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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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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 justified⁴³⁵.

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 indispensable 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 1887⁴³⁸ (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 der Philosophie*, Dühring's *Der Werth des Lebens* (Sommer 2012, p. 157), Teichmüller'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] 12.214⁴⁴¹). 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 works⁴⁴⁵.

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 compassion⁴⁴⁷ (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 Knowledge⁴⁴⁹

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 unequals⁴⁵¹. 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 nourishment⁴⁵². 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 3.559⁴⁵³ 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 deshalb auch die verhältnismässig 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 strongest⁴⁵⁶, and is the result of fear in the face of power⁴⁵⁷. 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 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 vengefulness⁴⁵⁹. 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 vivisection⁴⁶⁵. 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 Rupschus and Stegmeier to argue that Nietzsche’s source on this point was the work of Trendelenburg⁴⁶⁸ (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 cause⁴⁷⁰, 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 metaphysics⁴⁷¹. 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 transience (*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 concerned⁴⁷⁸). 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-preservation⁴⁸¹, 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 usually⁴⁸³ 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 exists⁴⁸⁴, 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 parts⁴⁸⁵. 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 passive⁴⁸⁶. Next to the explicit disavowal 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 attributes⁴⁸⁷. This claim is false according to Spinoza because the sum of all finite modes considered under each attribute 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 Spinoza'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 EI_p16, 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 absolute⁴⁸⁸ 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, explicate⁴⁸⁹ 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 different⁴⁹⁰ 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 world⁴⁹¹. 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 multiplicities⁴⁹² 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 thing⁴⁹³ (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-knowledge⁴⁹⁴ 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 *Elapp* 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 power⁴⁹⁵? Here, we see that besides the “natural” explanation that “all men are born ignorant of the causes of things” (Elapp), Spinoza also discusses historical explanations:

To cope with this difficulty⁴⁹⁶, 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.

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 emphasis⁴⁹⁹ 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 transformation⁵⁰⁰. 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 obtain⁵⁰⁶. “*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.

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 verhängnisvolle 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 indispensable 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 (Schrijvers 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 act⁵¹⁰. 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 Spinoza⁵¹¹, 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) empowering⁵¹³. 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 discourse⁵¹⁴. Affects are psycho-physiological realities that can be known either starting from the attribute of thought or of extension (Beysade 1999, pp. 114-6). These descriptions are used depending on the nature of the specific issues discussed and on the advantages⁵¹⁵ 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 cryptic 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 conducted⁵¹⁹. 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 place 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 exaggerated, of course. Spinoza’s philosophy does not allow for the existence of an intrinsically ignorant person or of an absolutely wise and perfect sage⁵²¹. 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 imagination⁵²³ 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 thinking⁵²⁵.

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 survive⁵²⁶. 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 agree⁵²⁷ 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 knowledge⁵²⁸ (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 knowledge⁵²⁹. 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 body⁵³¹ (EIVp42). Second, there is the case in which joy, under the name of pleasure (*Tittitatio*) 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 body⁵³² (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 causes⁵³³, 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, felicitous 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). Kissner 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 values⁵³⁵. The transcendent model of what the State ought to be⁵³⁶, together with moral interpretations of human behaviour⁵³⁷ (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 fanaticism⁵³⁸ of theologians⁵³⁹. We can therefore understand the importance of historical analysis⁵⁴⁰ 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, Macedonia (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. imagination⁵⁴¹. The constitution of the body politic cannot be predicated on the fictitious assumption that all humans possess the second and third types of knowledge⁵⁴².

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 constitution⁵⁴⁵ 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 politics⁵⁴⁷. 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 fear⁵⁴⁹ (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 indispensable 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 institutions⁵⁵⁰.

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 body⁵⁵¹. The greater or 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 encounters⁵⁵² 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 attribute⁵⁵³. 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 interactions⁵⁵⁴. 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 is 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 IIIp11s), 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 equivocation⁵⁵⁵ 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 EIII d2), 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 reevaluation 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 [gibt] 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 Allgemeinesgesetz 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 account⁵⁶⁸ 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 now⁵⁶⁹ (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 it⁵⁷¹ (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 ungeheure 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.”.

instincts⁵⁷² (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] 9.513⁵⁷⁴) 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 EIVp45s⁵⁷⁶:

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 gibt 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 givens⁵⁷⁸ (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 Interlude⁵⁷⁹. 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 from 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, Heerdtrieb 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 freedom⁵⁸². Furthermore, the exemplar of the strong individual or type, as we have seen above, requires freedom as a fundamental condition⁵⁸³. In this subsection 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 illusions⁵⁸⁵. 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 otherwise⁵⁸⁶: 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 truth⁵⁸⁷. 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 ‘happiness’, 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 sake⁵⁸⁹ (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 nature⁵⁹⁰, 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 drives⁵⁹³, 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 conflict⁵⁹⁴ 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 overcome⁵⁹⁶ (*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 freedom⁵⁹⁷. First, both criticize the notion of free will (the unconditional power of choice of an agent), a crude error

594 For an analysis of cases where Nietzsche seems to advocate 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 directed⁶⁰³.

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 ordinary 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 “Selbsterstörung”.

609 “Schlechtweggekommenen”.

610 “Die Selbstvivisektion, die Vergiftung, Berauschung”.

611 “Instinkts der Selbsterstörung”.

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 exploited⁶²³ 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 sick⁶²⁵ (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 Selbstdisciplinierung, 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 philosophy⁶²⁶. 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 than 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 Christian⁶²⁹ (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 morality⁶³⁰, 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,

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 passions⁶³⁸:

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 reevaluate all values⁶⁴⁰ (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 anderer Triumph ist unsere 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 Umwertung 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 “enchanted 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 them⁶⁴⁶.

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 reevaluating 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 people⁶⁵⁴. 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 few⁶⁵⁸.

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 inconclusive.

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 before⁶⁷³. 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 will⁶⁷⁴. 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 acknowledge 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 “Einem 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 economic⁶⁷⁷. 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 institutions 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 successfully 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 Streifzüge 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 human⁶⁸⁵.

The causes of this deplorable state can be traced back to the physiological mishandling of humanity for the past two thousand years⁶⁸⁶. 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 Ge-genprincip 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’ questions⁶⁹⁶ 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 agonial 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).