijheid en emancipatie die gevoed worden door hun gedeelde engagement voor naturalisme en immanentie.

In het eerste hoofdstuk betoog ik dat Spinoza zich op het lichaam richt om de weg te tonen naar machtsvergroting en bevrijding. Deze opzet vereist het verdrijven van een aantal fundamentele filosofische fouten en het bevorderen van adequate kennis van het lichaam. In de eerste sectie ligt het accent op Spinoza's reactie op zijn filosofische en wetenschappelijke context, met bijzondere aandacht voor de wijze waarop die zijn filosofische fysiologie beïnvloedt. Eerst bespreek ik Joodse middeleeuwse opvattingen van materie en het lichaam, in samenhang met debatten over belangrijke metafysische noties die ons helpen om Spinoza's herwaardering van het begrip 'substantie' te begrijpen. Vervolgens onderzoek ik Spinoza's reactie op zijn tijdgenoten, met name Descartes en Hobbes, en hun door

de wetenschap ingegeven opvattingen van het lichaam. Dit vereist begrip van de veranderingen in het filosofisch en wetenschappelijk perspectief die in de 17e eeuw plaatsvonden, vooral in de ontwikkeling van een mechanistische visie op de natuur. In het geval van Descartes bestudeer ik de transitie van zijn begrip van het lichaam van de Meditaties naar het latere Passies van de ziel als belangrijke voorloper van Spinoza's leer van de affecten. Hobbes is zowel belangrijk vanwege zijn streven naar een naturalistisch begrip van de mens, als vanwege het feit dat zijn methodische interesse belangrijke perspectieven biedt voor onderzoek naar politieke constituties.

De tweede sectie van hoofdstuk 1 behandelt Spinoza's eigen theorie van het lichaam en de wijzen waarop het lichaam gekend kan worden. Eerst belicht ik het belang van de wending tot het lichaam voor Spinoza's epistemologie: onze kennis is inadequaat omdat we ons lichaam verkeerd begrijpen. Adequate kennis is onmogelijk zonder voldoende begrip van ons lichaam. Adequate zelfkennis kan in principe worden verkregen in termen van denken of van extensie. Toch biedt de focus op het lichaam belangrijke strategische voordelen omdat het ons een aantal morele en metafysische illusies laat vermijden. Ten tweede beargumenteer ik dat Spinoza in de Ethica op drie manieren spreekt over het lichaam (het object van de idee die de geest constitueert; cf. EIIp13): 1) op een manier die dicht tegen een mechanisme aan ligt, in het Fysisch Intermezzo, 2) als een veelheid van affecten, in de boeken III, IV en de eerste helft van boek V, en 3) als een essentie, in de tweede helft van boek V. Hoewel deze drie manieren ons alle drie belangrijke aanwijzingen verschaffen hoe we het lichaam moeten begrijpen, betoog ik dat de eerste manier om het lichaam te kennen inadequaat is, en de derde manier onvoldoende licht werpt op de dynamische aard van Spinoza's notie van 'macht'. We moeten ons richten op de tweede manier om de complexe, dynamische aard van het lichaam en zijn intrinsieke macht om te handelen (de conatus) te begrijpen, alsmede om te begrijpen hoe Spinoza's wending tot de fysiologie de aanzet geeft tot zijn praktische filosofie.

In het tweede hoofdstuk richt ik mij op Nietzsche's wending tot het lichaam, en betoog ik dat hij erop uit is om een weg naar machtsvergroting en bevestiging of beaming van het leven (Lebensbejahung) te ontdekken door middel van een

kritiek op metafysica en moraal en hun manifestaties in decadentie en nihilisme. We moeten Nietzsche's wending tot het lichaam situeren in de context van zijn filosofische project als geheel (vanaf 1880) dat het nihilisme wil overwinnen, en van zijn toenemende preoccupatie met de kritiek en herwaardering van alle waarden. In de eerste sectie betoog ik dat Nietzsche reageert op een crisis van zijn tijd, gediagnostiseerd als nihilisme en fysiologische degeneratie. De structuur van de enorme veelheid van impulsen die de moderne mens constitueren kan ons macht ontnemen en daarom decadent zijn, volgens Nietzsche, in twee gevallen: waar deze structuur te los is en een organiserende kracht ontbreekt, of waar deze structuur te rigide is en er één impuls is die de balans tussen impulsen zozeer overheerst dat het de expressie van andere impulsen verhindert. Volgens bespreek ik een aantal cruciale metafysische en morele illusies die tot nihilisme leiden, waarbij ik Nietzsche's kritiek van de substantie-metafysica als leidraad neem. In tegenstelling tot Spinoza wil Nietzsche geen nieuw begrip van substantie bieden, maar de onderliggende leven-ontkennende aannames ervan bekritiseren en er tegenin denken vanuit het standpunt van worden en van de veelheid.

In de tweede sectie van hoofdstuk 2 bespreek ik de inhoud van Nietzsche's wending tot het lichaam, te beginnen met de conceptuele structuur van Nietzsche's filosofische fysiologie. Mijn stelling is dat de wending tot het lichaam drie functies heeft: interpretatief (descriptief), diagnostisch en normatief. Nietzsche's kernvragen betreffen het type lichaam dat verschillende moraliteiten en waarden tot stand heeft gebracht, en hoe het zichzelf opnieuw tot stand brengt op een wijze die onze creatieve macht maximaliseert. In tegenstelling tot Schopenhauer problematiseert Nietzsche onze epistemische toegang tot ons lichaam maar schrijft er desondanks methodologische prioriteit aan toe. Hoewel hij belangrijke voordelen ziet in fysiologie als een voortdurend veranderende kunst van het interpreteren van de dynamische morfologie van de wil tot macht, verwerpt hij de claim dat fysiologie een verklaring van de werkelijkheid kan bieden. Vervolgens richt ik mij op de complexe relaties tussen moraliteit en het lichaam in Nietzsche's denken: moraliteiten zijn ofwel symptomen of tekenen van fysiologische toestanden, ofwel worden zij gezien als effecten van fysiologische voorwaarden die op hun beurt fysiologische structuren kunnen beïnvloeden. Deze sectie bevat

ook een historische discussie van een aantal sleutelconcepten voor Nietzsche's filosofische fysiologie: type, kracht, actie/reactie, hiërarchie, strijd en affect. Tenslotte wordt de rol van fysiologie in drie belangrijke domeinen onderzocht: kunst, moraliteit en bewust denken.

In de derde sectie van hoofdstuk 2 betoog ik dat Nietzsche's fysiologie begrepen moet worden als een filosofische fysiologie en weerleg ik de beschuldiging dat hij de filosofie verlaat voor de natuurwetenschappen. Nietzsche is kritisch op de natuurwetenschappen, en op de levenswetenschappen in het bijzonder, omdat hij van mening is dat zij gefundeerd zijn op substantie-metafysica en zodoende geen recht doen aan het dynamische karakter van de werkelijkheid. Filosofische fysiologie vermijdt een aantal illusies door te erkennen dat het slechts een perspectief, een interpretatie, en niet een verklaring is zoals wetenschappelijke fysiologie zegt te zijn. Door zijn engagement voor immanentie en naturalisme is fysiologie een belangrijk instrument in de handen van de filosoof, die als leider en wetgever de taak heeft om nieuwe waarden tot stand te brengen. Het hoofdstuk eindigt met een weerlegging van de aanklacht dat Nietzsche een reductionist is.

In het derde hoofdstuk richt ik mij op een comparatieve studie van Spinoza's en Nietzsche's respectievelijke wendingen tot het lichaam. In de eerste twee secties bespreek ik Nietzsche's expliciete en impliciete receptie van Spinoza, en betoog ik, tegen een aantal claims in de secundaire literatuur, dat we belangrijke voorbeelden van continuïteit op het spoor kunnen komen in Nietzsche's confrontatie met Spinoza als geheel, als we de blik richten op zijn kritiek van Spinoza's begrip van 'macht'. Dit levert een belangrijke aanwijzing op hoe we een systematische vergelijking van hun filosofische fysiologieën moeten uitvoeren.

De derde sectie betreft Nietzsche's kritiek van substantie-ontologie zoals toegepast op Spinoza's concept 'substantie'. Het belangrijkste resultaat van deze sectie is dat Spinoza's begrip van substantie het bestaan van werkelijke veelheid, de intrinsieke macht van modi, toelaat, en een relationele visie op macht bevat, maar dat zijn begrip niet geheel ontsnapt aan Nietzsche's kritiek omdat de produktie van individuele essenties die met elkaar overeen komen alleen verklaard kan worden als de activiteit van substantie door de rede wordt bestuurd. Een cruciaal verschil

is dat Nietzsche zijn filosofisch discours plaatst in de context van een historisch en ontwikkelingsgericht relaas van individuen en maatschappijen dat geen parellel heeft in Spinoza. Beide geloven echter dat de wending tot het lichaam, met zijn nadruk op zelfkennis, de beste manier is om de metafysische illusies en waarden te ondermijnen die theologen en moralisten in staat hebben gesteld om hun macht te behouden en om authentieke zelf-transformatie op zowel individueel als sociaal vlak te verhinderen. Vervolgens betoog ik dat, hoewel Deleuze's analyse van de wending tot het lichaam veel waardevols aan het licht brengt, hij cruciale verschillen veronachtzaamt tussen Spinoza's en Nietzsche's behandeling van bewustzijn, tussen hun visies op hoe we het lichaam kunnen kennen, en tussen de verschillende praktische implicaties van hun claims. Beide beargumenteren dat we niet een lichaam hebben, maar ons lichaam zijn, en richten de aandacht op verrassend vergelijkbare noties van intrinsieke macht. Zij leggen grote nadruk op het bespreken van de veelvoudigheid die het lichaam constitueert, maar ze verschillen waar het gaat over de waarde die zij aan conflict toekennen in hun fysiologieën, en waar het gaat over hun ontologie van macht in bredere zin.

De laatste sectie van het comparatieve hoofdstuk bestaat uit een analyse van de overeenkomsten en verschillen tussen Spinoza's en Nietzsche's ethiek en politiek die volgen uit hun respectievelijke wendingen tot het lichaam. Deze taak vereist een discussie van de vragen hoe hun normatieve overtuigingen zich verhouden tot hun filosofische fysiologieën, en wat de belangrijkste kenmerken zijn van hun ethiek en politiek om te laten zien hoe deze passen in hun filosofische denken als geheel.

Volgens Spinoza toont de wending tot het lichaam dat alle mensen (of beter: alle eindige modi of dingen) streven naar machtsvergroting of vrijheid. Het verlangen om macht te vergroten is geen doel dat mensen zichzelf kunnen stellen, het is onvermijdelijk. Het verschil tussen mensen ligt in de verschillende manieren waarop zij machtsvergroting (al dan niet adequaat) begrijpen en in de methodes die zij hanteren om naar machtsvergroting te streven. Het doel van ethiek en politiek is het deugdzaam nastreven van eigenbelang, gericht op het maximaliseren van onze vrijheid en ons specifieke macht om te handelen, d.w.z. gericht op het versterken van de specifieke constitutie van onze lichamen zonder de ratio

van beweging en rust te vernietigen. Elk praktisch programma moet opgesteld worden in overeenstemming met het realistische inzicht dat alle mensen tot op zekere hoogte geleid worden door passies. Spinoza waardeert het verspreiden van 'overeenstemming', maar dit betekent niet uniformiteit (conformisme). Een goed gestructureerde samenleving gebaseerd op overeenstemming verschaft de middelen om het lichaam te onderhouden zodat het op zeer veel manieren kan handelen of voorwerp van handelen kan zijn; het stelt ons in staat van alles te ervaren en te leren, en ook om van alles te veranderen om ons van nut te zijn. In een goed gestructureerde samenleving, geleid door de rede, vormen mensen een macht die groter is dan dat die van welk individu ook.

De fundamentele vraag ten aanzien van Nietzsche's normatieve denken is hoe een filosofie die berust op immanentie normen of waarden voort kan brengen en hoe ze deze kan rechtvaardigen. Net als Spinoza stelt Nietzsche dat we levensvormen zijn die altijd bezig zijn met een proces van machtsvergroting, maar dat we voortdurend het risico lopen om van het juiste pad af te wijken in onze pogingen onze eigen macht te vergroten. Filosofische fysiologie verschaft een aantal aanwijzingen hoe we verschillende normatieve 'idealen' of waarden het beste kunnen beoordelen. Eerst bespreek ik Nietzsche's concept van 'doordacht egoïsme' (gedankreicher Egoismus) in zijn aantekeningen van 1881, waar hij kritisch ingaat op een aantal van Spinoza's claims. Vervolgens richt ik mij op Nietzsche's kritiek van de vrije wil en zijn verdediging van de noodzaak, en beschouw ik de verschillen maar ook de opmerkelijke overeenkomsten met het denken van Spinoza. Beide verzetten zich tegen vrije wil en stellen een ethisch ideaal van vrijheid voor als transitie van een kleinere naar een grotere macht om te handelen en tot zelf-expressie van het lichaam. Desalniettemin maakt Nietzsche's kenmerkende formulering van macht als conflict tussen willen tot macht het mogelijk om de vraag naar de kwalitatieve dimensie van machtsvergroting te stellen op een wijze die vreemd is aan Spinoza's rationele determinisme. Het is mijn stelling dat Nietzsche's verschil van mening met zijn voorganger draait om de vraag van levensbeaming die hij in relatie brengt tot de vraag van vrijheid en machtsvergroting.

Terwijl Nietzsche nooit een systematisch betoog formuleert van zijn politieke filosofie, biedt hij ons een aantal inzichten die samenhangen met de wending tot

het lichaam. De vraag van politiek is er een van weten of een samenleving of politieke structuur gunstige voorwaarden bevordert of tot stand brengt voor de ontwikkeling, in die samenleving, van het hogere type. Fysiologie moet volkeren en individuen evalueren, en, overeenkomstig de bevindingen, laten zien hoe de mensheid als geheel voortgeplant of gecultiveerd moet worden. Verder speelt fysiologie een bijzondere rol in Nietzsche's analyse van instituties, en van de gunstige of schadelijke rol die zij kunnen spelen bij het bevorderen van groei en diversiteit.

In de conclusie betoog ik dat we de overeenkomsten en verschillen tussen hun respectievelijke filosofische fysiologieën, en tussen hun filosofische posities in bredere zin, het beste kunnen begrijpen als we uitgaan van hun gedeelde interesse in de ontologie van macht en hun engagement voor immanentie en naturalisme. Waar Spinoza overeenstemming ziet als een centraal gegeven voor het verlangen naar machtsvergroting en bevrijding, betoogt Nietzsche dat spanning en antagonisme onmisbaar zijn voor de versterking van het individu. Beide begrijpen zij het belang van het bevestigen van 'slechte' passies of affecten voor de versterking van het leven, en achten zij authentiek gedijen alleen mogelijk in de context van een gemeenschap. Nietzsche benadrukt het belang van conflict en van verschillen in rang op een wijze die we niet bij Spinoza vinden, terwijl hij de nadruk legt op de gevaren van de democratie en van aandacht voor het algemeen belang.

Curriculum Vitae

Razvan Ioan was born in Galati, Romania, on October 3rd, 1985. He grew up in the city of Galati, where he graduated from the Alexandru Ioan Cuza high school in 2004. During 2004-2007 he studied Humanities at University College Utrecht, where he obtained his BA degree (*cum laude*). He earned his first master's degree in Modern Philosophy at Warwick University in 2008 and his second in 2012, in Continental Philosophy, after graduating with a scholarship from the Erasmus Mundus program (*Boursier Europhilosophie*) organised jointly by the Université de Luxembourg, the Charles University in Prague, and the Université Toulouse II le-Mirail. In 2011 he became a PhD Candidate at the Faculty of Philosophy of Leiden University, where he worked on his doctoral project in Modern European Philosophy under the supervision of Dr. Herman Siemens, and, starting from 2013, also under Prof. Dr. Chantal Jaquet (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), with Prof. Dr. Frans de Haas acting as promotor.

Ioan is a member of the Nietzsche Workgroup in Leiden/Nijmegen and also participates in the Nietzsche Dictionary project (NWB). He also takes part in the Study Group in Early Modern Philosophy, organized by the OZSW (Nederlandse Onderzoekschool Wijsbegeerte) In Autumn 2013 he spent a term as a Visiting Scholar at Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. During 2012-2015 he has acted as Research Assistant at Leiden University, as part of the project *Between Deliberation and Agonism: Rethinking Conflict and its Relation to Law in Political Philosophy*.

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