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Nietzsche's Philosophy of Conflict and the Logic of Organisational Struggle

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NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY OF CONFLICT AND THE LOGIC OF ORGANISATIONAL STRUGGLE

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REFERENCES AND CITATIONS

References to works other than those by Nietzsche are given as follows: (author date pages), e.g. Kaufmann (1974), pp.220-1. Where it is necessary or helpful to know a volume, chapter or section number, it is inserted between the date and page number, e.g. Burckhardt (2014), vol.4, p.85. The full reference for all non-Nietzsche works is provided in the footnotes on the first occasion that any such work is cited. These works are then listed in full in the bibliography at the end of this thesis.

NIETZSCHE'S WRITINGS

Emphases in Nietzsche's writings: normal emphases (= "Kampf" in KSA) are rendered as underlined. Further emphases ("Krieg" in KSA) are double underlined. *Interventions / omissions*: any interventions in citations by the author, including insertions of original German words, are indicated by square brackets: []. Any omissions by the author are also inserted in square brackets [...] in order to distinguish them from Nietzsche's own ellipses.

References to Nietzsche's published / titled texts: these follow the standard abbreviations given in *Nietzsche-Studien* under 'Siglen', and are listed below.

I have used German abbreviations, followed by the section / aphorism number (e.g. JGB 12; GM I 13). For sections / chapters that are not numbered but named, abbreviations have been devised for easy identification, e.g.:

Götzen-Dämmerung, "Das Problem des Sokrates", Section 3 = GD Sokrates 3.

Also sprach Zarathustra, zweiter Theil, "Von der Selbst-Ueberwindung" = Z II Ueberwindung.

Page references, where given, are to the relevant passage in the KSA. The format is as follows:

EH klug 9 6.294f. (*Ecce homo. Wie man wird, was man ist*, “Warum ich so klug bin”, Aphorism 9, KSA Volume 6, page 294f.).

References to the *Nachlass* (NL) in KSA follow the notation in KSA followed by volume and page, e.g. NL 2[15] 12.78f. = *Nachlass* note 2[15] in KSA Volume 12, page 78f.

References to the *Nachlass* in KGW give the volume, part, note and page, e.g. KGW I/4 62[7], p.551 = *Nachlass* note 62[7] in KGW Volume 1, Part 4, page 551.

References to Nietzsche’s letters include the volume, part, and page number in the KGB,

e.g. KGB III/1, pp.182-3 = KGB Volume 3, Part 1, pages 182-3.

ABBREVIATIONS

WORKS BY NIETZSCHE

In alphabetical order.

- AC *Der Antichrist. Fluch auf das Christenthum*
- CV “Fünf Vorreden zu fünf ungeschriebenen Büchern”
- CV 1 “Ueber das Pathos der Wahrheit”
- CV 2 “Gedanken über die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten
- CV 3 “Der griechische Staat”
- CV 4 “Das Verhältniss der Schopenhauerischen Philosophie zu einer deutschen Cultur”
- CV 5 “Homer’s Wettkampf”
- EH *Ecce homo. Wie man wird, was man ist*
- EH Vorwort “Vorwort”
- EH Motto [An diesem vollkommenen Tage ... mir mein Leben]
- EH weise “Warum ich so weise bin”
- EH klug “Warum ich so klug bin”
- EH Bücher “Warum ich so gute Bücher schreibe”
- EH (GT) “GT”
- EH (UB) “UB”
- EH (MA) “MA”
- EH (M) “M”
- EH (FW) “FW”
- EH (Z) “Z”
- EH (JGB) “JGB”
- EH (GM) “GM”
- EH (GD) “GD”
- EH (WA) “WA”
- EH Schicksal “Warum ich Schicksal bin”
- FW *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (“la gaya scienza”)
- GD *Götzen-Dämmerung oder Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophirt*
- GD Vorwort “Vorwort”
- GD Sprüche “Sprüche und Pfeile”
- GD Sokrates “Das Problem des Sokrates”

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| GD Vernunft | “Die ‘Vernunft’ in der Philosophie” |
| GD Fabel | “Wie die ‘wahre Welt’ endlich zur Fabel wurde” |
| GD Moral | “Moral als Widernatur” |
| GD Irrthümer | “Die vier grossen Irrthümer” |
| GD Verbesserer | “Die ‘Verbesserer’ der Menschheit” |
| GD Deutschen | “Was den Deutschen abgeht” |
| GD Streifzüge | “Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemässen” |
| GD Alten | “Was ich den Alten verdanke” |
| GD Hammer | “Der Hammer redet” |
-
- GDG “Der Gottesdienst der Griechen” (KGW II/5)
- GGL “Geschichte der griechischen Litteratur” (KGW II/5)
- GM *Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift*
- GMD *Das Griechische Musikdrama*
- GT *Die Geburt der Tragödie*
- JGB *Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft*
- KGW *Nietzsche Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe.* Giorgio Colli und
Mazzino Montinari (eds.) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967ff)
- KSA *Friedrich Nietzsche, Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden.* Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari (eds.) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980)
- KGB *Nietzsche Briefwechsel. Kritische Gesamtausgabe.* Giorgio Colli und
Mazzino Montinari (eds.) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977)
- M *Morgenröthe. Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurtheile*
- MA I *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister.* Erster Band
- MA II *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister.* Zweiter Band
- NL *Nachgelassene Fragmente*
- PHG *Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*
- SGT “Sokrates und die griechische Tragoedie”
- ST “Socrates und die Tragoedie”

- UB *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*
- UB I “Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen, Erstes Stück: David Strauss der Bekenner und der Schriftsteller”
- UB II “Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen, Zweites Stück: Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben”
- UB III “Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen, Drittes Stück: Schopenhauer als Erzieher”
- UB IV “Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen, Viertes Stück: Richard Wagner in Bayreuth”
- VM (MA II Erste Abtheilung) *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche*
- VPP “Die vorplatonischen Philosophen” (KGW II/4)
- WA *Der Fall Wagner. Ein Musikanten-Problem*
- WL “Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne”
- WS (MA II Zweite Abtheilung) *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten*
- Z *Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen*
- Z I [Erster Teil]
- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Z I Vorrede | “Zarathustra’s Vorrede” |
| Z I Verwandlungen | “Von den drei Verwandlungen” |
| Z I Lehrstühlen | “Von den Lehrstühlen der Tugend” |
| Z I Hinterweltlern | “Von den Hinterweltlern” |
| Z I Verächtern | “Von den Verächtern des Leibes” |
| Z I Leidenschaften | “Von den Freuden- und Leidenschaften” |
| Z I Verbrecher | “Vom bleichen Verbrecher” |
| Z I Lesen | “Vom Lesen und Schreiben” |
| Z I Baum | “Vom Baum am Berge” |
| Z I Predigern | “Von den Predigern des Todes” |
| Z I Krieg | “Vom Krieg und Kriegsvolke” |
| Z I Götzen | “Vom neuen Götzen” |
| Z I Fliegen | “Von den Fliegen des Marktes” |
| Z I Keuschheit | “Von der Keuschheit” |
| Z I Freunde | “Vom Freunde” |
| Z I Ziele | “Von tausend und Einem Ziele” |
| Z I Nächstenliebe | “Von der Nächstenliebe” |

Z I Schaffenden	“Vom Wege des Schaffenden”
Z I Weiblein	“Von alten und jungen Weiblein”
Z I Natter	“Vom Biss der Natter”
Z I Ehe	“Von Kind und Ehe”
Z I Tode	“Vom freien Tode”
Z I Tugend	“Von der schenkenden Tugend”
Z II [Zweiter Theil]	
Z II Kind	“Das Kind mit dem Spiegel”
Z II Inseln	“Auf den glückseligen Inseln”
Z II Mitleidigen	“Von den Mitleidigen”
Z II Priestern	“Von den Priestern”
Z II Tugendhaften	“Von den Tugendhaften”
Z II Gesindel	“Vom Gesindel”
Z II Taranteln	“Von den Taranteln”
Z II Weisen	“Von den berühmten Weisen”
Z II Nachtlid	“Das Nachtlid”
Z II Tanzlid	“Das Tanzlid”
Z II Grablid	“Das Grablid”
Z II Selbst-Ueberwindung	“Von der Selbst-Ueberwindung”
Z II Erhabenen	“Von den Erhabenen”
Z II Bildung	“Vom Lande der Bildung”
Z II Erkenntniss	“Von der unbefleckten Erkenntniss”
Z II Gelehrten	“Von den Gelehrten”
Z II Dichtern	“Von den Dichtern”
Z II Ereignissen	“Von grossen Ereignissen”
Z II Wahrsager	“Der Wahrsager”
Z II Erlösung	“Von der Erlösung”
Z II Menschen-Klugheit	“Von der Menschen-Klugheit”
Z II Stunde	“Die stillste Stunde”
Z III [Dritter Theil]	
Z III Wanderer	“Der Wanderer”
Z III Räthsel	“Vom Gesicht und Räthsel”
Z III Seligkeit	“Von der Seligkeit wider Willen”
Z III Sonnen-Aufgang	“Vor Sonnen-Aufgang”
Z III Tugend	“Von der verkleinernden Tugend”
Z III Oelberge	“Auf dem Oelberge”
Z III Vorübergehen	“Vom Vorübergehen”
Z III Abtrünnigen	“Von den Abtrünnigen”
Z III Heimkehr	“Die Heimkehr”
Z III Bösen	“Von den drei Bösen”
Z III Schwere	“Vom Geist der Schwere”

Z III Tafeln	“Von alten und neuen Tafeln”
Z III Genesende	“Der Genesende”
Z III Sehnsucht	“Von der grossen Sehnsucht”
Z III Tanzlied	“Das andere Tanzlied”
Z III Siegel	“Die sieben Siegel (Oder: das Ja- und Amen-Lied)”

Z IV [Vierter und letzter Theil]

Z IV Honig-Opfer	“Das Honig-Opfer”
Z IV Nothschrei	“Der Nothschrei”
Z IV Königen	“Gespräch mit den Königen”
Z IV Bluteigel	“Der Bluteigel”
Z IV Zauberer	“Der Zauberer”
Z IV Dienst	“Ausser Dienst”
Z IV Mensch	“Der hässlichste Mensch”
Z IV Bettler	“Der freiwillige Bettler”
Z IV Schatten	“Der Schatten”
Z IV Mittags	“Mittags”
Z IV Begrüssung	“Die Begrüssung”
Z IV Abendmahl	“Das Abendmahl”
Z IV Menschen	“Vom höheren Menschen”
Z IV Schwermuth	“Das Lied der Schwermuth”
Z IV Wissenschaft	“Von der Wissenschaft”
Z IV Wüste Unter	“Töchtern der Wüste”
Z IV Erweckung	“Die Erweckung”
Z IV Eselsfest	“Das Eselsfest”
Z IV Nachtwandler-Lied	“Das Nachtwandler-Lied”
Z IV Zeichen	“Das Zeichen”

ZB *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten Streitschrift.*

WORKS BY OTHER AUTHORS

- BP: Rolph, Wilhelm, *Biologische Probleme zugleich als Versuch zur Entwicklung einer rationellen Ethik* (Leipzig: Verlag von Wilhelm Engelmann, 1881).
- DWB: Grimm, Jacob and Grimm, Wilhelm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 25 vols (München: DTV, 1854ff.).
- KdU: Kant, Emmanuel, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, in Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*, "Akademieausgabe", 29 vols (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1922), vol.5.
- KTO: Roux, Wilhelm, *Kampf der Theile im Organismus: Ein Beitrag zur Vervollständigung der mechanischen Zweckmässigkeitslehre* (Leipzig: Wilhem Engelmann Verlag, 1881).
- WWV: Schopenhauer, Arthur, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, 2 vols (München: Deutschen Taschenbuch Verlag, 1998).

INTRODUCTION

Ai! let strife and rancour
perish from the lives of gods and men...
(Homer, *Iliad*, XVIII, l.107)¹

One must realize that war is shared and
Conflict is Justice,
and that all things come to pass [...]
in accordance with conflict.
(Heraclitus, fragment LXXXII)²

The disagreement between Heraclitus and Homer's Achilles depicted in our epigraph clearly reveals the ancient origins of the philosophical theme with which this thesis will be concerned – namely, conflict. The prevalence of this theme throughout the subsequent history of philosophy further indicates that our desire to understand the nature of conflict is deeply rooted in our nature as thinking beings; indeed, it represents a leitmotif running through the works of Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel and Heidegger, to name but a few. At some level, most of us are undoubtedly inclined to agree with Achilles insofar as we take war to be harmful and strive to resolve the various personal conflicts that arise in our lives in the sincere belief that we will be better off for doing so. Nonetheless, we can also no doubt appreciate Heraclitus' argument in favour of conflict insofar as it is hard to deny that struggle represents an essential part of the natural world and that our most valued achievements are usually wrought of contention either with others or ourselves. But

¹ Homer, *Iliad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

² Charles Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.67.

does this make Achilles naïve for yearning to bring an end to the kind of strife depicted in the *Iliad*?

As the OED tells us, the term “conflict” is a Latinate term, “the participial stem of *confligēre* to strike together, clash, conflict, contend, fight [...], < *con-* together + *fligēre* to strike”. Under this broad notion of “striking together”, we also have the general definition of conflict as a “prolonged struggle”; then a more specific, physical definition of it as “fighting, contending with arms, martial strife”; a psychological definition that describes it as a “mental or spiritual struggle within a man”; and an epistemological or ideological definition of it as the “clashing or variance of opposed principles, statements, arguments, etc.”; finally, we find a non-anthropomorphic definition of conflict as the “[d]ashing together, collision, or violent mutual impact of physical bodies”, or “the strife of natural forces”.³ It thus becomes quickly apparent that Heraclitus’ quarrel with Homer presents us with a false dichotomy – conflict is neither simply “good” nor “bad” *per se*. It is rather a complex concept used to index a wide range of relations, each of which may be said to have good or bad effects depending on the circumstances in which they occur and the standpoint of the individual making the relevant value judgement.⁴

Before we approach the first task of assessing the *value* of conflict and the ways in which we might go about cultivating “good” conflict and suppressing “bad” conflict, we thus need to designate as clearly as possible what we *mean* by conflict. Insofar as this demands drawing a clear conceptual map of the notion of conflict, and critically assessing the justifications for why we might value particular forms of conflict over others, our endeavour is an unambiguously philosophical one. In the following thesis, I will be arguing not just that Nietzsche should be considered among the wealth of philosophers to have engaged with these problems, but that he has contributed a great deal more to resolving them than has hitherto been

³ OED, “conflict, n.” and “conflict, v.”

⁴ And indeed, a closer examination of the opposition of Heraclitus and Homer’s Achilles reveals that they are largely talking about different forms of conflict, though an investigation of this is not our current purpose.

acknowledged. This said, fully appreciating Nietzsche's contribution demands extensive interpretive work. In this introduction, I will briefly make the case for why this interpretive work is so exigent before giving an outline of the overall structure of the thesis.

1. DETERMINING THE *MEANING* OF CONFLICT

In his "Jasagen zu Gegensatz und Krieg" (EH GT 3 6.313), Nietzsche proclaimed himself to be carrying the torch for Heraclitus, "in dessen Nähe überhaupt [ihm] wärmer, [ihm] wohler zu Muthe wird als irgendwo sonst" (EH GT 3 6.312-3). Thus, he celebrates the fact that life ("Leben") "Kampf sein muss" (Z II Selbst-Ueberwindung 4.148), and more specifically, a *Kampf* for the "Überwältigung des Fremden und Schwächeren, [...] Einverleibung und mindestens, mildestens, Ausbeutung" (JGB 259); moreover, he entreats his readers to cherish peace only "als Mittel zu neuen Kriegen" (Z I Kriegsvolk 4.58);⁵ in GT he urges us to engage in a "Kampf mit der Ausscheidung" of the redundant aspects of ourselves and society (GT 23 1.149); he advocates "kriegführen mit sich" (JGB 200); he writes that without *Kampf*, "wird alles schwach, Mensch und Gesellschaft" (NL 11[193] 9.517); and finally, he famously praises the ancient Greek love of "Wettkampf" or "agon" as the basis of their cultural prowess, asserting that "ihre ganze Kunst ist nicht ohne Wettkampf zu denken" (MA 170).

However, foregoing any prejudices we might have about Nietzsche, the object of these exaltations is *prima facie* unclear. Dictionaries of (the history of) German reveal that the noun "Kampf" rivals its English analogue "conflict" in its ambiguity, signifying not only a "physisches (bewaffnetes) Ringen um den Sieg", but also "'Wettkampf' [vor allem] im Sport" and "ideolog[isches] [beziehungsweise] geistiges Ringen".⁶ Perhaps we might think that *Krieg* has a more univocally martial

⁵ See also Z IV Koenige 2 4.307.

⁶ Hermann Paul, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 1992), pp.446-7.

connotation. Indeed, Herman Paul's dictionary describes how it came to replace the late-Medieval German term *urliuge* (which could be used to refer to any armed form of conflict); yet Paul also indicates that, historically speaking, *Krieg* had the far more general signification of "jede Art von Feindseligkeit" or "Streit (auch mit Worten)".⁷

What should further deter us from jumping to hasty conclusions regarding the referent of Nietzsche's celebrations of conflict is that the plurivocality described by Paul and DWB is reproduced in Nietzsche's own use of the terms in question. This semantic ambiguity is perhaps most obtrusive when it comes to interpreting his social philosophy. Is his affirmation of *Krieg* an affirmation of murderous, martial struggle? Or is he affirming a non-violent, non-destructive form of conflict analogous to sporting contest or debate? Otherwise put, does Nietzsche controversially propose that we engage in modes of contest that involve the struggle to negate our opponents in an unrestrained, *unmeasured* manner, or in a restrained, *measured* manner? Or is the matter simply unclear and therefore indeterminable? Some, such as Nietzsche's fascistic readers, have taken his discussions of social conflict as unproblematically referring to belligerent conflict; conversely, others have taken the opposite hermeneutic approach, maintaining that even where Nietzsche appears to be most overtly talking about martial conflict, this is not in fact the case – thus, Walter Kaufmann, who staunchly defends this position, asserts that "one may generalize that in most of [Nietzsche's] notorious remarks about 'war' [...] the word is used metaphorically", that is, to symbolise a *spiritual* war.⁸ In the context of the notion of *Wettkampf*, some have then argued that Nietzsche's conception of agonal contest includes violent forms of conflict, where others have read it as a definitively non-violent mode of struggle. And we can bring forth textual evidence to support both of these opposed interpretations.⁹ Likewise, there are texts in which Nietzsche conceives of the exploitative struggle that he thinks constitutes

⁷ Ibid., p.490.

⁸ Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p.386. This issue is examined in ch.1 of this dissertation.

⁹ This is outlined in greater depth in ch.2.

life as a naked, *amoral* and unmeasured form of conflict; yet there are also texts in which he characterises this struggle as intrinsically restrained and in some sense substituting for eliminative modes of opposition. And as we will see, interpreters have tended to emphasise one or the other side of this definition of vital exploitative *Kampf*.¹⁰ Finally, if we scrutinise the “Kampf mit der Ausscheidung” valorised by Nietzsche, we see that he sometimes describes this as a non-destructive act of excretion, which, while exclusive in an unmeasured fashion, is nonetheless conceived as an act of *Freigiebigkeit* that bestows fertilising dung on others (see e.g. NL 11[134] 9.492); yet at other times, he approximates *Ausscheidung* to a process of *eradicating* entities that have become harmful (see e.g. NL 23[1] 13.600).¹¹

In the first place, then, our task is *descriptive*. As far as possible, we need to draw a clear conceptual map of the philosophical terrain upon which Nietzsche is manoeuvring. This involves identifying the key forms of conflict with which he is concerned and then enumerating the qualities that he most consistently predicates to each of these. Throughout this thesis, I will be defending the idea that, albeit with a certain degree of interpretive violence, we can usefully divide the principal forms of human conflict advocated by Nietzsche into four groups (though it is important to note that not all of these are mutually exclusive):

1. *Vernichtungskämpfe*: violently unmeasured struggles to the death, in which adversaries vie to physically destroy one another.
2. *Wettkämpfe*: measured, non-violent, non-exploitative struggles between approximately equal individuals or social groups. I will also be referring to these as instances of *agonal* conflict.
3. *Kämpfe um Einverleibung*: measured struggles of individuals or social groups striving to *exploit* weaker entities without destroying them.

¹⁰ This is outlined in ch.3.

¹¹ See ch.3 and ch.4.

4. Unmeasured struggles for exclusion that necessarily accompany the struggle for *Einverleibung* – i.e. the repression (*Unterdrückung*), repulsion (*Zurückstoßen*), excretion (*Ausscheidung*) or destruction (*Vernichtung*, *Zerstörung*) of entities within one's self, social group, or society that have become redundant or harmful.

In Chapters 1 and 2, I will be concerned with conceptually clarifying (1) and (2), both discretely and in their relation to one another; I will then analyse the interrelated forms of conflict described under (3) and (4) in Chapters 3 and 4.

This is of course not an exhaustive typology of the forms of conflict dealt with by Nietzsche (for example, we may also think of anarchic conflict as another category of interest). Indeed, throughout this study, I will be drawing on many of the subsidiary forms of struggle that I have had to sideline in making the above taxonomy; however, I believe that it is through an analysis of the aforementioned quartet of categories that we will be able to obtain the best understanding of Nietzsche's positive normative stance towards conflict.

2. DETERMINING THE *VALUE* OF CONFLICT

In addition to the task of conceptually demarcating these different (though in many ways interrelated and overlapping) forms of conflict, we are faced with the further challenge of determining Nietzsche's normative stance towards each of them. Close inspection of the writings in which he is specific in his use of the concept of conflict reveals that, somewhat confusingly, he can be found to both valorise and denigrate each of these forms of conflict. Thus, in his notorious essay CV 3, where he is indubitably speaking of martial conflict, he confesses to singing a "Päan auf den Krieg" insofar as he declares such conflict to be not only an irreducible aspect of human existence, but one that is fundamental to any healthy culture (CV 3 1.774). On the other hand, in CV 5, he assents to the Greek disavowal of the "böse" Eris

goddess, who symbolises those impulses that provoke men “zum feindseligen Vernichtungskampfe [*sic*]” (CV 5 1.787). In this essay, Nietzsche favours a form of measured conflict he calls “Wettkampf” or, after the ancient Greeks, “Agon”; notwithstanding these affirmative remarks, he also warns that the competitive “agonal” spirit almost invariably led to destructive, socially harmful instances of *stasis* when sanctioned in the political domain (see e.g. WS 226). Moreover, within the artistic domain, Nietzsche claims that agonal conflict bred supradominant individuals – such as Homer, for example – who stifle the contest; hence, his conviction that “[d]as Agonale ist auch die Gefahr bei aller Entwicklung” (NL 5[146] 8.78). We find a similar ambivalence with respect to his views on exploitation. For instance, though he often affirms exploitation as a vital life-process, he also speaks critically of the attempt made by the weak to parasitically unite with the strong and exploit them for purposes of shelter and protection (“*unterschlüpfen*” [NL 36[21] 11.560]). Finally, he also equivocates over the normative status of the struggle to excise (*ausscheiden*) problematic parts of the self and society. Thus, Nietzsche censures the Christian practice of endeavouring to amputate one’s troublesome subjective impulses and to eradicate one’s ideological enemies (GD Moral 1-3); but despite this negative appraisal, he nonetheless calls for us to “*beschneiden*” problematic instincts (GD Streifzüge 41 6.143), and he infamously endorses “*die schonungslose Vernichtung alles Entartenden und Parasitischen*” from society (EH GT 4 6.313).¹²

This cursory survey should demonstrate the plurality of normative stances that Nietzsche takes towards each of the four main classes of struggle delineated in the previous section. Needless to say, this seeming oscillation represents a significant threat to the practical applicability of Nietzsche’s thoughts on conflict. After all, how are we to incorporate such ostensibly contradictory recommendations into our practical existence? As always with Nietzsche, we might be tempted to attribute this apparent inconsistency to his often flagrant disregard for the principle

¹² See Chapters 3 and 4 for more references.

of non-contradiction, and his desire to impartially scrutinise an object from as many angles as possible – what is often called his “perspectivism”. Such a conclusion, however, would be premature, and should only be permitted as a last resort, after a detailed attempt to identify some systematicity in his thoughts on conflict.

This is not virgin territory. A whole line of interpreters precedes me in my attempt to establish Nietzsche’s normative stance towards conflict. However, rather than striving to render his diverse thoughts on this topic coherent, they tend to latch onto *either* his celebration of measured forms of conflict *or* his advocacy of unmeasured conflict. It is worth making a brief and somewhat simplified reconstruction of these two veins of interpretation.

First there are those who have branded Nietzsche a belligerent thinker who unreservedly exalts unmeasured struggle, and particularly war. These are the proponents of the so-called “hard” Nietzsche. The individual most responsible for inaugurating this reading was his own sister, Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, who conscripted him as intellectual support for German aggression in the Great War.¹³ Subsequently, in his book, *Nietzsche der Philosoph und Politiker* (1931), Alfred Bäumler paints Nietzsche as a fascistic thinker, for whom the alternative to European nihilism was a militaristic form of German imperialism. In many ways, Heidegger’s Nietzsche of the 1930s and early 1940s can also be placed in this line of interpretation.¹⁴ No doubt on account of Nietzsche’s association with the fascist movement, anti-fascist thinkers similarly tended to calumny Nietzsche as a diabolical warmonger.¹⁵ This is what I will refer to as the *militaristic* reading of Nietzsche.

While there had often been voices supporting a softer reading of Nietzsche (particularly in France), this had been largely stifled in the Anglophone world of

¹³ For an overview of this influence, see Steven E. Ascheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany 1890-1990* (California: University of California Press, 1994) (see esp. p.142).

¹⁴ For a critical analysis of this aspect of Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche, see e.g. Julian Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.140ff.

¹⁵ See the introductory sections to ch.1 and ch.2.

Nietzsche scholarship until Walter Kaufmann's game-changing *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist and Antichrist* (1974), which sanitized Nietzsche for those of liberal political persuasions. Kaufmann made two related moves that are pertinent to our current discussion. As already mentioned, he proposed that Nietzsche's commendations of war should be read as metaphorically signifying the *spiritual* war that Nietzsche wanted us to wage against our passions. Continuing this line of interpretation, he then sought to depoliticise Nietzsche altogether, arguing that Nietzsche is first and foremost concerned with private *self*-cultivation, which is centred on the non-destructive sublimation of our impulses.¹⁶ His anti-political reading notwithstanding, Kaufmann also brought Nietzsche's early unpublished essay CV 5, with its marked social dimension, to the attention of Anglophone scholars. This is the essay (to which I have already referred) in which Nietzsche favours limited modes of social competition over and against martial conflict. With this rediscovery, a new line of Nietzsche research was initiated – one that tended to use this essay as a heuristic tool for dissecting Nietzsche's wider philosophical project. These readers, who generally occupy a liberal-democratic standpoint, sought to repoliticise Nietzsche's thought. However, in contrast to the earlier militaristic readings, they tried (and are still trying) to discover a more democratically minded Nietzsche, contending that the notion of contest we find in CV 5 is in fact exemplified in democratic contest. Indeed, they tend to argue that he seeks a *transformation* of unmeasured conflict *into* measured conflict, namely through the establishment of certain democratic political institutions. In this hermeneutic cluster, we find, among others, Christa Davis Acampora, William Connolly, Lawrence Hatab, David Owen, Herman Siemens, Tracy Strong and Alan Schrift. This is what I will be referring to as the agonistic reading of Nietzsche. When grouped with others such as Stanley Cavell, James Conant and Paul Patton (among others), who strive to read a more democratic impetus (though not necessarily an agonistic one) into Nietzsche's works, we might say that these interpreters represent

¹⁶ Kaufmann (1974), p.306.

what can be called the “soft” Nietzsche. Crucially, these readers often either gloss over the texts in which Nietzsche is most unambiguously bellicose and unmeasured in his prescriptions, or they wilfully ignore these moments by labelling them anomalous, hyperbolic outbursts that should not be included in any serious consideration of his thought.

In response to this tendentious aspect of the soft reading, however, an adapted version of the hard Nietzsche emerged. The chief objective of these readers was to vitiate the growing number of democratic appropriations of Nietzsche’s thought. They contended that the sheer weight of anti-democratic sentiments running through his writings renders such appropriations untenable. They redirected our attention towards the texts in which Nietzsche glorifies war, and they further emphasised his valorisation of an immoral, and often murderous, struggle to exploit and exclude the weak. In this group, we find Bruce Detwiler, Mark Warren, Frederick Appel and Don Dombowsky.¹⁷ These readers tend not to wholly ignore Nietzsche’s more democratic inclinations, nor his interest in the ancient Greek agon; however, they argue that these thoughts are largely confined to the early and middle writings, and so cannot be taken as representative of his mature thought, which they hold to be distinctly pro-aristocratic, if not proto-fascist. I will refer to this reading as the radical aristocratic reading.

Though not all of these commentators fit neatly into the camps to which I have assigned them, this should suffice to illustrate that the secondary literature merely reinstates the discord we originally found in Nietzsche’s texts themselves. They either characterise him as a hard thinker, recommending unmeasured conflict *or* as a soft thinker, endorsing measured conflict. This is the main *aporia* with which the following thesis will be concerned. I will be arguing that neither of these poles of interpretation is adequate to Nietzsche’s thought. Against these readings, my thesis will be that *both the early and the later Nietzsche can be read as valorising both measured and unmeasured social conflict.*

¹⁷ See ch.3.

The crux of my argument will be that the type of conflict Nietzsche prescribes depends on the given conditions. Since he does not positively value any mode of conflict in an unconditional or universal fashion, but rather in a way that is always context-specific, the variegated nature of his prescriptions will be seen to generate no serious contradiction. Identifying these conditions will reveal, particularly in the later period, a considered and cogent set of suggestions regarding how we ought to manage the various forms of conflict in our lives. While I will be focussing on the exegetical task of formulating, in as charitable a manner as possible, a coherent view of Nietzsche's philosophy of conflict, the ultimate aim is that this will also give us a novel set of arguments with which we can critically engage and which we can bring to bear on contemporary debates in ethics and political theory.

3. OUTLINE

In order to defend my thesis that Nietzsche should be read as promoting both measured *and* unmeasured conflict, I employ two argumentative strategies. In the first two chapters, I focus on illuminating how Nietzsche consistently valorises both *Vernichtungskampf* and *Wettkampf*, in both the early and later works. Thus, neither the exclusively measured, agonistic reading, nor the unmeasured, militaristic reading will be found to be adequate descriptions of Nietzsche's early or later thought. In contrast, in the final two chapters, I argue that both the early and the later Nietzsche recommend a *combination* of measured exploitative conflict (incorporation) *and* unmeasured exclusionary conflict as a means to overcoming society's ills. This dual struggle for exploitation and exclusion is what I will broadly call *organisational* conflict. It should be added that in maintaining that there is a parallelism between the early and the later Nietzsche, however, I am by no means suggesting that there is a relation of identity between the two. On the contrary, I will be arguing that Nietzsche's thoughts on conflict undergo a significant transformation between these

two phases due to the combined effect of his repudiation of Schopenhauerian metaphysics and his figuration of the world as will to power.

In Chapter 1, my focus is on *Vernichtungskampf* and, more specifically, war. Against his agonistic readers, I contend that Nietzsche gives various arguments, throughout the corpus, as to why we ought to esteem mortal forms of combat. However, my further contention will be that, particularly in the early period, many of these arguments are underpinned by an ontology of destructive conflict that is at odds with the logic of Nietzsche's agonistic project. Whereas the agonists see Nietzsche as calling for the *transformation* of destructive conflict, I call attention to both early and late texts in which he holds destructive conflict to be the result of a cathartic release of an *essentially* destructive metaphysical force – an idea he largely inherits from Schopenhauer's metaphysics of the will. Nonetheless, I maintain that the agonists are correct to identify a strong critique of murderous conflict in Nietzsche and, moreover, a belief that this kind of conflict can be transformed into more productive forms of contest. Indeed, I argue that his readings in the natural sciences in the 1880s, and his concomitant development of the notion of the world as will to power, lead him to redescribe physically destructive conflict as the *contingent* expression of a polymorphous impetus to release pent-up energy and establish relations of exploitation. Even within his mature worldview, however, he still gives a number of arguments for why we ought to positively value *Vernichtungskampf* under very limited conditions. Though this chapter will have carved out a coherent ontological space for Nietzsche's transformative project (since now the energy behind destructive impulses *can* be given alternative outlets), I nonetheless conclude that there remains a substantial portion of Nietzsche's thought that cannot be explained in agonistic terms.

Having examined the concept of *Vernichtungskampf* in Nietzsche's thought, I then consider its counterconcept in Chapter 2, namely, *Wettkampf* or agon. Against the militaristic and radical aristocratic readings, I justify the claim that Nietzsche consistently values agonal relations, understood as a measured form of non-exploitative and non-destructive conflict that takes place between approximately

equal adversaries. Before doing so, however, I survey the striking lack of consensus among current interpretations of Nietzsche's agonism. First, as has been intimated above, it is unclear what Nietzsche *means* by *Wettkampf*. Some claim that it is a wholly non-violent form of conflict, whereas others deem it to be inclusive of certain kinds of *Vernichtungskampf*. Furthermore, there is disagreement as to the social conditions under which he thinks agonal relations are possible and desirable. Some maintain that Nietzsche at least implicitly supports the idea that such relations can, and should, be democratically realised across the whole of society; contrariwise, others argue that according to Nietzsche, agonism should only be endorsed, and indeed is only truly possible, in the context of an elite minority of equals. Finally, commentators dispute the means by which this transformation can be effected and maintained. Some defend the idea that Nietzsche's agonism is secured by a self-initiated change of attitude towards one's opponents, while others submit that agonal relations can only be realised by means of establishing a balance of powers, within which individuals or groups are too equally matched to overpower one another. I invoke Nietzsche's contemporaries – namely, Jacob Burckhardt, Ernst Curtius and George Grote – in an effort to demonstrate that these various impasses can be overcome by means of a historically contextualised understanding of the agon. I conclude this chapter by affirming that both the early and the later Nietzsche can be said to valorise the agon and that therefore the wholly unmeasured reading (be it militaristic or radical aristocratic) does not bear scrutiny.

By the end of Chapter 2, I will have discredited attempts to understand Nietzsche's normative project exclusively in terms of either a violently unmeasured or an agonistically measured struggle, both of which Nietzsche only valorises under very specific and rarely occurring conditions. In Chapters 3 and 4, I turn to UB and the later writings (1884-8) respectively so as to demonstrate how Nietzsche describes a conceptually unique form of conflict – *viz.* organisational struggle – that fails to fit the *Vernichtungskampf*—*Wettkampf* dichotomy. I further maintain that he prescribes this in a far more general manner than either *Vernichtungskampf* or *Wettkampf* as a solution to the pathology he sees plaguing modernity. I open both

chapters by arguing that this pathology should be understood as a problem of disgregation between the parts of the organisation in question – i.e. the behavioural impulses that go to make up our self, or the citizens and social groups of which society is composed. In both chapters, I maintain that the principal remedy that Nietzsche recommends for this condition is a measured struggle for the exploitation or *Einverleibung* of that which is serviceable, and an unmeasured struggle for the exclusion of that which is harmful. Together, these two conflictual processes compose the struggle to order discordant elements of the self or society into a functional hierarchy. Against the radical aristocrats, who describe exploitation as an unmeasured mode of relation, my contention is that Nietzsche's conception of healthy exploitation is consistently measured. To support this thesis, I underscore how he describes such exploitation as a symbiotic relation in which the exploiter aims to preserve the exploited. On the other hand, I contest the softer readers who see the measured struggle for exploitation as *replacing* unmeasured forms of struggle – a claim that is defended at the level of the self by the sublimational readers (e.g. Walter Kaufmann and Ken Gemes), and agonistic readers at the socio-political level. In opposition to these, I maintain that, though the struggle for *Einverleibung* and exploitation should be understood as measured, it must also be understood as preconditioned by unmeasured conflictual processes aimed at the exclusion of that which is harmful or superfluous. In substantiating this argument, I seek to fully analyse the dual logic (of incorporation and exclusion) that constitutes the total economy of organisational struggle.

In Chapter 3, I examine how Nietzsche initially configures this dichotomous struggle for organisation in UB. I argue that he adopts a quasi-Schopenhauerian descriptive model of how healthy organisation arises, which presupposes the existence of metaphysical essences or *Ideas* teleologically organising the entities by means of selectively overpowering and assimilating the opposed entities that they need in order to fully realise themselves. My claim is that this is a measured process insofar as what is incorporated is *preserved* in a position of subservience to the Idea. I then argue that Nietzsche applies this abstract model to the concrete problems of

individual and social disintegration. To this end, I explicate his quasi-Schopenhauerian belief that gaining insight into the Ideas that are striving to guide our individual and collective development is a precondition of our actively fostering this struggle for organisation. Yet, in contrast to Schopenhauer, we will also witness Nietzsche placing a far greater emphasis on the way in which this assimilation is necessarily married to a struggle for the exclusion and excretion of the superfluous or incompatible aspects of the self and culture.

I conclude Chapter 3 by demonstrating how the metaphysical claims demanded by Nietzsche's early synthetic project are rendered impossible by his rejection of metaphysics; thus, in Chapter 4, I examine how the later Nietzsche reconceives of the foundations of organisational struggle in light of this development. I reconstruct how he develops a descriptive model of healthy organisation that draws on the natural sciences and is purged of metaphysics – namely, in his account of the world as will to power. According to this model of healthy life, purposeful organisation is figured as the result of certain forces within the self or society contingently taking control of the aggregate in question and struggling to organise its parts in accordance with their higher aspirations. Again, however, this shaping will be seen to consist in a dual process of, on the one hand, a measured struggle to incorporate useful entities within a hierarchy and, on the other, an unmeasured struggle to excrete or exclude those that fail to fit within this ordering. Whereas in UB this process was said to be initiated by means of gaining metaphysical insight into our essential selves or the essence of society, I conclude Chapter 4 by arguing that Nietzsche shifts his position so that it is now a purely immanent insight into the world *qua* will to power that enables us to initiate the two-sided struggle for organisation.

By way of conclusion, I summarise how the majority of Nietzsche's mature thoughts on conflict fit into a coherent whole; that is, how he can be said to prescribe agonistic, incorporative and destructive or exclusionary forms of conflict under quite separate, and compatible, sets of conditions. I then tally the various ways in which Nietzsche, and our study of his thought, warns that misconceiving of conflict can

have a seriously detrimental impact on one's practical existence. In tandem with this, I close by gesturing towards how we might positively reformulate our conception of conflict in light of our findings.

CHAPTER 1

NIETZSCHE *CONTRA* AGONISM

1.1. INTRODUCTION

In today's predominantly liberal climate, it comes very naturally to us to read Nietzsche as fundamentally opposed to murderous forms of conflict; and certainly, throughout his oeuvre, he repeatedly articulates a preference for measured, productive forms of struggle (what he calls “Wettkampf” or “Agon”) over and against those of a more destructive ilk. Texts expressing this idea, particularly CV 5, have recently been placed centre stage not only within Nietzsche scholarship, but also beyond, in liberal-democratic appropriations of his thought in political theory.¹ As these readers often point out, Nietzsche's antipathy towards destructive conflict manifests itself at both a physical and intellectual or spiritual level insofar as he censures both murderous struggle and the analogous silencing or exclusion of *geistige* adversaries (which we will be considering in Chapter 4). In this chapter, however, I will be specifically focussing on Nietzsche's philosophical stance toward *physically* destructive, inter-human conflict (hereafter referred to as PDC). This encompasses any struggle that is driven by the desire to physically exterminate one's opponent – what Nietzsche calls *Vernichtungslust*. Under this rubric, I will be

¹ On this trend, see ch.2.

considering everything from individual cases of murder and attempted murder, up to and including large-scale military conflicts.²

The tendency to read Nietzsche as a primarily agonistic philosopher, hostile to PDC, can be viewed as continuing the legacy left by Walter Kaufmann's concerted attempt to render Nietzsche's thought palatable to modern liberal readers. According to Kaufmann's pioneering interpretation, Nietzsche maintained that

the barbarian's desire to torture his foe can be sublimated into the desire to defeat one's rival, say, in the Olympic contests; it can even be sublimated into the rivalry of the tragedians who vie with each other for the highest prize, or into the efforts of a Plato to write more beautifully than the poets – and the entire Socratic dialectic could be construed as a sublimation of the same ancient striving to overwhelm one's foe.³

As we saw in the Introduction, Kaufmann then makes the further claim that Nietzsche only promotes martial conflict “metaphorical[ly]”, that is, as a means to promoting *spiritual* struggle.⁴ The key idea running through Kaufmann's exegesis is that Nietzsche sought a *transfiguration* of destructive conflict into measured intellectual modes of opposition. In the same vein, Lawrence Hatab has defended the general claim that Nietzsche does not espouse “eliminative destruction” but rather a “creative, agonistic” form of negation “that advances *over* something without annihilating it.”⁵ This is a prime example of the so-called “soft” reading of Nietzsche on conflict, which constitutes the main target of the current chapter. Christa Davis Acampora's Nietzsche, though perhaps not as “soft” as Hatab's, is

² It is acknowledged that war may not always destroy the opponent *absolutely* insofar as it often aims at the submission rather than the obliteration of the opposed military force. Nonetheless, as an activity, it consists of a multitude of smaller scale murderous engagements (battles). Indeed, Nietzsche explicitly groups murder and war together under the heading of *Vernichtungskampf*. See e.g. CV 5 1.784-5. See also NL 1[34] 10.18: “Der Krieg als die erlaubte Form des Nachbar-Mordes.”

³ Kaufmann (1974), p.220.

⁴ Kaufmann (1974), p.386.

⁵ Lawrence Hatab, *Nietzsche's Life Sentence: Coming to Terms with Eternal Recurrence* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p.63.

nonetheless a direct descendant of Kaufmann's Nietzsche – namely, insofar as she emphasises the transformative impulse that informs Nietzsche's stance on PDC: "From early in his career Nietzsche was interested in how human capacities for and tendencies toward aggression, struggle, and resistance could be channelled, sublimated, or redirected."⁶ The objective of the following chapter is to test the robustness of this cluster of related claims. I will contend that the "soft" agonistic reading has at best limited validity, since in both the early and the later works a) we find an ontology of PDC that, in certain cases, contradicts the possibility of agonistic transformation – i.e. he describes some PDC as a *necessary* and therefore, to some extent, *immutable* feature of human existence; and b) he can, under certain conditions, be said to valorise PDC. In this way, I will be arguing that he both describes and values PDC in a way that is incompatible with the agonistic reading.

This is by no means an unexplored theme. Nietzsche's normative stance towards PDC has already been the subject of much interpretive dispute. First, the agonistic readings of Nietzsche put forward by Kaufmann and his inheritors can be understood as both a critical backlash against earlier interpretations of Nietzsche as a proto-fascistic warmonger, as well as a positive effort to bring him into the liberal democratic fold.⁷ Yet, in CV 3 – part of the same collection of unpublished essays

⁶ Christa Davis Acampora, *Contesting Nietzsche* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013), p.4.

⁷ See e.g. Lawrence Hatab, *A Nietzschean Defence of Democracy: An Experiment in Postmodern Politics* (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 1995). On the agonistic counter-argument to Fascist readings, see e.g. Keith Ansell-Pearson, who states that "The real problem with the labelling of Nietzsche as a Fascist, or worse, a Nazi, is that it ignores the fact that Nietzsche's aristocratism seeks to revive an older conception of politics, one which he locates in the Greek *agon*", see *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp.33-4. Examples of readings of Nietzsche as a bellicose thinker can be found among his critics and supporters alike, see e.g. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.693; or Alfred Bäumler, *Nietzsche, der Philosoph und Politiker* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1931), pp.63ff. and pp.172ff.; Ernst Nolte, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche* (Munich: Piper, 1963), see esp. pp.533-4. For an overview of the extent to which Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche was responsible for propagating this image of her brother, see Christian Niemeyer, entry for "Krieg", in Christian Niemeyer (ed.), *Nietzsche-Lexikon* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009), pp.186–90 (pp.188-9).

as CV 5 – Nietzsche presents us with a valorisation of war that would seem to lend at least some credibility to the interpretation of his thought as belligerently proto-fascist; furthermore, in MA, he repeatedly avows the socially beneficial effects of war; and later, in GM, in his notorious portrayal of the violent, pillaging blond beasts, he again appears to unscrupulously affirm PDC.⁸ While some cite these texts to present Nietzsche’s normative project as one brutally advocating PDC,⁹ his agonistic readers tend to disregard, if not consciously suppress, them.¹⁰

Drawing on these and other texts, I therefore propose to give a balanced reconstruction of Nietzsche’s affirmative thoughts on PDC. Aside from mediating between agonistic and militaristic (or radical aristocratic) interpretations, the original contribution of this chapter is its analysis of the different ontologies underpinning his multifarious stances towards PDC. It is worthwhile giving a brief précis of my critical exegesis. Thus, in Section 1, I focus on CV 3 in order to unpack Nietzsche’s early thoughts on PDC. I argue that he uses an amalgam of Aristotle’s notion of catharsis and Schopenhauerian metaphysics to generate an ontology of PDC according to which it is construed as the expression of an *essentially* destructive and unstoppably accreting drive or behavioural disposition. While we may be able to contain this impetus, it can neither be extinguished nor transformed – and if contained, it *demand*s raw periodic release. On these grounds, I maintain that in this early text Nietzsche presents PDC as a *metaphysical* necessity.

In Section 2, I make an inquiry into the non-metaphysical conceptions of PDC that he develops in the wake of his rejection of Schopenhauerian metaphysics. In doing so, I largely concentrate on Nietzsche’s middle period (though I also

⁸ GM I 11 5.275.

⁹ See e.g. Fredrick Appel, *Nietzsche contra Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999). Appel, speaking of Nietzsche’s “sympathetic account of [the] unleashing of murderous destruction” in GM I 11, asserts that “although the ‘blond beast’ is gone forever, Nietzsche appears intent on encouraging something like a modern analogue to his beast of prey-like ‘innocent conscience’” (p.147). Don Dombowsky draws on CV 3 to defend a militaristic vision of Nietzsche in *Nietzsche and Napoleon: The Dionysian Conspiracy* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014) (p.75), and *Nietzsche’s Machiavellian Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) (pp.89-96).

¹⁰ See e.g. Acampora (2013), who does not once refer to either CV 3 or GM I 11.

consider CV 5). I begin by outlining his rejection of metaphysics before briefly considering the model of agonal transformation that he constructs in CV 5 and MA. My reading brings into relief precisely how this model presupposes an ontology of PDC that contradicts the ontology developed in CV 3.¹¹ Despite this apparent shift to agonism, in latter half of this section, I argue that even in MA, Nietzsche vociferously praises war on account of the purely realist observation that it *stimulates* weary cultures.

In Section 3, I then turn to Nietzsche's later conception of PDC. I commence with an analysis of GM, which we will see betrays a brief reversion to the earlier cathartic model of PDC as a human necessity (though now purged of metaphysics). Nonetheless, I argue that we ought to treat this as an anomaly since, from 1881 onwards, Nietzsche's thought is rather dominated by a novel ontology of PDC. This ontology, which is informed by the scientific theory of Robert Mayer, will be seen to be perfectly compatible with Nietzsche's agonism insofar as it posits PDC as wholly transformable. I nonetheless conclude that, although Nietzsche does endorse agonism, and formulate an ontology of PDC that is coherent with this endorsement, there is sufficient counterevidence to reject the overgeneralising claim of his agonistic interpreters that Nietzsche should be read as antipathetic towards PDC.

¹¹ Unlike many of his interpreters, Nietzsche prefers the adjective "agonal" to that of "agonistic", and so in the context of his thought I will employ the former.

1.2. THE EARLY NIETZSCHE ON *VERNICHTUNGSKAMPF*

1.2.1. CATHARSIS, PURIFICATION AND DISCHARGE IN THE EARLY NIETZSCHE

In order to get a bearing on how Nietzsche's treatment of PDC can be understood in terms of catharsis, we should begin by outlining the various ways in which he conceptualises this process. The Greek noun "κάθαρσις", from which the English "catharsis" originates, is standardly glossed as "purification" or "cleansing"¹², or in German as "Reinigung".¹³ As well as signifying the quotidian act of washing oneself, it can also take on the metaphorical sense of religious purification, or the act of washing away one's sin.¹⁴ As we can see from Nietzsche's own analysis of cathartic religious rituals in his 1875 lectures on "Der Gottesdienst der Griechen" (GDG), this metaphorical use exhibits varying degrees of symbolism. Thus, it can be used to signify the literal washing of the hands before dinner prayers, or the washing of a murderer with holy water so as to cleanse them of contaminating miasma ["μίασμα"]); but it can also refer to the act of cleansing a place of worship with holy smoke ("Weihgerauch").¹⁵

There is then the medical signification of catharsis. According to Hippocratic medicine, the body is composed of four humours or fluids that must be kept in harmonious balance if the individual is to remain healthy. Catharsis refers to the process of purgation that must be undertaken should one of these humours reach

¹² See Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), entry for "κάθαρσις" (p.851).

¹³ See Wilhelm Pape, *Handwörterbuch der griechischen Sprache: Griechisch-deutsches Handwörterbuch* (Braunschweig: Vieweg & Sohn, 1914), vol.1, p.1282.

¹⁴ See Peter Thomas, "Historical-Critical Dictionary of Marxism: Catharsis", *Historical Materialism*, 17 (2009), 259-264 (p.259).

¹⁵ See GDG, KGW II/5, pp.504-11. See pp.504-14 for Nietzsche's treatment of catharsis.

a pathological excess in a particular part, or the whole, of the body.¹⁶ We might compare this to the English verb “to let” (e.g. in the sense of “bloodletting”). An excess of black bile was held to be particularly problematic, though it was believed that this could be purged through either the ingestion of a drug or the performance of certain religious rites.¹⁷

Finally, there is the aesthetic meaning, which we first find in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, and which since then has been interpreted variously. Aristotle famously, yet ambiguously, theorised that one of the main functions of tragedy was to facilitate the catharsis of spectators’ feelings of fear and pity.¹⁸ Yet the brevity of Aristotle’s remarks, both in the *Poetics* and *Politics*, ignited a lengthy and on-going philological dispute. As it concerns us, this debate can be divided between the contrary interpretations of Lessing and Bernays. The former, in his *Hamburger Dramaturgie*, argues that tragic catharsis was a process by which passions undergo moral purification (“Reinigung”) and are thereby transformed into practical virtues.¹⁹ As an example, he draws on André Dacier’s hypothesis that going through the compassionate and fearful experience of watching a tragic character’s downfall renders the possibility of our being personally struck by similar misfortunes less fearsome: since we are acquainted with the possibility of such occurrences, their fear-inspiring element of surprise is undermined and we should be able to face them with greater fortitude should they actually come to pass. Thus, the outburst of

¹⁶ See also Liddell and Scott (1940) (p.851), who give a selection of references to the relevant places in Galen’s and Hippocrates’ works where this definition is evidently in play. See also Aristotle, *Problems*, 864b12-864b27, for evidence that Aristotle was well acquainted with this medical practice.

¹⁷ See Adnan K. Abdulla, *Catharsis in Literature* (Indiana: Indiana UP, 1985), p.14. See the entire of ch.1 of Abdulla’s analysis for an excellent survey of the historical meanings of catharsis.

¹⁸ See Aristotle, *Poetics*, 49b27; see also Aristotle, *Politics*, 1341b20-1341b32 for a slightly more complete and politically relevant treatment of catharsis. All references to Aristotle are taken from Jonathan Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 2 vols (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991).

¹⁹ Gotthold Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (Stuttgart, G. J. Göschen, 1890), pt.LXXVIII (January 29, 1768), p.262.

emotion evoked by tragedy has the power to transfigure the foible of fear into the noble virtue of courage.²⁰

Jacob Bernays, however, takes issue with both the vagueness and philological inaccuracy of Lessing's exegesis. Through a close and historically contextualised reading of Aristotle, Bernays maintains that Aristotle's use of the term "catharsis" should instead be understood in relation to term's meaning within ancient Greek medicine.²¹ Bernays argues that when transferred from the medical into the psychological domain by Aristotle, the notion of catharsis nonetheless still implies the discharge ("Entladung"), but *not* transformation ("Verwandlung") or further suppression ("Zurückdrängung"), of a pathological accretion; however, now it is a case of an accretion of *affects* as opposed to humours.²² While the originality of his medical interpretation may be questionable, it was certainly influential insofar as it inaugurated the now commonplace translation of "κάθαρσις" as "Entladung".²³

There is strong evidence to suggest that Nietzsche was aware of, and adopted, Bernays' conception of catharsis. We find this in another lecture, namely, GGL, in which Nietzsche tells us that religious ceremonies could purge not just sin, but also overloaded affects. Through the performance of rhythmic music, the Greeks believed they could placate the gods by draining off their ferocity ("ferocia"); similarly, they were also of the conviction that art, by allowing a certain release, could be employed to regulate their own pathologically accreted affects ("krankhaft

²⁰ Ibid., p.261. N.B. Lessing also criticises Dacier for believing that this one example exhausted the meaning of dramatic catharsis.

²¹ Abdulla (1985) convincingly contests the originality of Bernays' medical interpretation (p.17).

²² Jacob Bernays, *Grundzüge der verlorenen Abhandlung des Aristoteles über Wirkung der Tragödie* (Breslau: E. Trewendt, 1857), p.144. Here he describes Aristotelian catharsis as "eine von Körperlichem auf Gemüthliches übertragene Bezeichnung für solche Behandlung eines Beklommenen, welche das ihn bleklemmende Element nicht zu verwandeln oder zurückzudrängen sucht, sondern es aufregen, hervortreiben und dadurch Erleichterung des Beklommenen bewirken will."

²³ On the issue of the originality of Bernays' interpretation, see fn.21. On Bernays' having established the standard translation of catharsis, see Glenn Most, "Nietzsche gegen Aristoteles mit Aristoteles", in Martin Vöhler and Dirck Linck (eds.), *Die Grenzen der Katharsis – Transformationen des aristotelischen Modells seit Bernays, Nietzsche und Freud* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), pp.51–62 (p.60).

gesteigerten Affekte”). In this way, tragedies, symposia and orgiastic cults would employ combinations of dramatic action, rhythmic music, or wine to induce a state of frenzy (“*Taumel*”) or excess (“*Übermaße*”), which would in turn enable a discharge (“*Entladung*”) of these affects, thereby restoring inner harmony and equilibrium (“*Gleichgewicht*”).²⁴ Thus, with his discussion of catharsis in terms of a raw or untransformed “*Entladung*”, and the lack of any mention of moral transformation, Nietzsche is ostensibly already operating with a Bernaysian conception of catharsis. The key features of this Bernaysian model of catharsis *qua* raw discharge can be summarised as follows:

1. An initial pathological accretion of an affect;
2. Stimulation or arousal of this affect to the point of excess;
3. The subsequent unrefined, raw discharge of this affect;
4. The final attainment of a healthy affective equilibrium.

From GT, we can also see that Nietzsche was keenly aware of the dispute between Bernays and Lessing, speaking directly of “*Jene pathologische Entladung, die Katharsis des Aristoteles, von der die Philologen nicht recht wissen, ob sie unter die medicinischen oder die moralischen Phänomene zu rechnen sei*” (GT 22 1.142). However, in contrast to the aforementioned adoption of Bernays’ exegesis in his lectures, here Nietzsche rejects *both* theories as insufficient *explanans* of the effect of tragedy. In GT 22, he describes these interpretations of tragedy as evidently *not* those of aesthetically attuned individuals. The true function of tragedy is, according to Nietzsche, its ability to grant its audience an invigorating insight into the dark, but nonetheless joyful, Dionysian nature of reality – that is, the primal unity of the world

²⁴ GGL, KGW II/5, pp.285-6: “Alle orgiastischen Culte haben den Sinn, die ferocia einer Gottheit auf Ein Mal zu entfesseln, damit sie uns nachher in Ruhe lasse [und] milde sei.” See also p.286: “Die kathart. Wirkung der Musik ist nun die, jene Entladung herbeizuführen, dadurch daß man die Seele schnell zu jenem trunkenen Übermaße führt.”

underlying individuated appearances. In EH, Nietzsche again reiterates his earlier criticism of Bernays' Aristotle, stating that people do not attend tragedies "um sich von einem gefährlichen Affekt durch dessen vehemente Entladung zu reinigen" but, rather, in order to be stimulated and to experience the pleasure of life even in the face of its strangest and most intractable problems (EH GT 3 6.312).

Notwithstanding these critical thoughts, the dynamic model of cathartic *Entladung*, as Glenn Most has demonstrated at length, recurs throughout GT.²⁵ Thus, Nietzsche claims that in spectating tragedy we can be said to satisfy our need to "entladen" our "musikalische Erregungen".²⁶ And moreover, the musical satyr chorus of early Greek tragedy – representative of the "Ureine", or noumenal world will underlying all appearance – is said to need to discharge ("entladen") itself in Apollonian images; indeed, it was this choral discharging that gave rise to the dialogue and stage action of tragedy.²⁷ As such, the full original title of GT, *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, is only explicated by Nietzsche with reference to a model of energetic economy that replicates the structure of the Bernaysian model of catharsis. What has hitherto not been observed, and we should therefore now examine, is the way in which the influence of this model extends beyond Nietzsche's early reflections on aesthetics into his socio-political thought of the same period.

²⁵ See Most (2009), pp.60-2.

²⁶ See GT 24 1.49-50: "Wir hatten unter den eigenthümlichen Kunstwirkungen der musikalischen Tragödie eine apollinische Täuschung hervorzuheben, durch die wir vor dem unmittelbaren Einssein mit der dionysischen Musik gerettet werden sollen, während unsre musikalische Erregung sich auf einem apollinischen Gebiete und an einer dazwischengeschobenen sichtbaren Mittelwelt entladen kann."

²⁷ See GT 8 1.61-2: "Nach dieser Erkenntniss haben wir die griechische Tragödie als den dionysischen Chor zu verstehen, der sich immer von neuem wieder in einer apollinischen Bilderwelt entladet. Jene Chorpartien, mit denen die Tragödie durchflochten ist, sind also gewissermaassen der Mutterschooss des ganzen sogenannten Dialogs d.h. der gesammten Bühnenwelt, des eigentlichen Dramas. In mehreren auf einander folgenden Entladungen strahlt dieser Urgrund der Tragödie jene Vision des Dramas aus [...]"

1.2.2. SCHOPENHAUER, BERNAYS AND “DER GRIECHISCHE STAAT”

One of the most explicitly political tracts from Nietzsche’s early period is CV 3. This unpublished essay was originally part of an early draft of GT (entitled “Ursprung und Ziel der Tragödie”), only to be subsequently removed.²⁸ In CV 3, Nietzsche launches a thinly veiled attack on the early Wagner’s humanist conviction that higher culture requires the freedom of the ordinarily oppressed masses, which is in turn only secured through perennial social revolution.²⁹ Another foil of CV 3 is Wagner’s later conviction that patriotic militarism is a blight for the state due to the fact that it threatens social stability.³⁰ Remarking upon the violence, slavery and war inherent to the Greek state, Nietzsche seeks to counter the rosy, Christianised picture of the Greeks presented by Winkelmann and Schiller; what is more, he launches into a serious examination of whether such violence might in fact represent a *precondition* of higher culture. During this period, Nietzsche is profoundly concerned with identifying the grounds of a “wahre Kultur” – i.e., a noble, unified and artistically productive society. He takes ancient Greece as the prototype of just such a society; conversely, he views modern Germans as the epitome of a decadent

²⁸ See KGW III/5, pp.142-55; compare NL 10[1] 7.333-49. Martin Ruehl has speculated that this was likely removed from the final draft of GT at the behest of Wagner. See Martin Ruehl, “‘Politeia’ 1871: Young Nietzsche on the Greek State”, in Paul Bishop (ed.), *Nietzsche and Antiquity: His Reaction and Response to the Classical Tradition* (Rochester: Camden House, 2004), pp.79-97 (p.83). As Niemeyer (2009) has noted, however, there is nonetheless a distinctly Wagnerian vein of anti-Semitism running through the piece (p.187). However, Ruehl’s convincing analysis refutes Niemeyer’s later claim that CV 3 “darf allerdings, da er [CV 3] dem hier gesetzten Kontext (Wagner) unterworfen scheint, nicht pars pro toto genommen werden (und kann insoweit auch nicht erweitert werden dahingehend, N. sei hinreichend als ‘K[rieg]-Philosoph’ überführt)” (ibid.).

²⁹ See Richard Wagner, *Die Kunst und Revolution* (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1850), pp.40-5. For an insightful account of how Nietzsche’s rejection of Wagner and his defection to Burckhardt played a key role in the composition of CV 3, see Ruehl (2004).

³⁰ See “Über Staat und Religion”, in Hans von Wolzogen and Richard Sternfeld (eds.), *Sämtliche Schriften und Dichtungen*, 16 vols (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1911), vol.8, pp.3-29 (p.12).

pseudo-culture.³¹ In his endeavour to discover the roots of cultural health, Nietzsche rebels against Socialist and Communist visions of the ideal social condition as one of peaceful, substantive equality. For Nietzsche, this amounts to the forfeiting of culture altogether. Indeed, in his eyes, the state (*Staat*), along with the forms of higher culture enabled by the state, are predicated on slavery, and it is through war that such slaves are procured. Culture is thus the child of violence³²; and as such, Nietzsche gorily likens “herrliche Kultur” to a “bluttriefenden Sieger [...], der bei seinem Triumphzuge die an seinen Wagen gefesselten Besiegten als Sklaven mitschleppt”.³³

But *how* does slavery enable higher culture for Nietzsche? The answer to this is that, in many respects echoing Aristotle, Nietzsche thinks that the artistic genius is only afforded the leisure time he needs to produce his grand works of art by living off the surplus produced by a base of slave-labour.³⁴ But this is not all bad for the labouring masses according to Nietzsche; now resonating with Wagner, he views the artist as dignifying, and even giving meaning to, their toilsome existence.³⁵

Once this pyramidal state, with its inegalitarian division of labour, has been formed by means of war, Nietzsche maintains that it then shields the genius from violent conflict for extended periods of time, allowing their works to attain fruition – *constant* war would constitute an impediment to cultural success. Thus, so far, his affirmation of war is limited to its role as a *matrix* for higher culture, though we should observe that cultural fecundity is clearly figured as the normative ground upon which Nietzsche’s praise of war is based.

In probing the question as to how culture and violence might in reality be complementary rather than antagonistic, Nietzsche continues the realist legacy of

³¹ See CV 3 1.764. For more on this, see ch.3, §1 of this thesis.

³² CV 3 1.767; compare GM II 17 5.324.

³³ CV 3 1.771; see also NL 1[10] 7.343.

³⁴ In Aristotle, we find the idea that freedom and higher modes of cultural praxis (particularly political praxis) are predicated on slavery. For an overview of this, see Terence Irwin, *Aristotle’s First Principles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp.411ff.

³⁵ CV 3 1.776; compare Wagner (2015), p.26.

Jacob Burckhardt (and, before him, Machiavelli³⁶). In the first part of *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (entitled “der Staat als Kunstwerk”), Burckhardt traces the way in which Renaissance states were forged through calculated and violent despotism. Drawing a causal relation between PDC and artistic excellence, he hypothesises that the violence committed by the Baglione family in fifteenth-century Perugia, where the twelve-year-old Raphael was growing up, was probably the inspiration for the painter’s masterful depictions of St. George and St. Michael.³⁷ In *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, Burckhardt is also at pains to highlight just how integral both slavery and wars of eradication were to the fabric of ancient Greek life.³⁸

As CV 3 continues, Nietzsche’s line of thought concerning war begins to evince distinct parallels with Bernays’ account of catharsis. At the same time, we witness Nietzsche developing a Schopenhauerian metaphysic to ground his belief in the inevitability of war (a belief that he in fact shared with Burckhardt and Schopenhauer alike). For reasons that will become clear, in order to fully appreciate the cathartic dynamic at play in CV 3, we need to begin by making an excursus on how Schopenhauer’s philosophy is covertly operating in the text.

³⁶ See Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. by Harvey Mansfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), ch.14 (p.59): “[the Prince] should never lift his thoughts from the exercise of war, and in peace he should exercise it more than in war.”

³⁷ Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (Wien: Phaidon, 1934), p.18; see also “Der Krieg als Kunstwerk” (pp.58-60), where Burckhardt also draws a strong connection between art and war, showing how prevalent war was as an artistic theme among the renaissance Italians. On a similar note, in *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, Burckhardt describes Delphi as “das große monumentale Museum des Hasses von Griechen gegen Griechen, mit höchster künstlerischer Verewigung des gegenseitig angetanen Herzeleids”. See Jacob Burckhardt. *Griechische Kulturgeschichte: Alle vier Bände in Einem Buch* (Berlin: Hofenberg, 2014) (vol.1, p.285).

³⁸ On slavery, see Burckhardt (2014), esp. vol.1, pp.141-58: “Es fällt uns einigermassen schwer, ein Griechenland zu denken, das neben vier bis fünf Millionen Freier zwölf Millionen Sklaven, fast lauter ungriechischer Herkunft beherbergt hätte” (vol.1, p.146); and see also vol.4, p.258: where Burckhardt describes how, in fifth-century (B.C.) Greece, “Ausmorden, Verkauf in die Sklaverei, Verwüsten aller Pflanzungen, Ödelegen und Zerstören ist an der Tagesordnung.”

The early Nietzsche follows Schopenhauer and Hobbes in positing the natural state of humans to be one of *bellum omnium contra omnes*.³⁹ But what are Schopenhauer's reasons for making this claim? In WWV, the world is said to have two aspects: that of "Wille" (or "will", in English), signifying the noumenal world in itself; and that of "Vorstellung" (or "representation", in English), signifying the phenomenal world of objects and appearance. The world as will exists as an atemporal unity, which underlies all plurality at the level of representation, and can be described as a pathos of desire occasioned by a corresponding sense of lack – it is what Schopenhauer calls a "blinder Drang" (WWV I §34, p.246). At the most abstract level of the world as representation, there is then the atemporal plurality of Platonic Ideas. These are what Schopenhauer calls the "Stufe der Objectivation des Willens", and they constitute the ideal form of every possible species of representable phenomenon (WWV I §25, p.187). But diverging from Plato, Schopenhauer describes these phenomena as striving against one another in an effort to realise their inner Idea at the level of appearances:

Beständig muß die beharrende Materie die Form wechseln, indem am Leitfaden der Kausalität, mechanische physische chemische organische Erscheinungen, sich gierig zum Hervortreten drängen, einander die Materie entreißend, da jede ihre Idee offenbaren will. Durch die gesammte Natur läßt sich dieser Streit verfolgen, ja sie besteht eben wieder nur durch ihn. (WWV I §27, p.208)⁴⁰

The phenomena in which Ideas are embodied are therefore caught in a relentless struggle according to Schopenhauer. With respect to living organisms, this is best understood as the struggle over the resources that are requisite for survival and full development. This makes destructive conflict a metaphysically necessary characteristic of existence in a number of different ways. First, the situation is one also described by Malthus and Darwin, though now given a metaphysical basis: there is a superabundance of competitors in a situation of conflict over limited resources,

³⁹ See WWV I §61, where Schopenhauer explicitly employs Hobbes' phraseology (p.432).

⁴⁰ This text is cited in PHG 5 1.826 as evidence corroborating Heraclitus' worldview.

which renders destructive contest an ineluctable fact of existence.⁴¹ The second reason is that these phenomena must also consume one another (as is evinced by any food chain).⁴² Indeed, with existence painted as a maelstrom of destructive struggle driven by an aching sense of lack, it comes as little surprise that Schopenhauer pessimistically interprets the world as marked by endless suffering.

The underlying, unitary will of Schopenhauer therefore divides itself across the plurality of its phenomenal forms, and as these consume one another, so the will consumes itself. The will is thus said to be divided against itself (“selbstentzweit”),⁴³ caught in a state of restless hunger, lack and striving.⁴⁴ As such, for Schopenhauer, the essence of the will is self-consumption⁴⁵ and self-laceration (“Selbsterfleischung”).⁴⁶ This generates a third argument in Schopenhauer for the metaphysical necessity of destructive conflict: since every appearing form is an embodiment of the will, and must therefore reproduce its inner nature, “will Jeder Alles für sich, will Alles besitzen, wenigstens beherrschen, und was sich ihm widersetzt, möchte er vernichten”.⁴⁷ We can syllogistically summarise this argument as follows:

⁴¹ See WWV I §56, p.403: “überall die mannigfaltigen Naturkräfte und organischen Formen einander die Materie streitig machen, an der sie hervortreten wollen, indem Jedes nur besitzt was es dem Andern entrissen hat, und so ein steter Kampf um Leben und Tod unterhalten wird”. See also Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on The Principle of Population* (London: J. Johnson, 1798), ch.3 and ch.8 (p.44); and Charles Darwin’s wedge metaphor in the first edition of *The Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1859), ch.3 (p.67): “In looking at Nature, it is most necessary [...] never to forget that every single organic being around us may be said to be striving to the utmost to increase in numbers; that each lives by a struggle at some period of its life; that heavy destruction inevitably falls either on the young or old, during each generation or at recurrent intervals. [...] The face of Nature may be compared to a yielding surface, with ten thousand sharp wedges packed close together and driven inwards by incessant blows, sometimes one wedge being struck, and then another with greater force.”

⁴² See WWV I §27, p.208.

⁴³ See WWV I §27, p.208 and §56, p.403.

⁴⁴ See WWV I §56, p.403: “Eben ein solches rastloses, nimmer befriedigtes Streben ist das Daseyn der Pflanze, ein unaufhörliches Treiben.”

⁴⁵ WWV I §28, p.217: “[D]er Wille an sich selber zehren muß, weil außer ihm nichts da ist und er ein hungriger Wille ist. Daher die Jagd, die Angst und das Leiden.”

⁴⁶ See e.g. WWV I §51, p.335.

⁴⁷ WWV I §61, p.431.

The Metaphysical Reflection Argument

1. The will is characterised by destructively conflictual activity;
2. Every existing individual is an instantiation of the will;
3. Therefore, every existing (human) individual is necessarily characterised by destructively conflictual activity.

Despite the necessity with which individuals reflect the characteristics of the metaphysical ground, rule of law and state institutions can, says Schopenhauer, be used to suppress such *Eris* (strife) within the sphere of human society. This is achieved by threatening, and imposing, deterrent punishment; however, says Schopenhauer,

endlich wendet sich die aus dem Innern glücklich vertriebene Eris zuletzt nach außen: als Streit der Individuen durch die Staatseinrichtung verbannt, kommt sie von außen als Krieg der Völker wieder, und fordert nun im Großen und mit einem Male, als aufgehäuften Schuld, die blutigen Opfer ein [...].⁴⁸

⁴⁸ WWV I §62, p.454. Compare Burckhardt's argument that war is practically unavoidable ("unvermeidlich"): "Es gehört mit zur Jämmerlichkeit alles Irdischen, daß schon der Einzelne zum vollen Gefühl seines Wertes nur zu gelangen glaubt, wenn er sich mit anderen vergleicht und es diesen je nach Umständen tatsächlich zu fühlen gibt. Staat, Gesetz, Religion und Sitte haben alle Hände voll zu tun, um diesen Hang des Einzelnen zu bändigen, d. h. ins Innere des Menschen zurückzudrängen. Für den Einzelnen gilt es dann als lächerlich, unerträglich, abgeschmackt, gefährlich, verbrecherisch, sich ihm offen hinzugeben.

Im großen aber, von Volk zu Volk, gilt es als zeitweise erlaubt und unvermeidlich, aus irgend welchen Vorwänden übereinander herzufallen.

[...]Ein Volk lernt wirklich seine volle Nationalkraft nur im Kriege, im vergleichenden Kampf gegen andere Völker kennen, weil sie nur dann vorhanden ist; auf diesem Punkt wird es dann suchen müssen, sie festzuhalten; eine allgemeine Vergrößerung des Maßstabes ist eingetreten. (Jacob Burckhardt, *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* [Berlin: W. Spemann, 1905], pp.162-3.)

For Burckhardt, the necessity of war is based on an empirical-psychological, rather than metaphysical, claim: it is the desire to test one's strength against another that leads so ineluctably to war. War is thereby conceived as a kind of measure or *Maßstab*. This compulsion for comparison (in many ways recalling Rousseau's notion of *amour propre*) is posited by Burckhardt as an essential quality of man, and since the only way in which it is satisfied at an international scale is through war, he avers that it is almost inevitable that communities engage in military conflict with one another. As with Schopenhauer, even if

With this tendency towards Eris necessarily cumulating like a piled-up debt (“aufgehäuften Schuld”) within collective human existence, we can already begin to see an affinity between the dynamic described by Schopenhauer at a metaphysical-social level and that described by Bernays’ Aristotle at the aesthetic-psychological level. We should now return to CV 3 in order to examine how Nietzsche brings about a more complete rapprochement of the dynamics respectively described by Bernays and Schopenhauer.

One of the notable differences between (the early) Nietzsche’s and Schopenhauer’s will-based metaphysics is the recurrent reference to discharge (“Entladung”) that is so striking in the former, though largely absent from latter. This is particularly the case in CV 3. For Nietzsche, as for Schopenhauer, the will’s essence as inner contradiction (and self-consumption) must be reflected at the level of appearances;⁴⁹ however, in CV 3, what the will ultimately strives to realise in appearance is genius, beauty and redemptive works of art. It is through these highest levels of objectification that the will can marvel at itself and attain temporary solace and redemption from its suffering.⁵⁰ Yet Nietzsche, reprising an argument that can be traced back to Hartmann, holds that beauty and cultural development are foreclosed by the natural struggle for existence (that is, the “Kampf ums Dasein”).⁵¹ These two originary tendencies by means of which the will manifests itself are, in the state of nature, incompatible – indeed, in this condition, the drive for art (“die zwingende Kraft des künstlerischen Triebes” [CV 3 1.766]) is fated to lose the battle against what Nietzsche calls the “Trieb des bellum omnium contra omnes”.

this compulsion must be granted periodic expression at an inter-community level, the state can nonetheless effectively force its suppression at an individual level.

⁴⁹ See NL 7[157] 7.199-200.

⁵⁰ CV 3 1.770-1.

⁵¹ See Federico Gerratana, “Der Wahn jenseits des Menschen: Zur frühen E. v. Hartmann-Rezeption Nietzsches (1869-1874)”, *Nietzsche-Studien*, 17 (1988), 391-433 (see esp. pp.418-21). See also NL 7[24] 7.143-4. On the notion of the *Kunsttrieb* and its roots in Häckel and Schiller, see also Gregory Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.89-96. Moore, however, misses the important Hartmann connection. Compare also WWV II §27.

For this reason, the state (*Staat*) is needed to impede or dam-up the *Kampf ums Dasein* for the sake of cultivating the will's artistic impulse and, thereby, propagating culture. Echoing both Schopenhauer (and Burckhardt), though now using the vocabulary of "Entladung", Nietzsche further suggests that the state cannot altogether inhibit the destructive structure of existence; rather,

nach der allgemein eingetretenen Staatenbildung, concentrirt sich jener Trieb des bellum omnium contra omnes von Zeit zu Zeit zum schrecklichen Kriegsgewölk der Völker und entladet sich gleichsam in seltneren, aber um so stärkeren Schlägen und Wetterstrahlen. In den Zwischenpausen aber ist der Gesellschaft doch Zeit gelassen, unter der nach innen gewendeten zusammengedrängten Wirkung jenes bellum, allerorts zu keimen und zu grünen, um, sobald es einige wärmere Tage giebt, die leuchtenden Blüten des Genius hervorsprießen zu lassen.⁵²

From this it is evident that, although the destructive "Trieb" for all-out war is depicted as irreducible, the political apparatus of the state *is* able to temporarily inhibit this proclivity, limiting it to short though severe outbursts of PDC. This ensures periods of peace and stability, during which the genius can work unhampered by the tumult of war; accordingly, this dynamic enables the flourishing of culture.⁵³ While the general *Kampf ums Dasein* is negatively valued insofar as it constitutes an impediment to culture and genius, Nietzsche positively values belligerent explosions of PDC insofar as they facilitate the ends of culture.⁵⁴

In this depiction of a dynamic involving an energetic build-up followed by a qualitatively untransformed discharge, we bear witness to Nietzsche extending the Bernaysian model of catharsis to sociological phenomena.⁵⁵ Further buttressing this reading, we find that Nietzsche expands upon this apology for war in such a way as

⁵² CV 3 1.772; see also NL 10[1] 7.344.

⁵³ See also NL 7[121] 7.169-70; cf. CV3 1.772-7.

⁵⁴ NL 1[10] 7.344: "Für diese Helena und ihre Kinder führte er jene Kriege: welcher Richter dürfte hier verurtheilen?"

⁵⁵ Though Nietzsche, unlike Bernays, employs this dynamic to explain the dynamic of certain "Triebe" rather than "Affekte", the difference in this case appears to be minimal, as they both refer to particular behavioural tendencies, the latter merely placing emphasis on the emotional disposition underlying these tendencies.

to both bring more clearly into relief the influence of Bernays, and give the Schopenhauerian metaphysical speculation some empirical basis. Nietzsche specifically adds that the political drives (“Triebe”) were the means developed by the Greeks to suppress the drive for all-out war, but these eventually became overdeveloped or overloaded (“überladen”). Such an excess of political activity had the adverse effect of hindering cultural development and fomenting violent political rivalries, culminating in revolution and war.⁵⁶ Going beyond Aristotle (and Schopenhauer), Nietzsche therefore suggests that pathological accretion occurs in the very drives contrived to inhibit destructive conflict (i.e. the political drives). War ensues as a result, and the destructive energies accreted in the will are released or discharged in a quantitatively more condensed, but qualitatively *untransformed*, manner (in accordance with Bernays’, rather than Lessings’, account of catharsis). Nietzsche states that these violent releases illuminate how “der Wille von Zeit zu Zeit solche Selbstzerfleischungen als ein Ventil gebraucht, auch hierin seiner entsetzlichen Natur getreu.”⁵⁷ Insofar as Nietzsche claims that these releases are required by the will in order for it to remain faithful (“getreu”) to its nature, it is clear that he is positing the “metaphysical reflection” argument as the necessary ground of this cathartic process. According to this ontology of PDC then, war is postulated as an obligatory lesser evil (the greater being a perpetual, pre-social form of total war). The argument advanced for the necessity of destructive conflict within this vision of (social) existence can therefore be articulated as follows:

⁵⁶ CV 3 1.771. We may think of Burckhardt’s (2014) criticism of fifth-century (B.C.) Athens (vol.4, esp. pp.535-39).

⁵⁷ See e.g. NL 7 [121]7.170; 7[169] 7.205; 7[122] 7.175; 7[64] 7.153; see also GT 22 1.141; GT 4 1.39.

The Bernaysian Catharsis Argument

1. All humans are necessarily characterised by an irreducible drive for physically destructive conflict (as demonstrated by the metaphysical reflection argument);
2. This drive can either be expressed continuously or in short concentrated bursts;
3. Humans organised into a *Staat* impede destructive conflict;
4. Therefore, humans organised into a *Staat* are necessarily characterised by an irreducible drive for physically destructive conflict that is expressed in short bursts.

Nietzsche's reasons for affirming PDC are now far more transparent: by discharging the drive for PDC in short outbursts of war, the now regulated ("reguliert") – i.e. moderated and rehabilitated – political drives can be directed towards the generation of genius "mit neuer und überraschender Kraft".⁵⁸ Nietzsche therefore concludes that "in diesem Sinne ist das schreckliche Schauspiel der sich zerreißen den Parteien etwas Verehrungswürdiges."

In describing this dynamic as one that generates an end-state of healthy equilibrium (i.e. between the political, destructive and artistic drives) all four of the aforementioned criteria required to label a given energetic economy "cathartic" (in Bernays' sense) have been fulfilled: there is an initial condition of pathological accretion, followed by a process of active stimulation and raw discharge, which culminates in the reattainment of a healthy state of equilibrium. Yet two questions now present themselves: what happens to Nietzsche's position regarding destructive conflict when a) he definitively repudiates the quasi-Schopenhauerian metaphysical world-view upon which the Bernaysian catharsis argument is grounded?; and b) he embarks on a project calling for the *transformation* of destructive into productive

⁵⁸ NL 7[121] 7.169-70: "Wenigstens pflegt der durch solche Ereignisse regulirte politische Trieb mit neuer und überraschender Kraft an der Vorbereitung der Geburt des Genius zu arbeiten."

conflict? In the following two sections, I will endeavour to show how these two developments in Nietzsche's thought problematize the cathartic model we have seen him formulate in CV 3.

1.3. *VERNICHTUNGSKAMPF* AFTER METAPHYSICS

As we have just seen, the Bernaysian catharsis argument is decisively grounded in the Schopenhauerian metaphysical reflection argument. But Nietzsche famously came to reject such metaphysical presuppositions; indeed, he had already adumbrated a damning critique of Schopenhauer in 1868, though this was shelved until the composition of MA. In this text, "Zu Schopenhauer", Nietzsche states that "das eine Wort 'Wille' sammt seinen Prädikaten" is a "schwergemünztes, viel umschließendes Wort".⁵⁹ Although the world-will is supposed to exist in total isolation from the realm of objectivity, and therefore cannot even be conceived of as an object of knowledge, Nietzsche claims that, within Schopenhauer's metaphysics, "die sämtlichen Prädikate des Willens von der Erscheinungswelt geborgt sind."⁶⁰ In terms of the published works, in the first part of MA, Nietzsche deepens his criticism of Schopenhauer's *Weltanschauung* and commends the "strengere Logiker, nachdem sie den Begriff des Metaphysischen scharf als den des Unbedingten, folglich auch Unbedingenden festgestellt hatten, jeden Zusammenhang zwischen dem Unbedingten (der metaphysischen Welt) und der uns bekannten Welt in Abrede gestellt" (MA 16).⁶¹

Nietzsche therefore reveals himself to be in favour of at least a return to the negative conception of the thing in itself as an "unfaßbares X", à la Kant, if not the

⁵⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, "Zu Schopenhauer", KGW I/4, pp.417-26 (§1, p.419).

⁶⁰ Ibid., §3 (p.424).

⁶¹ See also MA 9, 13, 15, 17, 21.

complete abandonment of philosophical inquiry into the existence and essence of things in themselves (a position to which he would later wholeheartedly commit⁶²). These lines of reasoning preclude the possibility that predicates such as “self-consuming” and “self-lacerating” could be assigned to the world in itself (that is, to the will); indeed, it renders untenable the notion of there being any relation of reflection between the world in itself and the world of objectivity. With the failure of the metaphysical reflection argument, the Bernaysian catharsis argument of CV 3 likewise falls – the reason for this being that the former is a foundational premise of the latter. By this logic, an unstoppably accumulating drive for PDC can no longer be metaphysically grounded. So, while Nietzsche does not directly take issue with the argument for the necessity of PDC that he presents in CV 3, we can see that with his apostasy from Schopenhauer (and metaphysics in general), it becomes simply unsustainable. It is perhaps unsurprising then that alongside his renunciation of Schopenhauerian metaphysics, Nietzsche begins to formulate alternative stances towards PDC, and it is to these that we should now turn our inquiry.

1.3.1. THE PROJECT OF AGONAL TRANSFORMATION: A SKETCH

One of the notable ways in which Nietzsche departs from the ideas of CV 3 is in his development of an agonal conception of PDC. Although I undertake a full analysis of Nietzsche’s conception of the agon in Chapter 3, it behoves us to briefly foreground the principal ways in which his agonism is at odds with the cathartic model of CV 3. It is in CV 5 that we discover the clearest delineation of this divergent conception of PDC, even though the essay was written in the same year as CV 3 (1872), and belongs to the same collection of unpublished essays. First off, in this text, Nietzsche is unequivocally critical of even short outbursts of PDC. Thus, he appears to concur with Hesiod’s indictment of the Eris goddess responsible for

⁶² See e.g. GD Fabel 6.80-1.

“Vernichtungskampf” (i.e. “den schlimmen Krieg und Hader”).⁶³ Nietzsche censures PDC on account of its being antithetical to the productive, agonal conflict, symbolised by the “gute Eris”. It was this latter type of conflict that lay at the foundation of much of ancient Greek culture, and which characterised the contests fought among poets, politicians, musicians, athletes and dramatists (among many others). Nietzsche therefore implicitly calls for the *transformation* of *Vernichtungskämpfe* into these measured forms of contest; namely, insofar as he both tracks and exalts the way Greek (agonal) culture grew *out of* the condition of *Vernichtungskampf* that dominated Greece prior to Homer.⁶⁴

In CV 5, the figure of the genius (“Genius”) (particularly Homer) is portrayed as the instigator of this shift. He *acknowledges* the terrible impulse for war (the “so furchtbar vorhandenen Trieb”), and instead of falling into pessimistic resignation at the thought of its existence, asks: “was will ein Leben des Kampfes und des Sieges?” The answer to this, in CV 5 and MA at any rate, is that the drive (“Trieb”) achieving satisfaction in PDC is one fundamentally seeking contest and victory. Nietzsche no longer posits an essentially destructive “Trieb des bellum omnium contra omnes”. The drive at the root of PDC can, according to this account, be satisfied through an institution such as the agon, which grants people just such opportunities for contest and victory, though now through non-violent modes of conflict. By illuminating the potential for such transformation, the (poetic) genius can initiate the move away from PDC and towards agonal culture: “Der Dichter erzieht: die tigerartigen Zerfleischungstriebe der Griechen weiß er zu übertragen in

⁶³ CV 5 1.786.

⁶⁴ See CV 5 1.785: “[W]ie sich in Wahrheit vom Morde und der Mordsühne aus der Begriff des griechischen Rechtes entwickelt hat, so nimmt auch die edlere Kultur ihren ersten Siegeskranz vom Altar der Mordsühne.” However, see also NL 16[26] 7.403, where Nietzsche still seems to be operating within a Schopenhauerian metaphysic: “1. Problem: wie wird der Wille, der furchtbare, gereinigt und geläutert, d. h. umgesetzt und in edlere Triebe verwandelt? Durch eine Veränderung der Vorstellungswelt, durch die große Ferne seines Zieles, so daß er sich im übermäßigen Ausspannen veredeln muß. Einfluß der Kunst auf die Reinigung des Willens. Der Wettkampf entsteht aus dem Kriege? Als ein künstlerisches Spiel und Nachahmung?”

die gute Eris. [...] Die Gymnastik der idealisirte Krieg.” (NL 16[15] 7.398). In WS 226, this picture is painted with greater clarity:

Da das Siegen- und Hervorragewollen ein unüberwindlicher Zug der Natur ist, älter und ursprünglicher, als alle Achtung und Freude der Gleichstellung, so hatte der griechische Staat den gymnastischen und musischen Wettkampf innerhalb der Gleichen sanctionirt, also einen Tummelplatz abgegränzt, wo jener Trieb sich entladen konnte, ohne die politische Ordnung in Gefahr zu bringen. Mit dem endlichen Verfall des gymnastischen und musischen Wettkampfes gerieth der griechische Staat in innere Unruhe und Auflösung.

It is the drive for victory (“Siegen”) and pre-eminence (“Hervorragewollen”), rather than all-out *bellum*, that is now figured as an immutable natural impetus (“unüberwindlicher Zug der Natur”). We can see from the vocabulary of *Entladung* that Nietzsche still conceives of this process in terms of cathartic discharge; and to be sure, during this period, he still views catharsis as fundamental to ancient Greek culture: “Die Nothwendigkeit der Entladung, der κάθαρσις, ein Grundgesetz des griechischen Wesens. Ansammlung und Entladung in gewaltsamen, zeitlich getrennten Stößen” (NL 5[147] 8.79). In this note, we bear witness to the same dynamic of accumulation and discharge, yet, understood in the context of WS 226, we can assume that Nietzsche is not referring to the discharge of a drive toward PDC, but a drive for ascendancy. Of course, this drive *can* express itself destructively if it is not channelled into, and contained within, the correct social practices (such as the agon, for example). This also sheds light on VM 220, where Nietzsche attributes the cultural success of the Greeks to the fact that

Sie leugnen den Naturtrieb, der in den schlimmen Eigenschaften sich ausdrückt, nicht ab, sondern ordnen ihn ein und beschränken ihn auf bestimmte Culte und Tage, nachdem sie genug Vorsichtsmaassregeln erfunden haben, um jenen wilden Gewässern einen möglichst unschädlichen Abfluss geben zu können.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ VM 220; See also NL 5[146-7] 8.77-9.

Reading this alongside WS 226, one way we might conceive of this *Naturtrieb* is as the aforementioned desire for ascendancy. Again, this drive demands expression, and so some form of cathartic model is certainly still at play (N.B. the hydraulic figurative language in the above quote); however, this drive is no longer conceived as intrinsically destructive or even harmful (i.e. *schlimm*) in nature – indeed, with the aid of the state, it can now be safely channelled away from its murderous behavioural component.

CV 5 and the cited texts from the late 1870s all imply that PDC is neither metaphysically nor psychologically necessary (i.e. immutable); it is rather the expression of some polymorphous desire for combat, victory and overcoming (in many ways, as we shall see, prefiguring the notion of *Wille zur Macht*). Certainly, from CV 5 onwards, this idea of transfiguring destructive conflictual relations into those of a more productively conflictual character represents an enduring theme in Nietzsche's writings.⁶⁶ As should now be clear, however, this transformative model is contradicted by the cathartic account of PDC presented in CV 3. The reason for this is that these early and middle period texts are incompatible with the idea that destructive conflict is a metaphysically or psychologically necessary feature of human existence. From this perspective, the choice that CV 3 presented us with between perpetual and episodic war appears to be a false dichotomy.

Before moving on, we should consider one objection to the incompatibility that I have purported exists between the cathartic and transformational models of PDC. Thus, one might counter that the situation is akin to that which Freud describes in his account of the psychological limitations of sexual sublimation:

Ins Unbegrenzte fortzusetzen ist dieser Verschiebungsprozeß [d. h. Sublimation] aber sicherlich nicht, so wenig wie die Umsetzung der Wärme in mechanische Arbeit bei unseren Maschinen. Ein gewisses Maß direkter sexueller Befriedigung scheint für die allermeisten Organisationen unerlässlich, und die Versagung dieses individuell

⁶⁶ This is also true of the later works, with respect to both physical *and* non-physical forms of destructive conflict. On physical conflict, see NL 7[161] 10.295; on non-physical conflict, see GD Moral 2-3 and EH Weise 7.

variablen Maßes straft sich durch Erscheinungen, die wir infolge ihrer Funktionsschädlichkeit und ihres subjektiven Unlustcharakters zum Kranksein rechnen müssen.⁶⁷

Perhaps PDC, like sexual energy in Freud's picture of psychic economy, can be transformed *up to a point*, which always leaves an untransformable remainder resilient to sublimation. Maybe Nietzsche thinks that, rather than being wholly untransformable, our predilection for PDC is rather defined by a limit at which point individuals are compelled to engage in war insofar sublimational institutions such as the agon have become ineffective. However, the first problem with this attempt at a rapprochement of the cathartic and transformational models of PDC is that it lacks textual support. The only evidence for such an interpretation is in CV 3. In this text, we saw that “unter der nach innen gewendeten zusammengedrängten Wirkung jenes bellum”, the *Gesellschaft* is able “allerorts zu keimen und zu grünen”; however, this does not suggest a significant amount of transformation or canalisation of the accumulated destructive energies (if any). It merely implies, in a rather ambiguous manner, that they can be *used* while they are accumulating. But even if we assent to this charitable interpretive strategy, this is still not enough to rescue the agonistic reading of Nietzsche, since even this approach must still affirm the presence of an ever-mounting quantity of PDC, which is beyond our transformative efforts, and whose raw discharge must be sanctioned as a prerequisite of social health. The reading of Nietzsche as a general advocate agonism (à la Kaufmann, Hatab or Acampora), would nonetheless be vitiated. But CV 3 is not the only problem for agonistic readings. As I will now endeavour to show, in MA itself, we find that this line of interpretation is unable to account for further counterevidence.

⁶⁷ Sigmund Freud, “Die kulturelle Sexualmoral und die moderne Nervosität”, in *Gesammelte Werke*, 17 vols ([London: Imago, 1940-1952] and [Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1966]), vol.7, pp.143-67.

1.3.2. NIETZSCHE'S REALISM: WAR AS A CULTURAL STIMULANT

Even in MA, Nietzsche is not wholly committed to the project of agonal transformation. He also presents us with a realist account of the benefits of PDC – one that is purged of the metaphysical underpinnings of CV 3. But these realist reflections diverge from CV 3 in another important way. PDC is now praised insofar as it *energises* a community – that is, not insofar as it enables the *discharge* of energy, as in CV 3. This idea is clearly prefigured in Burckhardt's *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*. Indeed, it is worthwhile sketching Burckhardt's position in this text since this will grant us a richer understanding of Nietzsche's own argumentation. Burckhardt quotes Lasaulx's claim that for an old culture, which “nicht mehr eine gewisse Masse unverbrauchter Naturkräfte in sich trägt, aus denen es sich erfrischen und verjüngen kann”, being invaded by a younger, “kulturfähig” people can, in the long term, have a rejuvenating effect. As an example, Burckhardt cites the Teutonic invasion of the exhausted late Roman Empire. He nevertheless stipulates that, unqualified, this is a naively optimistic claim, and that suffering colonisation is by no means a guaranteed cultural boon; for example, the Mongols, argues Burckhardt, tended to have a merely detrimental effect on the cultures that they conquered.⁶⁸ Notwithstanding, he maintains that suffering defeat in a war of colonisation represents a “notwendiges Moment höherer Entwicklung” for a people.

Though passively suffering defeat in war is in this way praised by Burckhardt, he reserves his most laudatory words for the *active* pursuit of warfare – in particular on account of its enlivening, ordering, disciplining effects. On the one hand, according to Burckhardt, war has this beneficial effect due to the fact that it

⁶⁸ Jacob Burckhardt (1905), p.161; See also Egon Flaig, “Kultur und Krieg. Antihumanismus bei Jacob Burckhardt und Friedrich Nietzsche”, in Richard Faber (ed.), *Streit um den Humanismus* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2003), pp.137-56 (esp. pp.145-7).

both fosters the cultivation of heroic virtues and counteracts the cowardly foibles individuals develop during times of peace:

[D]ie Kriege reinigten die Atmosphäre wie Gewitterstürme, stärkten die Nerven, erschütterten die Gemüter, stellten die heroischen Tugenden her, auf welche ursprünglich die Staaten gegründet gewesen, gegenüber Entnervung, Falschheit und Feigheit.⁶⁹

Compounding this, however, war also forces a society to order itself in what Burckhardt holds to be a vastly more economic manner:

[D]er Krieg, welcher so viel wie Unterordnung alles Lebens und Besitzes unter einen momentanen Zweck ist, [hat] eine enorme sittliche Superiorität über den bloßen gewaltsamen Egoismus des Einzelnen; er entwickelt die Kräfte im Dienst eines Allgemeinen und zwar des höchsten Allgemeinen und innerhalb einer Disziplin, welche zugleich die höchste heroische Tugend sich entfalten läßt [...].

Und da ferner nur wirkliche Macht einen längeren Frieden und Sicherheit garantieren kann, der Krieg aber die wirkliche Macht konstatiert, so liegt in einem solchen Krieg der künftige Friede.⁷⁰

Preparation for war unifies a social body by dint of the fact that individuals are forced to fight as one in order to overcome an external threat to their collective existence. In times of peace, Burckhardt argues, people become dissatisfied with structural social inequalities. The consequent demand for rights generates unrest and disunity, which in turn effects a general weakening of the social whole. By contrast, in times of war, all willingly submit to hierarchical organisation because all know this to be the most effective stratagem – it is in this way that Burckhardt thinks that egoism is overcome by the brute desire to prevail in the face of potential extermination.⁷¹ War mobilises a society, transforming it into a potently well-oiled war-machine.⁷²

⁶⁹ Burckhardt (1905), p.164.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ However, as we shall see in the following chapter, in his *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, Burckhardt is more sceptical regarding the cultural benefits of war (as compared with those of the agon).

⁷² Compare FW 283.

Large-scale PDC is thus conceived by Burckhardt as an instance of cultural *crisis*. Recalling Kuhn's depiction of scientific crises, which give rise to new scientific paradigms better able to structure a given discipline of knowledge, Burckhardt conceives of martial crises as the stimulant needed to reestablish social coherence. He adds, however, that modern wars do not qualify as crises on account of their being too small and temporary to touch upon the quotidian existence of European citizens; accordingly, such conflicts do not bless Europeans with the beneficial effects associated with "crisis" wars. Burckhardt presciently warns us that modern wars therefore merely postpone the coming "Hauptkrisis". However, we should note that he also views it as perfectly possible for cultures to be simply eradicated by such crises without enjoying any of the aforementioned regenerative effects.⁷³

But how does Nietzsche reprise and develop these themes? If we look at MA, we can see that he adopts Burckhardt's commendation of war in almost all of its essentials. In MA 444, for example, he venerates war insofar as it "barbarisirt [...] und macht dadurch natürlicher; er ist für die Cultur Schlaf oder Winterszeit, der Mensch kommt kräftiger zum Guten und Bösen aus ihm heraus." Like Burckhardt, Nietzsche thus maintains that even defeat can be beneficial insofar as it acts as a rejuvenating form of cultural hibernation. Taken on its own, this laconic affirmation of war is not particularly cogent. However, drawing on our analysis of Burckhardt, we can now infer the implicit rationale informing Nietzsche's provocative assertions: suffering defeat in war can clear away the dross that encumbers a decadent culture, and though potentially devastating in the short term, can, in the long-term, reenergise that culture by fertilising it with new cultural influences.

But what about the advantages of *actively* engaging in war? While Nietzsche gestures towards these in MA 444, it is in MA 477 (entitled "der Krieg unentbehrlich") that he properly elucidates his position. Moreover, in this aphorism we also witness him dramatically altering his stance with respect to the necessity of

⁷³ Burckhardt (1905), p.164.

PDC (*qua* war). Now such conflict is no longer conceived as *releasing* accrued energy, but rather *creating* or *augmenting* it. Thus, we know of no other means, he argues,

wodurch mattwerdenden Völkern jene rauhe Energie des Feldlagers, jener tiefe unpersönliche Hass, jene Mörder-Kaltblütigkeit mit gutem Gewissen, jene gemeinsame organisierende Gluth in der Vernichtung des Feindes, [...] ebenso stark und sicher mitgetheilt werden könnte, wie diess jeder grosse Krieg thut.

Insofar as it goads individuals into action, war is extolled as a wellspring of socially beneficial energy. Like Burckhardt, Nietzsche maintains that by actively participating in war, a people can foster the amoral warrior virtues (such as a brave and brutal strain of sangfroid) upon which a vibrant culture is founded.⁷⁴ Similarly, in MA 235, Nietzsche posits conditions of social violence as a prerequisite of cultivating genius – it gives them “ihr Feuer, ihre Wärme”. Peace, on the other hand, is conceived as the womb of cultural weakness and mediocrity; hence, asks Nietzsche, “[m]üsste man somit nicht wünschen, dass das Leben seinen gewaltsamen Charakter behalte und dass immer von Neuem wieder wilde Kräfte und Energien hervorgerufen werden?” Again, the criterion of evaluation underlying these aphorisms is that of cultural flourishing, and it is therefore unsurprising that war is described as particularly indispensable for later, more developed societies. Without war, such societies become weary (*matt*), as is evident in modern Europe, according to Nietzsche; echoing Burckhardt’s esteem of crisis, Nietzsche prescribes modern Europe “der grössten und furchtbarsten Kriege” (MA 477).⁷⁵ Whether or not

⁷⁴ MA 477: “Die Cultur kann die Leidenschaften, Laster und Bosheiten durchaus nicht entbehren.” See also Z I Kriegsmänner 4.59, where Nietzsche contrasts the warrior virtue of courage with the Christian virtue of neighbourly love: “Der Krieg und der Muth haben mehr grosse Dinge gethan, als die Nächstenliebe. Nicht euer Mitleiden, sondern eure Tapferkeit rettete bisher die Verunglückten.” See also MA 444.

⁷⁵ In the critical literature, this aspect of Nietzsche’s approach to PDC is perhaps best appreciated by the radically anti-foundationalist Georges Bataille, who is less interested in the underlying naturalistic or metaphysical grounds of violent conflict so much as its valuable iconoclastic effects. For Nietzsche, says Bataille, war *energises* a culture by exploding suffocating social and moral orders: “ces catastrophes lui semblèrent préférables à la

we assent to Nietzsche's (or Burckhardt's) suppositions, it can at least be stated that, now in Nietzsche's middle period, we have once again denuded various justifications of PDC that are profoundly at odds with the agonistic reading.

Before moving on to Nietzsche later writings, it is worth noting that these ideas from the middle period are aligned with current empirical research, which tends to contest hydraulic drive theories of aggression. These theories – typified by Freud and Lorenz – represent inherently violent, destructive energies not only as intrinsic to human nature, but as psychologically accruing like mounting steam pressure in sealed vessel.⁷⁶ According to this them, actively engaging in or watching violent activity ventilates this pressure and returns the individual to a healthy mean. The weight of psychological research, however, counters this thesis. Indeed, empirical studies indicate that neither watching nor participating in violent activity have a cathartic effect. On the contrary, to borrow Plato's phraseology, the empirical evidence supports the idea that such activity “feeds and waters the passions”, rather

stagnation, au mensonge de la vie bourgeoise, de la béatitude des professeurs de morale reçue.” Georges Bataille, “Nietzsche et le national-socialisme” (1937), in *Œuvres Complètes*, 18 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), vol.6, pp.185-8 (p.185). What should also be remarked about Bataille's reading of Nietzsche as pro-war is that it is not only at odds with agonistic interpretations, but is also distinctly opposed to readings of Nietzsche as promoting a murderous proto-fascistic aristocracy resembling that of the blond beasts. In Bataille's words: “il est vain de lui [Nietzsche] prêter quelque intention mesurable en termes de politique électorale, en arguant qu'il parla de 'maîtres du monde'. Il s'agit de sa part d'une évocation hasardée du possible. Cet homme souverain dont il désirait l'éclat, il l'imagina contradictoirement tantôt riche et tantôt plus pauvre qu'un ouvrier, tantôt puissant, tantôt traqué. Il exigea de lui la vertu de tout supporter comme il lui reconnut le droit de transgresser les normes. D'ailleurs, il le distinguait en principe de l'homme au pouvoir. Il ne limitait rien, se bornait à décrire aussi librement qu'il pouvait un champ de possibilités” (ibid., p.186). In contrast to Appel, then, Bataille reads Nietzsche as presenting the “master race” as just one potential ideal in a field of contradictory future possibilities. According to Bataille, it is Nietzsche's self-appointed task to keep this field of potentiality radically open. We must therefore acknowledge a significant third position in the debate over Nietzsche's normative stance towards physically destructive conflict, one that cannot be reduced to the dichotomy between, on the one hand, agonistic and, on the other, murderous or militaristic, aristocratic readings. For more on Bataille's anti-fascistic reading of Nietzsche, see “Nietzsche et les Fascistes” in *Œuvres Complètes*, 18 vols (Paris, Gallimard, 1973), vol.1 (esp. pp.452-3).

⁷⁶ See e.g. Sigmund Freud, “Das Unbehagen in der Kultur”, in *Gesammelte Werke*, 17 vols ([London: Imago, 1940-1952] and [Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1966]), vol.14, pp.419-506. See also Konrad Lorenz, *Das Sogenannten Böse: Zur Naturgeschichte der Aggression* (München: Deutschen Taschenbuch Verlag, 1998).

than giving vent to them.⁷⁷ Engaging in, or watching, violent behaviour *increases* the chance of further violent behaviour rather than allaying violent inclinations.⁷⁸ Furthermore, while humans seem to have certain instincts that make them prone to aggressive modes of behaviour, the bulk of violence research suggests that homicidal behaviour is *learnt*, and therefore in no way compelled by a “natural”, let alone unstoppably accreting, drive.⁷⁹

Nietzsche’s position in MA 477 nevertheless goes beyond these theories in two important ways: first, for Nietzsche, engaging in violence does not just further stimulate propensities for such behaviour, but also stimulates the individual and society in a more general manner. Second, and directly following from this, unlike these contemporary critiques of catharsis theory, Nietzsche sees the stimulation resulting from certain forms of violent behaviour as a *desideratum*. Nevertheless, even in MA 477, Nietzsche is not entirely affirmative of the energising effects of war. He warns that the flood of energy that bursts forth with warfare can in fact devastate tender, under-developed cultures.⁸⁰ As such, in MA, not only has Nietzsche evidently abandoned Schopenhauerian metaphysics in reconceptualising PDC, but his affirmative normative stance has also become generally more nuanced as compared with CV 3: war is no longer posited as a metaphysical necessity, but

⁷⁷ See Plato, *Republic*, trans. by G. M. A. Grube and C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), 606c-e. Plato, it should be noted, is specifically referring to the effects of poetry.

⁷⁸ For a comprehensive survey of the current literature on cathartic theories of aggression, see R. Baumeister and B. Bushman, “Emotions and Aggressiveness”, in Wilhelm Heitmeyer and John Hagan (eds.), *International Handbook of Violence Research* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2007), pp.479-494 (esp. pp.485-7).

⁷⁹ J. Kivivuori, J. Savolainen and P. Danielsson, “Theory and Explanation in European Homicide Research”, in Marieke C. A. Liem and William Alex Pridemore (eds.), *Handbook of European Homicide Research: Patterns, Explanations and Country Studies* (New York: Springer, 2011), pp.95-110 (see esp. pp.105-9).

⁸⁰ See MA 477, where Nietzsche talks of the “hervorbrechenden Bächen und Strömen” caused by war, “welche freilich Steine und Unrath aller Art mit sich wälzen und die Wiesen zarter Culturen zu Grunde richten”. Indeed, we also uncover staunchly negative appraisals of PDC (especially war) before, during and after the middle period. For the early period see e.g. GT 15 1.100 or UB I 1.160; for the middle period, see e.g. MA 480, VM 320 and WS 284; for the late period, see e.g. AC 48; NL 9[126] 12.410; 14[182] 13.369; 15[38] 13.438. For further references, see Niemeyer (2009).

rather as an instrumental requirement for social vitality, *in some cases*. Yet, if a culture is to survive in the long-run, recurrent military conflict is indispensable. There can be no Kantian “perpetual peace”, only a constant oscillation between the contented stability of peace and the rousing fervour of war. We should now ask whether the same can be said in the context of Nietzsche’s later writings.

1.4. THE LATER NIETZSCHE ON *VERNICHTUNGSKAMPF*

I will now argue that Nietzsche’s later thoughts on PDC can be divided into two distinct subsets. The first regresses to the cathartic model developed in CV 3, while the second explicitly develops the ontology presupposed by the agonal transformative project. I will now analyse these consecutively in an effort to show that while the later Nietzsche may open up an ontological space of possibility for agonal transformation, he nonetheless both conceptualises and valorises PDC in a manner that is incompatible with the agonistic reading.

1.4.1. GM, “EIGENTLICHE AKTIVITÄT” AND THE RETURN TO CATHARSIS

On the basis of GM I 11, Frederick Appel has asserted that an unrefined, raw discharge of physically destructive energy was considered imperative by the later Nietzsche.⁸¹ And certainly, there is a case to be made that the Bernaysian catharsis argument has made a resurgence in GM, particularly in the sketch Nietzsche makes of the noble “blonde Bestien”. Resonating with other aphorisms such as JGB 259, in GM I 11, Nietzsche paints an idealised picture of a community of aristocrats who

⁸¹ See fn.9.

live in a strict form of society based on mutual restraint. Despite this reciprocal moderation, however, these same nobles are said to struggle in an apparently unrestrained manner to exploit, dominate and incorporate those who live beyond the bounds of their rigorous social order. And to be sure, this lack of restraint often manifests itself as PDC. Thus, in their relation to outsiders, the blond beasts enjoy

die Freiheit von allem socialen Zwang, sie halten sich in der Wildniss schadlos für die Spannung, welche eine lange Einschliessung und Einfriedigung in den Frieden der Gemeinschaft giebt, sie treten in die Unschuld des Raubthier-Gewissens zurück, als frohlockende Ungeheuer, welche vielleicht von einer scheusslichen Abfolge von Mord, Niederbrennung, Schändung, Folterung mit einem Übermuth und seelischen Gleichgewichte davongehen [...]. Auf dem Grunde aller dieser vornehmen Rassen ist das Raubthier, die prachtvolle nach Beute und Sieg lüstern schweifende blonde Bestie nicht zu verkennen; *es bedarf für diesen verborgenen Grund von Zeit zu Zeit der Entladung, das Thier muss wieder heraus, muss wieder in die Wildniss zurück [...].* (GM I 11 5.275; my italics)

We have, again echoing the Bernaysian catharsis argument, a potentially pathological build-up and a subsequent need for periodic, unrefined discharge, which takes the form of a physical *Vernichtungskampf* (against those considered foreign).⁸² What is also implied in this depiction is the idea that such outbursts reinstate a condition of healthy equilibrium. These immoderate eruptions are affirmed by Nietzsche as innocent, irrepressible expressions of strength. Indeed, only two sections later, he compares these violent discharges to the innocent necessity with which an eagle kills the lambs it needs to survive, or with which a lightning bolt flashes.⁸³ Just as the lightning bolt simply *is* the flash, the nobles simply *are* these callous forms of activity, possessing no substantial self, let alone a libertarian free will, by dint of which they could be held morally accountable. The

⁸² On the potentially pathological consequences of over-accumulation, see GM II 11 5.312, where, in the case of the ascetic, this destructive impetus eventually releases internally due to a lack of external outlets. Compare also JGB 76.

⁸³ See GM I 13 5.278-9.

destructive urges of the nobles therefore cannot and should not be kept in a state of perpetual restraint (“das Thier muss wieder heraus”).

But on what grounds is this necessity posited? In GM, what we see is that the essentially destructive metaphysical will, which necessitated PDC in CV 3, has been replaced by an immanent account of *life* (“Leben”) as necessarily destructive. Nietzsche asserts that life “nämlich in seinen Grundfunktionen verletzend, vergewaltigend, ausbeutend, *vernichtend* fungirt und gar nicht gedacht werden kann ohne diesen Charakter” (GM II 11 5.312; my italics). This can also be taken as one way in which Nietzsche conceives of life as “will to power” – namely, as a brutal, eruptive and destructive struggle for assimilation, growth and expansion. What motivates this peculiar description of life is Nietzsche’s desire to reveal how, although exploitation and destructive conflict may be *locally* inhibited (through the imposition of law e.g.), this is only ever as a means to forming greater unities of power (*Macht-Einheiten*), better able to brutally struggle against *other* opposed entities.⁸⁴ As such, these fundamental biological processes (or *Grundfunktionen*) can only ever be *displaced* (but never wholly negated).⁸⁵ To pursue their universal suppression, as Nietzsche believes Christianity is guilty of doing, is to pursue an actively hostile relation to life.⁸⁶ Humans are therefore naturally (i.e. psychologically and physiologically) bound to engage in PDC since they cannot but embody these *Grundfunktionen* – expressing them as individuals, social groups or even ascetically against themselves.

The Bernaysian catharsis model was found to be conditioned by the existence of some distinctly destructive energy that irrevocably accretes. In GM,

⁸⁴ Compare AC 58 6.245-7.

⁸⁵ See GM II 12 5.312: “Rechtszustände immer nur Ausnahme-Zustände sein dürfen, als theilweise Restriktionen des eigentlichen Lebenswillens, der auf Macht aus ist, und sich dessen Gesamtzwecke als Einzelmittel unterordnend: nämlich als Mittel, grössere Macht-Einheiten zu schaffen.”

⁸⁶ Although N.B. that insofar as both Christianity and its secular descendants rapaciously pursue mastery over their opponents and even life itself, they paradoxically embody the very characteristics of life as will to power against which they are ostensibly struggling. See e.g. GM III 11 5.362-3.

though the will to power is first and foremost described as a will to more power, it is at least in part conceived as just such a kind of energy. As we have seen, will to power is portrayed as having an ineradicably destructive component, which at the level of human existence demands periodic release in PDC. In GM, however, Nietzsche situates this energy immanently within life itself, rather than in the noumenal realm of the will. In this way, he can be said to have replaced the “*metaphysical* reflection” argument with a “*naturalistic* reflection” argument, which can be expressed as follows:

The Naturalistic Reflection Argument

1. All living entities are necessarily characterised by will to power;
2. Will to power is necessarily characterised by destructive conflictual relations;
3. Humans are living entities;
4. Therefore, humans are necessarily characterised by destructive conflictual relations.

One would be hard put to deny that Nietzsche has to some extent reverted in GM to the (albeit now naturalised) Bernaysian catharsis argument. But should we take this as evidence of a substantive reprisal of the position he implicitly rejected in MA? And does this not problematize his transformative project in the same way CV 3 did – that is, insofar as it indicates that (at least after a certain point) we can only displace, but not transform, destructive tendencies? The ontological obstacle of immutability has once again reared its problematic head. My contention, however, is that this text should be treated as anomalous and therefore cannot be taken as evidence for Nietzsche having made a wholesale reversion to the Bernaysian catharsis argument.

The first reason for treating these texts as anomalous is that in no other enumeration of the *Grundfunktionen* of life does Nietzsche mention destruction; rather, these consistently underscore the functions of overpowering, exploitation,

instrumentalisation and domination.⁸⁷ It is these, I would argue, that best capture what the later Nietzsche holds to be the ultimately ineluctable aspects of life, nature and the world as will to power. Crucially, as I will claim in the following subsection, these do not necessarily have to be expressed in PDC.

Second, in GM, as Marco Brusotti has noted, Nietzsche is principally opposing himself to Eugene Dühring's theory that the concept of justice originated in the desire for revenge, which reactively follows our suffering of an injury.⁸⁸ Nietzsche saw Dühring (among others) as representative of a wider tendency within the human sciences to give explanatory priority to the reactive sentiments (e.g. "Hass, Neid, Missgunst, Argwohn, Rancune, Rache"). Further, Nietzsche argues that because these thinkers are caught in the spirit of Christian *ressentiment*, they tendentiously view the world through the lens of reactivity.⁸⁹ In opposition to this, Nietzsche wants to introduce a new *Grundbegriff* to the sciences (biology and physiology in particular), namely, that of "eigentliche Aktivität".⁹⁰ He endeavours to illumine affects other than those based in reactivity – affects he holds to be of "höheren biologischen Werthe": "die eigentlich aktiven Affekte, wie Herrschsucht, Habsucht und dergleichen".⁹¹ Nietzsche strives to represent nobility and freedom as being distinguished by such "activity". Unlike the weak and the slavish, they act with spontaneity and aggression, which Nietzsche defines as the essential characteristics of life itself, that is, of will to power. Nietzsche's nobles are not prone to brooding and protracted periods of resentment that culminate in calculated acts of vengeance; they are an outpouring of aggressive, unrestrained, and as we have seen, at times necessarily *destructive*, force. If they do react, they do so *immediately*,

⁸⁷ See NL I[30] 12.17; NL 40[7] 11.631; JGB 259.

⁸⁸ See GM II 11 5.310-3; GM III 14 5.370. See also Marco Brusotti, "Reagieren, schwer reagieren, nicht reagieren. Zu Philosophie und Physiologie beim letzten Nietzsche", *Nietzsche-Studien*, 41 (2012), 104-126 (see p.106 and p.126).

⁸⁹ See GM II 11 5.310: "Worauf ich allein aufmerksam mache, ist der Umstand, dass es der Geist des Ressentiment selbst ist, aus dem diese neue Nuance von wissenschaftlicher Billigkeit (zu Gunsten von Hass, Neid, Missgunst, Argwohn, Rancune, Rache) herauswächst."

⁹⁰ See GM II 11 5.310 and 12 5.315-6.

⁹¹ GM II 11 5.310.

without being poisoned by *ressentiment*. When not immediate in this manner, reactivity becomes life-denial (since life just *is* spontaneous activity).

As Brusotti remarks, it is largely in opposition to Dühring that Nietzsche sets up the active–reactive dichotomy from which thinkers such as Deleuze have gotten so much philosophical mileage. Brusotti persuasively argues, however, that Nietzsche abandons this opposition after GM. Upon reading the works of the psychiatrist Charles Féré in 1888, Nietzsche came to realise that instantaneous reaction was symptomatic of the sick and neurotic.⁹² What characterises the strong is not the kind of unrestrained, automatic and spontaneous discharge we see the blond beasts destructively unleashing upon outsiders, but rather slow, deliberate reaction.⁹³ Hence, Nietzsche is (ironically) reactively forced into making this extreme characterisation of will to power and freedom as immediate and aggressive “actual activity” due to his opposition to Dühring, which falls into the background after 1888.

The third reason for treating Nietzsche’s description of PDC in GM as an exception becomes obvious once we probe the rhetorical status of the blond beast. Charitable readings have tried to argue that the figure is either a caricature of evil from the perspective of the slaves, or a mere symbol of unrestrained passion.⁹⁴ While this human type is not easily reduced to a merely chimerical or symbolic status, there is textual evidence to support the idea that the blond beast functions as a rhetorical

⁹² See Brusotti (2012), pp.115-7; see also Marco Brusotti “Nachweis aus Charles Féré, *Dégénérescence et Criminalité* (1888), *Nietzsche-Studien*, 20 (2011) 342; see also Charles Samson Féré, *Dégénérescence et Criminalité* (Paris: Alcan, 1888).

⁹³ See NL 14[102] 13.279.

⁹⁴ Lawrence Hatab suggests that the depiction of the blond beast in GM is a caricature of the raiding barbarians as viewed from the perspective of the slaves. See Lawrence Hatab, *Nietzsche’s Genealogy of Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp.48-9. Walter Kaufmann (1974) on the other hand, claims that the blond beasts function as “ideograms for the conception of unsublimated animal passion” and asserts that “Nietzsche does not glorify [...] them” (p.225). Along with these, we should also recall Bataille’s argument against literal readings of Nietzsche’s entreaties for an aristocratic master race. For Bataille, this figure merely represents one among many hypothetical future exemplars sketched by Nietzsche in his effort to describe “aussi librement qu’il pouvait un champ de possibilités” (see fn.75).

device – i.e. as a polemical character (or caricature) akin to the men in the state of nature envisioned by Hobbes and Rousseau.

In the relevant passages, Nietzsche complains that Europeans have lost their fear of man. Consequently, Nietzsche continues, they have also lost their love and admiration of man.⁹⁵ We no longer have any sense of reverence for humans on account of the fact that we find ourselves surrounded by mediocre, sick individuals (“Missrathenen, Verkleinerten, Verkümmerten, Vergifteten”). Nietzsche’s disdain for this mediocre human type in many ways recalls his fear of a future dominated by the figure of the “last human” (“der letzte Mensch”) – a form of herd-animal, the ideal utilitarian citizen, perfectly socialised and highly skilled at surviving, yet no longer able to develop and augment himself.⁹⁶ In *Z*, Nietzsche contrasts his dystopian vision of the last human with his hope for a future ruled by the *Übermensch*.⁹⁷ Analogously, in *GM*, the mediocre man of the present is contrasted with the blond beast. But can the *Übermensch* therefore be equated with the blond beast (as Detlef Brennecke has claimed, for example⁹⁸). Should we think of a world governed by blond beasts as Nietzsche’s aspiration?

There are good reasons against our making either of these assumptions. First, the only mention of the *Übermensch* in *GM* is in relation to Napoleon, but even he is not described as an *Übermensch* through and through. He is instead labelled a “Synthesis von Unmensch und Übermensch”, which strongly implies that his brutish and beastly (i.e. *unmenschlich*) traits are not part of his *Übermenschlichkeit* (*GM* I 16 5.288). Moreover, Nietzsche’s examples of blond beasts are mostly historical – for instance, the ancient Greeks and the Vikings (*GM*

⁹⁵ See *GM* I 11 5.275f.

⁹⁶ See *Z* I Vorrede 5 4.19-20.

⁹⁷ On the opposition of the last human and the *Übermensch*, see *NL* 4[171] 10.162. See also *Z* IV Vom höheren Menschen 3 4.358, where Nietzsche warns that “diese kleinen Leute: die sind des Übermenschen grösste Gefahr!”

⁹⁸ See Detlef Brennecke, “Die Blonde Bestie. Vom Mißverständnis eines Schlagworts”, *Nietzsche-Studien*, 5 (1976), pp.113-145. See also Gerd Schank, “Nietzsche’s Blond Beast”, in *Nietzsche’s Bestiary: Becoming Animal beyond Docile and Brutal*, Christa Davis Acampora and Ralph R. Acampora (eds.) (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), pp.140–55.

I 11 5.275) – whereas he explicitly states in Z that “Niemals noch gab es einen Übermenschen” (Z II Von den Priestern 4.119).⁹⁹ Finally, when he does look to the past for exemplars, he certainly does not limit himself to blond beasts, often preferring to invoke artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Homer and Goethe.¹⁰⁰ It is therefore unjustifiable to reduce the *Übermensch* to the violent, murderous figure of the blond beast.¹⁰¹ Even in GM, Nietzsche qualifies his esteem for the behaviour of the blond beasts, warning that “Man mag im besten Rechte sein, wenn man vor der blonden Bestie auf dem Grunde aller vornehmen Rassen die Furcht nicht los wird und auf der Hut ist” (GM I 11 5.277).

The blond beast’s function becomes plain when we take into consideration what Nietzsche was trying to achieve in these sections of GM: to give himself and his readers “Einen Blick nur auf etwas Vollkommenes, zu-Ende-Gerathenes, Glückliches, Mächtiges, Triumphirendes, an dem es noch Etwas zu fürchten giebt!” (GM I 12 5.278). He also endeavours to bring into relief how such terrifying, amoral behaviour is perfectly compatible with, and even forms the basis of, higher culture (hence his classifying the Athenians among the blond beasts). Nietzsche thereby rejects the myth that the purpose of culture is to transform man from the blond beast into “ein zahmes und civilisirtes Thier” (GM I 11 5.276).

The blond beast therefore evidently functions as a rhetorical device principally conceived as a means to arousing an energising sense of awe. With this polemical character, he hopes to illuminate (by juxtaposition) not just the feebleness of modern Europeans, but also the contingency of our currently being in this lamentable condition. Nonetheless, in spite of Nietzsche’s valorising register, it is not an ideal for which he encourages us to strive.¹⁰² It is an image designed to enliven

⁹⁹ Quoted in Paolo Stellino, *Nietzsche and Dostoevsky: On the Verge of Nihilism* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2015), p.196.

¹⁰⁰ See e.g. JGB 200 and NL 9[157] 12.428.

¹⁰¹ See Stellino (2015), pp.196ff. Compare also Patrick Wotling, *Nietzsche et le Problème de la Civilisation* (Paris: PUF, 2009), p.291.

¹⁰² A note that supports Appel and Brennecke, however, is NL 11[31] 13.18, though even here Nietzsche’s call appears to be for a *temporary* group of ruling barbarians who can act as a means to a more cultivated future ideal.

his readers and open their eyes to the possibility of constructing alternative ideals. We would also do well to avoid reading his description of their behaviour as an account of how will to power is necessarily or best expressed in human forms of life – that is, through inhibition, followed by necessarily destructive and unrestrained cathartic releases. In GM, as I have construed it, he only foregrounds the violence of the blond beasts in order to elicit the aforementioned galvanising fear and remind us of our brutal ancestry.¹⁰³

For these reasons, though there is undeniably some reversion to the Bernaysian catharsis argument employed in CV 3, I submit that we read this as an exceptional case. While we should therefore not associate the later Nietzsche with his earlier cathartic model of PDC, it is imperative that we remark that the notion of energetic discharge nonetheless plays a fundamental and widespread role in his later writings, albeit not in the way suggested by GM I 11; indeed, we should now examine Julius Robert Mayer’s influence on Nietzsche, since this will give us an insight into how Nietzsche’s broader conception of discharge actually underwent an important shift in the 1880s.

1.4.2. GROUNDING THE TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT: J. R. MAYER ON *AUSLÖSUNG* (1881-89)

As of 1881, Mayer’s concept of “Auslösung” (i.e. “release” or “discharge”) comes to play a leading role within Nietzsche’s philosophy. The influence of Mayer’s conception of discharge can be traced back to when Peter Gast sent Nietzsche a copy of Mayer’s *Über Auslösung* (1876).¹⁰⁴ In this text, Mayer posits two species of causal relation: the first describes cases in which a given cause is equal to its effect (in obvious accordance with the principle of the conservation of energy, also developed by Mayer). He hypothesises, however, that there is a species of causal relation that

¹⁰³ Again, the same might be said for GD Alten 3 6.157.

¹⁰⁴ See letter to Heinrich Köselitz 16.04.1881 (KGB III/1, pp.84-5).

cannot be subsumed under this category; namely, that in which a cause triggers a chain reaction, or the (often sudden) release of a large quantity of stored up energy, as in an explosion. The energy invested in the action of pulling the trigger of a gun, for example, seems to be far outweighed by the energy thereby released in the firing of the bullet. While this is merely characteristic of “sehr viele” natural processes (“Naturprozesse”) according to Mayer, he deems the living, organic world to be “an einen ununterbrochenen Auslösungsprozeß geknüpft”.¹⁰⁵ In humans, for example, a nerve impulse represents a weak motor activity capable of triggering disproportionately great muscular movements. When measured and not overstepping precise boundaries (“gewisse Grenzen”), these *internal Auslösungen* produce a pleasurable sensation. This is evinced by the enjoyment we take in exercising our muscles through recreational sport, says Mayer. This pleasant sensation, Mayer continues, is closely connected to the feeling of health insofar as both index “einen ungestörten Auslösungsapparat”.¹⁰⁶

Mayer also claims that humans take similar pleasure in triggering *external Auslösungen* – in firing guns for example. Finally, he also points to “Auslösungen verbrecherischer Art”, speculating that

wäre unserer Planet so beschaffen, das es jedem möglich wäre, denselben wie ein mit Dynamit gefülltes Gefäß auseinanderzusprenge[n], so würden sich sicher zu jeder Zeit Leute genug finden, bereit, mit Aufopferung ihres eigenen Lebens unsere schöne Erde in den Weltraum explodieren zu lassen [...].¹⁰⁷

What should be observed, however, is that according to this argument, the urge humans feel to bring about destructive discharge is not due to a build-up of an intrinsically destructive drive or species of energy, nor is it motivated by any

¹⁰⁵ Julius Robert Mayer, *Über Auslösung*, in *Die Mechanik der Wärme. Gesammelten Schriften* (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1893), pp.440-6 (p.442). For a comprehensive review of Mayer's influence on Nietzsche, see also Alwin Mittasch, *Nietzsche als Naturphilosoph* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kroner Verlag, 1952), pp.114ff.

¹⁰⁶ Mayer (1893), p.443.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.446.

anticipated pleasure in the destructive aspect of the act *per se* (Mayer's project implies that we would have no interest in destroying the world if we had to do so with spades over the course of millennia); it is rather due to the anticipated pleasure in causing *a disproportionate release of energy*, which is only contingently associated with such explosively destructive actions.

Though Nietzsche rejects the atomism he identifies in Mayer, this conception of *Auslösung* forms the cornerstone of his later conceptions of action, the affects, and the will to power.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, Nietzsche now describes the fundamental natural process as that of *Auslösung*: "vor allem will etwas Lebendiges seine Kraft auslassen".¹⁰⁹ Of equal importance, though, is the accumulation of energy or force. For Nietzsche, geniuses and stronger human types are distinguished from weaker types insofar as they inherit or are able to store up greater quantities of force.¹¹⁰ He directly opposes this idea to Darwin's notion of a drive for self-preservation, the logic of which, Nietzsche implies, cannot account for this ostensibly useless and even suicidal discharging of force (Mayer's "Dr. Strangelove" example elegantly illustrates this incompatibility with the logic of self-preservation).¹¹¹ As such, the will to power does not designate a process whereby entities merely accrue power *in potentia*, but includes the subsequent process of releasing or discharging such potential – that is, power *in actu*.¹¹²

While there is, as with the Bernaysian catharsis model, a certain *demand* for discharge according to this formulation of the will to power, engaging in PDC is neither metaphysically nor naturalistically necessitated. Even in 1883 (i.e. before his brief reversion to the Bernaysian catharsis argument), Nietzsche states that such

¹⁰⁸ On Nietzsche rejection of Mayer's atomism, see letter to Heinrich Köselitz 20.03.1882 (KGB III/1, pp.182-3).

¹⁰⁹ NL 2[63] 12.89; see also NL 27[3] 11.275 and JGB 13.

¹¹⁰ See GD Streifzüge 44 6.145-6 and NL 10[165] 12.553.

¹¹¹ NL 2[63] 12.89.

¹¹² See NL 11[114] 13.54, where it can be observed that both the inheriting and discharging of power are key to Nietzsche's conception of strength; see also NL 15[78] 13.455 or JGB 208 for Nietzsche's application of this discharge model to the realm of human socio-political practice.

stores of energy can, as Mayer indicates, be ventilated through a gamut of different activities:

[...] Ein und dieselbe Kraftgefühls-Menge kann sich auf tausend Weisen entladen: dies ist “Freiheit des Willens” — das Gefühl, daß im Verhältniß zu der nothwendigen Explosion hundert von Handlungen gleich gut dienen. Das Gefühl einer gewissen Beliebigkeit der Handlung in Betreff dieser Spannungs-Erleichterung. (NL 7[77] 10.268)

For Nietzsche, as for Mayer, there is always an array of behaviours through which this abstract, polymorphous force can obtain release. Thus, in one note from 1887, when he has more fully formulated his notion of the world as will to power, Nietzsche refers to the many “Ausdrucksweisen und Metamorphosen des Einen Willens [...], der allem Geschehen inhärrt, der Wille zur Macht”, which he characterises as a “Stärker-werden-wollen” (NL 11[96] 13.44). At the level of human behaviour, the discharge of this will to power can take an infinitude of forms: for example, just as we have seen that it can discharge itself in PDC, or as we will witness in later chapters, socio-political oppression, it can equally obtain release in artistic expression.¹¹³ Within this account of *Auslösung*, we might say that physically destructive behaviour would be reduced to the status of a merely *possible* (though nonetheless probable) corollary of the release of power – just as was the case with the individuals Mayer theorised would detonate the earth if given the chance, the urge is one towards release, not PDC. While this opens up a logical space for agonism – since it allows for the apparently unlimited channelling of energy away from PDC – Nietzsche still acknowledges, albeit in an aphorism from 1881 (before he had conceptualised the will to power), that such accrued energy is, *de facto*, often released through impulsive, violent acts:

¹¹³ NL 7[3] 12.256: “Man muß den Künstler selbst nehmen: und dessen Psychologie (die Kritik des Spieltriebs, als Auslassen von Kraft, Lust am Wechsel, am Eindringen der eigenen Seele, der absolute Egoismus des Künstlers usw.)”

Das Böse der Stärke. — Die Gewaltthätigkeit als Folge der Leidenschaft, zum Beispiel des Zornes, ist physiologisch als ein Versuch zu verstehen, einem drohenden Erstickungsanfall vorzubeugen. Zahllose Handlungen des Übermuths, der sich an anderen Personen auslässt, sind Ableitungen eines plötzlichen Blutandranges durch eine starke Muskel-Action gewesen: und vielleicht gehört das ganze “Böse der Stärke” unter diesen Gesichtspunct.
(M 371)¹¹⁴

Violence is explained and demoralised by Nietzsche insofar as he describes it as a means of attaining cathartic release. Such actions are not evil, he assures us, but merely the result of an immediate need to release (*auslassen*) pent-up energy in order to avert a condition analogous to suffocation. In a similar manner, Nietzsche seems to think that the *de facto* way in which nations often actually pursue power expansion is through wars of aggression:

Es gehört zum Begriff des Lebendigen, daß es wachsen muß, — daß es seine Macht erweitert und folglich fremde Kräfte in sich hineinnehmen muß. [...] Eine Gesellschaft, die endgültig und ihrem Instinkt nach den Krieg und die Eroberung abweist, ist im Niedergang (NL 14[192] 13.378).

This realist argument would appear to naturalise, explain, demoralise and even encourage PDC in a way that is largely at odds with the idea within the agonistic reading that Nietzsche was strongly opposed to such conflict.

¹¹⁴ M 371. See also See also GD Alten 3 6.157: “[...] Ich sah ihren [die alten Griechen] stärksten Instinkt, den Willen zur Macht, ich sah sie zittern vor der unbändigen Gewalt dieses Triebs, – ich sah alle ihre Institutionen wachsen aus Schutzmaassregeln, um sich vor einander gegen ihren inwendigen Explosivstoff sicher zu stellen. Die ungeheure Spannung im Innern entlud sich dann in furchtbarer und rücksichtsloser Feindschaft nach Aussen: die Stadtgemeinden zerfleischten sich unter einander, damit die Stadtbürger jeder einzelnen vor sich selber Ruhe fänden. [...]” Though Nietzsche appears to be working with the Bernaysian catharsis model here, later in the same text he indicates that this energy could also be expressed through the agon. PDC was just one unrefined means the state used to release its excessively pent-up energy. Compare also GD Sokrates 8 and GD Streifzüge 23, where Nietzsche indicates that even within the agon itself, the striving for dominance could be transformed from physical contest into spiritual, philosophical contest.

Despite the fact that Nietzsche does not explicitly refer to *Auslösung* in the context of his post-1881 thoughts on war, there is nonetheless telling evidence that Mayer's theory had a decisive impact on these thoughts. For example, in FW, where Nietzsche cautions us against accusing pacific cultures of laxity. Beneath this veneer of lassitude, he tells us,

jene alte Volks-Energie und Volks-Leidenschaft, welche durch den Krieg und die Kampfspiele eine prachtvolle Sichtbarkeit bekam, jetzt sich in unzählige Privat-Leidenschaften umgesetzt hat und nur weniger sichtbar geworden ist; ja, wahrscheinlich ist in Zuständen der "Corruption" die Macht und Gewalt der jetzt verbrauchten Energie eines Volkes grösser, als je, und das Individuum giebt so verschwenderisch davon aus, wie es ehemals nicht konnte, — es war damals noch nicht reich genug dazu! (FW 23)

This picture of once destructive, though now productively modulated, energies is at odds with the ontologies of PDC constructed in CV 3 and GM. But perhaps more interestingly, this aphorism also represents a change of tack from MA 477. In those cultures that have lost their taste for war, though they may *prima facie* appear weary or lax, closer scrutiny reveals that their combative energy, far from having disappeared, has rather been canalised into other pursuits – a process he unambiguously praises as a facilitator of knowledge. (It is this converted ["umgesetzt"] energy that enabled "die Flamme der Erkenntniss lichterloh zum Himmel [aufzuschlagen]" within these superficially languid cultures.) This aphorism therefore presents us with a dynamic that resembles a zero-sum struggle for energy fought between a nation's martial and cultural undertakings.¹¹⁵

This idea is also present in the writings from the end of Nietzsche's working life. In one of his final notes from 1888/89, presciently entitled "Letzte Erwägung", we can see that even at this late stage in his career, Nietzsche maintained a view of war far more compatible with Mayer's notion of *Auslösung* than with the Bernaysian catharsis model:

¹¹⁵ An idea that is prefigured in UB I (see UB I 1 1.160f).

Könnten wir der Kriege entrathen, um so besser. Ich wüßte einen nützlicheren Gebrauch von den zwölf Milliarden zu machen, welche jährlich der bewaffnete Friede Europa kostet; es giebt noch andre Mittel, die Physiologie zu Ehren zu bringen, als durch Lazarethe...
(NL 25[19] 13.646)

Notwithstanding the subjunctive mood (“[k]önnten wir”), dispensing with war altogether remains a conceivable possibility for Nietzsche. Furthermore, eradicating war, and thereby freeing up millions of men usually engaged in standing armies, would allow their energy to be directed toward better ends – for example, as he mentions in a paraphrased version of this note, toward “die grandiose und hohe Arbeit des Lebens” (NL 25[14] 13.644). As such, the later Nietzsche can be said to promote the transformation of our collective behaviour from *Krieg* to cultural perfectionism in a manner that reverberates with the dynamic presaged in CV 5. The physically destructive relation of humans to one another is therefore possible (and even probable), but not necessary – humans can affirm and embody the *Grundfunktionen* of life without need of war and murder, and it generates no contradiction to conceive of human life as unburdened of these.

1.5. CONCLUSION

Despite the continued presence of an agonal impulse throughout Nietzsche’s writings, it should nonetheless now be evident that we must reject the claim that his attitude toward PDC is best described as denigratory and primarily concerned with its transformation. This position has been undermined on two fronts. The first regards the modal status of PDC in his philosophy – namely, that at two points he suggests that PDC is a *necessary* aspect of human existence. This necessity is expressed in two different ways, depending on the phase under examination: the early work CV 3 presenting PDC as *metaphysically* necessary; the later work GM presenting it as *naturally* necessary. We began by expounding the conception of

PDC underlying Nietzsche's early affirmation of war in CV 3. Within this, such conflict was seen to be metaphysically necessitated by an immutably destructive and incessantly accreting drive demanding periodic release in war. This cathartic theory of violence was found to be grounded in an amalgam of Schopenhauerian metaphysics and the model of energetic economy found in Bernays' reading of Aristotle. We then saw Nietzsche somewhat anomalously revive the same dynamic in GM; following his apostasy from Schopenhauerian metaphysics, however, we saw him reformulate this theory on naturalistic grounds. On account of the fact that CV 3 and GM posit the existence of a quantum of energy that *must* release itself as PDC and that will always be impervious to qualitative transformation, the ontological view underpinning these texts was seen to contradict the idea proposed by the agonistic readers that Nietzsche sought the complete transformation of PDC. The problem is trenchant: there are texts that actually entail the *impossibility* of the agonal project with respect to certain forms of destructive behaviour, which are posited as essential to thriving human life (i.e. episodic outbursts of PDC). Indeed, the normative cost of assenting to ontologies of destructive conflict resembling those we find in CV 3 or GM I 11 is that we (potentially inadvertently) sacrifice the idea of transformation as a coherent or even conceivable possibility. Due to their practical repercussions, it would therefore serve us well to be particularly chary of hypotheses postulating any intrinsically destructive tendencies as essential to either human psychology or the wider natural world.

Nonetheless, I have tried to demonstrate how we can ring-fence these intractable texts (particularly CV 3 and GM I 11), and to argue that Nietzsche's mature position is best (though not exhaustively) understood as the naturalist-realist account of PDC that he develops out of Burckhardt and Mayer. According to this, no essentially destructive drive is posited, and PDC is regarded as the contingent consequence of a polymorphous impetus toward power – an ontology of PDC that is perfectly congruent with his project of agonal transformation. However, even within this position, PDC is posited as a highly probable part of human existence.

This brings us to the second major problem for the agonistic reading, which concerns the normative value that Nietzsche attributes to PDC. Whereas the agonistic readers suggest that Nietzsche is critical of PDC, and that this forms the basis of his calls for its transformation, it has now been demonstrated at length that he affirms PDC for an array of reasons. Despite the diversity exhibited by these justifications for PDC, they can roughly be split into two groups. The first group are founded on the presupposition that the energy associated with PDC is immutable, which suggest that compressing the expression of this energy into short term bursts is a precondition of social life and the forms of higher culture associated therewith. There is then the idea, also founded on this presupposition, that engaging in PDC represents a hale expression of power and freedom. The second group, however, is in no way premised on a notion of PDC *qua* discharge. Based on realist observations, which it appears he inherited from Burckhardt, Nietzsche suggests that PDC has a regenerative effect on culture – clearing away outdated cultural practices and fostering the cultivation of warrior virtues.

Another finding that should be underscored is that MA 477 presented us with an account of PDC that contradicts both the Bernays and the Mayer inspired discharge ontologies. In this aphorism, PDC is figured as having an *energising* rather than a ventilating effect. Indeed, in his post-metaphysical phase, Nietzsche offers us perspectives from which PDC can be understood both as a *source* of energy as well as a locus for its discharge.

It should be further added, that in this chapter I have by no means exhausted Nietzsche treatment of the sources and justifications for PDC. First, throughout his oeuvre, he attributes this species of conflict to a motley of other sources: in GT, for example, one cause of PDC is the unrestrained pursuit of egoistic ends;¹¹⁶ and in AC, he traces it back to God's (and priests') desire to keep man divided and distracted from science ("Wissenschaft").¹¹⁷ Interestingly, though, we do not find competition

¹¹⁶ GT 15 1.100.

¹¹⁷ AC 48 6.226-7.

over a scarcity of resources among these (except in Nietzsche's citation of WWV in PHG), such as Schopenhauer, and many today, suggest is one of the prime motivating factors for PDC.¹¹⁸ Moreover, what readers may also find glaringly absent from my treatment is Nietzsche's later calls for a "Vernichtung von Millionen Mißrathener" (NL 25[335] 11.98) – what has often been interpreted as a proto-Nazi advocacy of ethnic cleansing. The reason for this absence is that this theme will be explored in depth in Chapter 4.¹¹⁹

It has minimally been demonstrated that both in the early works and thereafter, we bear witness to a multitude of unequivocal affirmations of PDC. In thinking through the preconditions of a strong and vibrant culture, Nietzsche posits war and violence as indispensable means. Nonetheless, he does not do so in an unqualified manner, remaining staunchly critical of forms of PDC that harm culture; thus, even in CV 3 he warns against unrelenting, universal states of war, and in MA 477 he warns of the detrimental effects that wars can have for fledgling cultures. The evaluative criterion used to distinguish between better and worse forms of PDC is cultural health – that is, to what extent do the distinct forms of PDC enable a culture to become a productive whole? In our analysis of CV 5 and MA it was brought to light how Nietzsche employs this same evaluative metric to valorise the agonal transformation of PDC in an apparently generalised manner; notwithstanding, to frame this as representative of his wider thoughts on conflict risks whitewashing over the strong affirmative dimension to his thoughts on PDC. Therefore, although this study has supported the idea that Nietzsche cannot be straightforwardly branded a bellicose thinker, we should nonetheless guard against inversely distorting his thought in reaction to tendentious militaristic readings.

¹¹⁸ See e.g. Steven le Blanc, *Constant Battles: Why We Fight* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2003).

¹¹⁹ Bruce Detwiler notes this proto-fascistic interpretation in *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p.113.

CHAPTER 2

NIETZSCHE *CONTRA* VERNICHTUNGSKAMPF

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Surveying the various justifications of war that were enumerated in the previous chapter, one would perhaps not be blamed for thinking that Nietzsche's thoughts concerning conflict should be understood, above all, as a general endorsement of destructive, unmeasured struggle. And indeed, there is no shortage of readers who take Nietzsche to valorise destructive conflict in a generalised manner. He was widely deemed to be at least partly responsible for both of the World Wars, namely insofar as he was taken to promulgate a ruthless strain of immoralism, and was read as actively promoting war as a remedy for modern Europe's ills. Both his acolytes and detractors alike interpreted him as a proponent of war. Thus, we find Bernhardt, Bäumler and Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche (amongst many others) all reading his work as a literal call to arms. In concert with myriad other critics of Nietzsche, Bertrand Russell reiterated a commonly held lay prejudice when he claimed in his *History of Western Philosophy* that Nietzsche's works are informed by a generally militaristic impulse, it being "obvious" that "in his day-dreams he is a warrior, not a professor; all of the

men he admires were military”.¹ Similarly, Ernst Nolte (among others) reads Nietzsche as a philosopher of unbending intolerance, inciting his readers to both the physical and ideological extermination of the decadent elements of modern culture, be these moralities, philosophical worldviews, or human beings.²

In the following chapter, I will refute the fallacious belief that Nietzsche’s philosophy of conflict is best read as generally endorsing unmeasured conflict and try to bring into relief the grounds upon which he endorses measured conflict. *En passant*, we have already witnessed the fact that Nietzsche advocates a non-destructive form of conflict – one that he maintains is exemplified in the ancient Greek practice of the agon. The agon (ἀγών) was typified in the athletic, equestrian and dramaturgical games that took place at Olympia and Delphi, but it also designated the more general cultural phenomenon of individuals competing to outdo one another in the pursuit of excellence. The key text for understanding Nietzsche’s early celebration of the agon is undoubtedly CV 5; however, we also find him explicitly dealing with the agon (or “Wettkampf” and “Wettstreit”, which I will hitherto read as synonyms for “agon”) in a sustained manner in MA, the *Nachlass* of 1883 and GD.³ Moreover, he is commonly taken to be implicitly referring to the agon in a number of aphorisms from JGB.⁴ Thus, whereas in

¹ See Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.693. For an excellent review of the innumerable journalists and intellectuals who read Nietzsche as a warmonger, see Nicolas Martin “Nietzsche as Hate-Figure in Britain’s Great War”, in Fred Bridgeham (ed.), *The First World War as a Clash of Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.147-66; see also Ascheim (1994), esp. ch.5 and ch.8. As Martin (2006) points out, Bernhardt’s only explicit reference to Nietzsche in *Deutschland und der nächste Krieg* (Stuttgart und Berlin: J. G. Cotta, 1913) is a quote he takes from Z I Krieg (p.149).

² Nolte (1963), see esp. pp.533-4.

³ See e.g. MA 158 and 170; NL 7[161] 10.295 and NL 15[21]10.485; GD Alten 3 6.157, GD Sokrates 8 6.71 and GD Streifzüge 23 6.126.

⁴ Especially JGB 259 and 265.

the previous chapter I rebutted exclusively measured, agonal readings of Nietzsche by highlighting his valorisation of war, I will now rebut the exclusively unmeasured, militaristic interpretation of his thought by underscoring and elucidating his advocacy of *agonal* conflict.

In the wake of influential liberal-democratic readings of Nietzsche, such as those of Kaufmann, Hatab and Connolly, the conception of the agon as measured and non-violent may appear self-evident and unproblematic; yet a broader reading of the literature on Nietzsche's agonism suggests otherwise. Indeed, for my thesis to stand in any meaningful way, it must overcome three key problems reflected by three points of contention in the critical literature. The first, and most pressing, of these issues is that Nietzsche's notion of agonal conflict has in fact been interpreted as inclusive of violent, unmeasured forms of conflict (such as war). This is what I will call the *destructive* reading, and (as we shall see) we find it propounded by Bäumler, Dombowsky and Martin Ruehl. In the first section of this chapter, however, I contend that for both the early and the later Nietzsche, the concept of agonal conflict is *intrinsically* non-destructive; indeed, one of the ways in which he commonly defines the agon is in its exclusive opposition to unmeasured forms of conflict.

Having established that Nietzsche's agonism describes a decidedly measured form of conflict, we then need to ascertain how this measure is characterised for Nietzsche. We thus arrive at our second obstacle. This regards the social scope within which Nietzsche thinks agonal measure is *possible* (a descriptive issue) and the scope within which he then endorses such measure (a normative issue). First off, there is the idea that agonally measured conflict is only deemed possible or desirable by Nietzsche within the very limited confines of an aristocratic minority struggling over political

power. This is what I will call the *aristocratic* reading, which can be found in both Appel's and Dombowsky's interpretations of Nietzsche's agon. On the other hand, within what I will call *democratic* readings of Nietzsche's agonism – such as that of Hatab, for example – the agon is depicted as globally realisable and desirable within the bounds of any given society. Caught between these two extreme readings, we are left with little clue as to the scope of Nietzsche's agonal recommendations. I will argue, however, that in both the early and the later writings, Nietzsche maintains that individuals of every capacity and social standing are conceivably able to engage in agonal conflict, though only with individuals of approximately equal ability. Nonetheless, we also see that both the early and the later Nietzsche celebrate a more exclusive conception of the agon, only open to a minority of individuals – whether this is the elite artistic struggle for fame (*Ruhm*), as in the early works, or the equally elitist struggle for socio-political power (*Macht*), as in the later works.

The third problem relates to Nietzsche's observation that agonal conflict “entfesselt das Individuum” but also, simultaneously, “bändigt” him (NL 16[22] 7.402). It productively *unleashes* the individual insofar as it arouses their envy and egoistic ambition. Yet, beyond a certain point, these affects become socially and culturally detrimental, since they can lead individuals to strive for a form of permanent dominance that suppresses the contest of which they are a part; alternatively, Nietzsche thinks that such *Maßlosigkeit*, and the blind arrogance imbued in some by victory, can lead to violent acts of hubris, sedition or war – that is, back into the *Vernichtungskampf* from whence the agon originally emerged (a risk Nietzsche repeatedly flags up in CV 5, for example). How does agonal conflict restrain or *bändigen* the destabilising and potentially seditious affects

that it provokes and thereby avoid bringing about its own downfall? There are two contradictory answers to this question. According to the first interpretation (which I will call the *respect* reading), it is argued that the source of the agon's measure is a shift in attitude on the part of the contestants. As we shall see, in their political appropriations of Nietzsche, William Connolly and Lawrence Hatab have contended that someone who affirms agonal political contest must respect the right of all individuals to participate in democratic struggle. The way in which this respect is engendered according to the respect reading, is that individuals come to appreciate a "Nietzschean" ontology of difference, whereby each acknowledges their adversaries as the constitutive ground of their existence. The contrary position maintains that within any agonal practice, the attitudes and goals of contestants are no different from those that drive more destructive forms of conflict – they still seek absolute domination. Measure is rather based in the fact that agonal contest is between roughly equal powers who mutually frustrate one another's tyrannical aspirations. This reading, which I will call the *counterbalancing* reading, is proposed by Bonnie Honig and Herman Siemens. Both also posit the need for an institutional framework able to restore the state of mutual balance when counterbalancing fails, namely by forcibly removing violent or excessively dominant contestants (i.e. through the practice of ostracism).

In the final section of this chapter, having unpacked the nature of this stand-off in more detail, I argue that neither of these readings is wholly adequate. Contrary to the counterbalancing reading, the self-limitation of contestants is imperative for both the early and the later Nietzsche. However, contrary to the respect reading, Nietzsche does not understand this self-limitation as originating in one's respect for the other as the ground of one's

own existence. Rather, in the early work, self-limitation is motivated by a respect for the social whole and a religious piety. Then in the later work, Nietzsche replaces this with the Schmidt-inspired notion of *Ehrfurcht* – that is, a noble sense of reverence for opponents that who deems to be of equal worth, an affect that leads individuals to refrain from harming or exploiting one another.

Although there exist some common features to Nietzsche's various overlapping configurations of agonal conflict, I will be trying to foreground the irreducible plurality and discord between these. It is little wonder that the concept is as nebulous as it is, since the Greeks themselves had no explicit theory of the agon.⁵ Furthermore, even among the historical sources with which Nietzsche would have been familiar, there is little consensus regarding the precise nature of the ancient Greek agon. The key historical conceptions of the agon with which Nietzsche would have been acquainted are to be found in Ernst Curtius' "Der Wettkampf",⁶ George Grote's *A History of Greece*,⁷ Burckhardt's *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*⁸ and Leopold Schmidt's *Die*

⁵ See Andreas Kalyvas, "The Democratic Narcissus: The Agonism of the Ancients Compared to that of the (Post)Moderns", in Andrew Schaap (ed.), *Law and Agonistic Politics* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp.15-41 (p.18).

⁶ Ernst Curtius, "Der Wettkampf", in *Göttinger Festreden* (Berlin: Wilhelm Herz, 1864), pp.1-22. James Porter has claimed that both Nietzsche and Burckhardt "adored" Curtius' study (see James Porter, "Hellenism and Modernity", in George Boys-Stones, Barbara Graziosi, Phiroze Vasunia (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Hellenism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). See also Curt Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Biographie*, 3 vols (Munich: Hanser, 1978-9), vol.1, p.491. There is also evidence that Curtius influenced Burckhardt's agonal interpretation of the Greeks (see Henning Ottmann, *Philosophie und Politik bei Nietzsche* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999], p.49, fn.22). Moreover, the significant overlap in content between Curtius' essay and CV 5 indicates that Nietzsche had independent knowledge of this text.

⁷ George Grote, *History of Greece*, 2nd edn, 12 vols (London: John Murray, 1851). For evidence of Grote's influence on Nietzsche, see NL 16[39] 7.407.

⁸ We know that Burckhardt had discussed the content of his lectures at length with Nietzsche prior to presenting them. See letter to Erwin Rohde 21.12.1871 (KGB II/1, p.257), where Nietzsche indicates that, preceding the composition of CV 5, and while Burckhardt was composing *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, "Mit Jakob Burkhardt [hat er] einige schöne Tage

Ethik der alten Griechen.⁹ And to be sure, we find a number of the contemporary readings of the agon at least partially anticipated by Nietzsche's forerunners. Thus, in Ernst Curtius, we find a precursor of the destructive reading; in Burckhardt we uncover an early analogue of the aristocratic reading; finally, in Grote we find a democratic interpretation of the agon resembling the respect reading.

Though I will be bringing to light the way in which these philological studies foreshadow many of the contemporary misinterpretations of Nietzsche's agonism, it is not this that is of primary interest to us. Rather, by looking at where Nietzsche agrees and develops their idiosyncratic conceptions of the agon, we will see that each of them offers us a key to resolving the three interpretive disputes that are the central concern of this chapter. Thus, in Burckhardt we find a strong rejection of destructive readings of the agon – one that Nietzsche himself adopts (with modifications). Furthermore, in Burckhardt we also find a strong rejection of the idea that the agon is necessarily limited to an elite ruling caste – a stance that Nietzsche radicalises, rendering the agon even more inclusive. In opposition to the respect reading, the early Nietzsche follows Curtius and Grote in arguing that what gives rise to self-restraint is *not* respect for the other but patriotic love and religious fervour. Finally, against the counterbalancing reading, in his later work, Nietzsche directly draws upon Schmidt's notion of *Aidos*, a noble form of *self*-restraint. Since a historical contextualisation of Nietzsche's

erlebt, und unter [ihnen] wird viel über das Hellenische conferirt." See Ruehl (2004) (p.91 and p.96, n.44) for further references demonstrating this connection. This gainsays Acampora, who claims that the influence of Burckhardt on Nietzsche was negligible. See Acampora (2013), p.211 (n.7).

⁹ Leopold Schmidt, *Die Ethik der alten Griechen* (Berlin: Wilhelm Herz Verlag, 1882). For evidence of his influence on Nietzsche, see e.g. NL 7[161] 10.295. For an excellent overview of this line of influence, see Andrea Orsucci, *Orient—Okzident: Nietzsches Versuch einer Loslösung vom europäischen Weltbild* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996), pp.248-75.

conception of the agon has not yet been performed in a comprehensive manner, and moreover, since such work will help us make tractable the three aforementioned obstacles, filling this lacuna will constitute one of the main objectives of this chapter. Let us therefore begin with Curtius, Burckhardt and the destructive reading.

2.2. DESTRUCTIVE CONFLICT AND THE AGON

The destructive reading of the agon is the most problematic with respect to the thesis being defended in this chapter – namely, that Nietzsche’s agonism attests to the fact that he advocates a *measured* form of conflict. This is because the destructive reading construes Nietzsche’s conception of the agon as co-extensive with, or at least inclusive of, unmeasured physical conflict (i.e. PDC). Bäumler, for example, puts forward a distinctly militaristic interpretation of Nietzsche’s agon. He reads CV 5 as stressing the need to affirm the “Lust des Sieges” and reads Nietzsche’s interpretation of Heraclitus’ metaphysics in terms of a naked (i.e. brutal and unlimited) struggle for political power.¹⁰ He then uses these readings to ground his claim that for Nietzsche the most effective remedy for the decline of modern Europeans is an affirmation of “Gefahr und Krieg”; indeed, he declares that Nietzsche “gehört in das Zeitalter des großen Krieges”.¹¹ Bäumler arrives at the portentously fascist conclusion that the task of Germany is to be the “Führer Europas” – a mission requiring the national leadership of a single heroic individual.¹² The affirmation of victory in CV 5 is thus equated with an affirmation of martial

¹⁰ See Bäumler (1931), pp.63-4.

¹¹ Ibid., p.172 and p.183.

¹² Ibid., pp.181-2.

conquest. Similarly, Ruehl, Dombowsky and Enrico Müller have also interpreted Nietzsche's agonism as inclusive of physically unmeasured conflict. Ruehl and Dombowsky do this by reading CV 5 as continuous with the militaristic sentiments of CV 3.¹³ To be sure, as we saw in Chapter 1, Nietzsche does positively value martial conflict in CV 3, provided it does not take the form of relentless all-out war. But can the same be said for CV 5?¹⁴

At a more general level, to subsume physically destructive modes of conflict under the concept of "agon" is perfectly consistent with historical usage. In ancient Greek, "ἄγών", though initially signifying any "gathering [or] assembly; [...] especially met to see public games" or a "contest for a prize at the games", can also refer to "contests in general", or "generally, struggle" and even specifically "struggle[s] for life and death" or "battle[s]".¹⁵ Then, in post-classical Latin, "agon" was used to signify (among other things) martyrdom.¹⁶ And surveying the history of German, one can see that "Wettkampf" has also been used to refer to measured and unmeasured conflict alike.¹⁷ Indeed, we might cite Curtius' study as further evidence

¹³ See e.g. Dombowsky (2004), p.94: "In his early essays of 1871–72, the agonistic conception Nietzsche endorses does not exclude physical warfare, but wars of extermination (*bellum internecinum*).” And he continues “Nietzsche approvingly cites fragment 83 of Heraclitus, ‘*War is the father of all good things*’ (GS 92). Here it should be said, against the tenor of the radical liberal democratic interpretation that Nietzschean agonism is basically compatible [...] with the commitment to perpetual war or permanent confrontation characteristic of fascist ideology...” (see also pp.43-4). See also Müller (2005) p.83. Müller considers Nietzsche to describe the *Wettkampf* as (among other things) “Kriegszustand zwischen den vereinzelt Poleis, als Stasis zwischen den verfeindeten Parteien innerhalb der Poleis”. See also Ruehl (2004), p.91, where he argues that in CV 3, “Nietzsche describe[s], with obvious relish, the Greek *agon* as ‘the bloody jealousy of one town for another, one party for another, this murderous greed of those petty wars, the tiger-like triumph over the corpse of the slain enemy’.”

¹⁴ Note that commentators such as Acampora (2013), who read CV 5 as an unequivocal promotion of non-destructive conflict, nevertheless refer to Nietzsche's later “agonal practice” as including destructiveness (see e.g. p.189).

¹⁵ See entry for “ἄγών”, in Liddel and Scott (1961), pp.18-9.

¹⁶ See entry for “agon”, in *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (Lipsiae: B. G. Teubneri, 1900-), vol.1, p.1412.

¹⁷ See entry for “Wettkampf, m.”, in DWB, vol.29, col.779). The first definition given of Wettkampf is: an “auseinandersetzung zweier oder mehrerer gegner”, the examples for which include military struggles – e.g. “das dänische Reich wird auch zum Ringplatz für eine Reihe jener Wettkämpfe politischer und militärischer Rivalität [...]”.

of such usage, since for him “Wettkampf” and “Krieg” are not mutually exclusive concepts (as we will see below). Finally, even in Nietzsche’s notebooks, we find at least one fragment in which he also uses the term “Wettkampf” to signify the violent “Kampf um’s Dasein”.¹⁸

In the following section, I begin by arguing that if we take a closer look at Curtius’ “Der Wettkampf”, we can see that although he uses the term “Wettkampf” to refer to war and measured contest alike, he nonetheless distinguishes between two types of *Wettkampf*: one unmeasured, martial *Wettkampf*, and one measured, non-violent *Wettkampf*, for which he shows an unequivocal preference. I then expound how Burckhardt rejects this subdivision of *Wettkampf*, preferring to strictly distinguish *Wettkampf* from war, though nonetheless acknowledging the often violent and even fatal consequences of agonal contest. Finally, in the remainder of the section, I argue that Nietzsche sides with Burckhardt’s approach, but suppresses the violent elements of the *Wettkampf* remarked by his predecessor, thereby creating an idealised conceptual distinction between agonal conflict and PDC. Although I therefore defend the thesis that agon and war remain *conceptually* distinct for Nietzsche, I also explicate how he follows Burckhardt in underscoring the *genealogical* relation of agonal to destructive conflict.

2.2.1. CURTIUS, BURCKHARDT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DISTINCTION

For Curtius what distinguishes the Greeks from other cultures is what he calls their “wetteifender Thatenlust” – their joyful desire to engage in competitive activity and prove themselves preminent. Thus, he proclaims, “Sollte ich Ihnen mit einem Worte ein Kennzeichen des hellenischen Lebens angeben, durch das es sich von dem aller anderen Völker unterscheidet – ich würde sagen es sei der Kranz”.¹⁹ For the

¹⁸ NL 21[15] 7.527.

¹⁹ Curtius (1864), p.3.

Greeks, he continues, the meaning and value of life lay not in security and material comfort (as it does for modern individuals) but in “Ringen und Streben”,²⁰ and he traces their cultural productivity back to the inordinately high value they placed on contest and victory. At the most general level, Curtius uses the term *Wettkampf* to signify any struggle for ascendancy in which the value of contest is placed above that of Arcadian contentment.

Nothing in this vision of the *Wettkampf* is incompatible with military conflict, and indeed, Curtius maintains that the ancient Greek *Wettkampf* began as a military contest of tribes vying for ascendancy. What motivated such tribes to overcome one another, says Curtius, was their *difference*. He describes how they sought to establish the superiority of their “Eigenthumlichkeit” in “Verfassung, Kunst und Sitte” by destroying their rivals (though as Curtius points out, this would negate the very grounds of the victorious tribe’s *Eigenthumlichkeit*, since it was defined in its opposition to that of the eliminated tribe).²¹ Never in history, asserts Curtius, has any “Wetteifer der Kräfte so viel Energie entfaltet” as in ancient Greece in this all-out tribal (and later, inter-*poleis*) contention.²² Further equating *Krieg* and *Wettkampf*, though now between Greeks and non-Greeks, Curtius also compares the first Persian war to a *Wettkampf*.²³

Nonetheless, Curtius goes on to recount how later the Greeks conscripted religion as a means to developing a more stable, institutionalised form of agon, such as took place at Delphi or Olympia – what he calls the “regelmäßig[e] Wettkampf”.

²⁰ Ibid., p.4.

²¹ See *ibid.*: “Ein Wettkampf – zunächst der Stämme. Zwar sehen wir auch in der orientalischen Geschichte die verschiedensten Stämme mit einander ringen; ein Volk erhebt sich über das andere und drängt es aus seiner Stelle; aber hier gilt es nur einen bestimmten Besitz. Ist dieser gewonnen, so folgt das Leben wieder den alten Gleisen; mit Erreichung des Ziels hört das Streben auf, und der Stämme Eigentümlichkeit verschwindet.” He additionally discusses the “Wettkampf” of Athens, Sparta and Ionia, apparently also referring to their military struggle (*ibid.*, p.5).

²² *Ibid.*, pp.5-6.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.7: “Ja als zum großartigsten Wettkampfe die Persernot alle Kräfte des Griechenvolks aufrief, da hat Athen in der Schule der schwersten Drangsale, mit unglaublicher Anstrengung und Opferfreudigkeit den Ehrenkranz gewonnen”.

It is this regulated mode of contest that Curtius wishes to cultivate in German educational institutions in the form of a “geistig[e] Wettkampf”. His hope is that encouraging individuals to compete for ascendancy within the *wissenschaftliche* domain will act as a tonic for academic progress.²⁴ Although Curtius unequivocally favours this limited species of *Wettkampf*, his wider use of the concept nevertheless encompasses *all* forms of struggle driven by a love of contest and ascendancy.

Conversely, Burckhardt eschews this use of the term, opting instead to completely dissociate the notion of the agon from martial conflict. According to him, the Greek agon emerges only with the passing of “das heroische Zeitalter” of warfare. Only then is a form of victory other than that realised through the destruction of the other established, namely, “der Agonalsieg, d.h. der edle Sieg ohne Feindschaft [...], den friedlichen Sieg einer Individualität”.²⁵ Burckhardt traces the birth of the agon back to a burgeoning of the aristocracy, who, thanks to their slaves, had the time and wealth to engage in this new form of contest:

Die durch die Geburt gegebenen Individuen der herrschenden Klasse sind nicht mehr, wie vorher, in beschränkter Anzahl vorhanden, sondern es herrscht eine große, wesentlich von Grundrenten lebende städtische Aristokratie, deren Lebenszweck und Ideal wiederum der Kampf, *aber weniger der Krieg als der Wettkampf unter Gleichen* ist. Die ganze Nation ist überzeugt, daß dies das Höchste auf Erden sei.²⁶

Like Curtius, Burckhardt underscores how the brilliance of Greek culture can be traced back to the enlivening effects of the Greeks’ agonally competitive spirit, as well as the inclusion of the arts within the institution of the agon.²⁷ From the above quote, we can already see that Burckhardt understands agon as conceptually distinct from *Krieg* insofar as they refer to mutually exclusive states of conflictual affairs

²⁴ See pp.19ff.

²⁵ Burckhardt (2014), vol.4, p.88.

²⁶ See *ibid.*, p.117 (my italics).

²⁷ See *ibid.*, p.83. Burckhardt refers to the agon as “das allgemeine Gärungselement, welches jegliches Wollen und Können, sobald die nötige Freiheit da ist, in Fermentation bringt”.

(even though both are similarly motivated by a desire for victory).²⁸ To fully articulate this division, Burckhardt invokes Hesiod's distinction of the two Eris goddesses, or goddesses of strife, each of whom symbolised a unique species of discord:

Bei [Hesiod] finden wir denn auch die Kunde vom Agon, wie er sich im ländlichen und bürgerlichen Leben offenbart, d.h. der Konkurrenz, welche nur eine Parallele zum vornehmen und idealen Agon ist, und zwar kommt hier seine Lehre von der bösen und der guten Eris in Betracht, die wir am Anfang der Werke und Tage [...] lesen. Letztere ist die früher geborene (wonach die böse etwa nur eine Ausartung ins Große, zu Krieg und Streit wäre), und zwar scheint Hesiod sie nicht nur im Menschenleben zu finden, sondern auch in der elementaren Natur; denn der Kronide hat sie schon in die Wurzeln der Erde gelegt. Sie ist es, welche auch den Trägen und Unbehilflichen zur Arbeit aufweckt; indem er einen andern sieht, welcher reich ist, müht dann auch er sich, zu pflügen und zu pflanzen und das Haus zu ordnen, und Nachbar eifert mit Nachbar im Streben nach Reichtum.²⁹

Burckhardt appears to assent to Hesiod's parsing of war and *Wettkampf*, each of which are symbolised by distinct Eris deities. The good ("gute") Eris symbolises *Konkurrenz* and agon, which manifest themselves in *productive* activity (i.e. "pflügen", "pflanzen" and "das Haus ... ordnen"), while the evil ("böse") Eris is manifested in the *destructive* activity of war and strife ("Krieg und Streit").

In his analysis, however, Burckhardt does not create an absolutely clear-cut dichotomy between *Wettkampf* and destructive conflict; namely, insofar as he also accents the often-fatal consequences of the official agon, particularly the pankration – a no holds barred contest that combined boxing and wrestling, unrestrained by rules except those forbidding eye-gouging and biting. In such contests, people lost teeth, fingers were broken, and "[d]urch das Würgen, die entsetzlichen Stöße in den

²⁸ Though he only distinguishes "Wettkampf *unter Gleichen*" from "Krieg", we find that, unlike Curtius, Burckhardt generally refrains from using the term "Wettkampf" (or "Agon") to refer to martial conflict.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.88.

Unterleib usw. kamen aber auch nicht selten Tötungen vor”.³⁰ Thus, although intentionally killing the other was supposed to be proscribed, fatalities were undoubtedly tolerated.³¹

It should also be observed that in Burckhardt’s citation of Hesiod, while the twin godheads are depicted as mutually exclusive in *conceptual* terms, the two species of conflict that they represent are figured as standing in *genetic* relation to one another. However, Burckhardt formulates this relation in a manner quite different from that of Curtius, who conceived of war as originary, and the “regelmäßig[e] Wettkampf” as only emerging later by means of human artifice (i.e. through the institution of religion). Contrastingly, for Burckhardt’s Hesiod, this relation is inverted, and it is the good Eris whom is conceived as the “früher geborene”; the evil Eris (i.e. “Krieg und Streit”) only arises as the result of human corruption or degeneration: “die böse etwa nur eine Ausartung ins Große [...] wäre”, says Burckhardt. Therefore, although Burckhardt construes the Greek agonal age as *historically* posterior to the belligerently unmeasured heroic age, his interpretation of Hesiod indicates that the agonal impulse is ultimately genetically prior to the impulse for war. We should now determine where Nietzsche sits in this debate.

³⁰ Ibid., pp.97-8. Burckhardt also maintains that artistic contests could be equally violent insofar as they often descended into a chaos of frenzied partisanship, which often eventuated in the spectators murdering one or more of the contestants. Indeed, the outcome of artistic contests were treated as a matter of life or death, claims Burckhardt, since contestants could be “scourged” (“blutig gegeißelt”) and expelled in the event of unfavourable judgement (see *ibid.*, p.112 and fn.208).

³¹ Indeed, whereas the grecophilic Curtius postulated that the Greeks took some inherent relish in the activity of struggle, Burckhardt stresses that “Es war nichts positiv Glückliches, wenn das ganze Leben auf einen Augenblick der furchtbarsten Spannung eingerichtet war; in der Zwischenzeit muß Abspannung oder tiefe Sorge um die Zukunft die Betreffenden ergriffen haben” (*ibid.*, p.102.). Burckhardt also shows how envy, animosity and the shame of defeat were crippling and even drove competitors to suicide (see *ibid.*, pp.102-3.).

2.2.2. THE EARLY NIETZSCHE ON THE RELATION OF *WETTKAMPF* AND *VERNICHTUNGSKAMPF* (1869-80)

As already stated, Nietzsche himself can be found to use the term “Wettkampf” to refer to unmeasured conflict – namely, the unmeasured struggle pervading nature, as described by Darwin, Hobbes and Schopenhauer (and expounded in Chapter 1). For example, in an early *Nachlass* note, he describes the Schopenhauerian will (“Wille”), in terms of *Wettkampf*: “Der Wille tödtend (in der Natur im Wettkampfe des Schwächeren und des Stärkeren)” (NL 21[15] 7.527).³² There are then further texts that appear to support the idea that Nietzsche’s agonism is compatible with warmongery. For instance, in the opening paragraphs of CV 5, he marvels at the how the Greeks – widely considered “die humansten Menschen der alten Zeit” – could have been so violent and cruel, and taken such pleasure in the horrors depicted in the *Iliad*. Indeed, he censures our “weichlichen Begriff der modernen Humanität”, and our corresponding inability to conceive of this aspect of Greek culture as anything but an aberration. It is in contrast to these failings, therefore, that in CV 5 Nietzsche endeavours to recuperate a vision of humanity able to incorporate such ostensibly savage tendencies.³³

This desire to acknowledge PDC as an intrinsic part of our humanity certainly recalls Nietzsche’s affirmation of war and its representation in CV 3, where he maintains that the warmongery of the Greeks, as depicted in the *Iliad*, was

³² Like Burckhardt, he also states in lecture notes from 1874-5 that the artistic “Wettkampf” was a “Kampf” in which a contestant’s life or death (“Leben oder Tod”) was often at stake (GGL III, KGW II/5, p.290).

³³ See CV 5 1.783: “So haben die Griechen, die humansten Menschen der alten Zeit, einen Zug von Grausamkeit, von tigerartiger Vernichtungslust an sich: ein Zug, der [...] in ihrer Mythologie uns, die wir mit dem weichlichen Begriff der modernen Humanität ihnen entgegenkommen, in Angst versetzen muß. [...] Warum mußte der griechische Bildhauer immer wieder Krieg und Kämpfe in zahllosen Wiederholungen ausprägen, ausgereckte Menschenleiber, deren Sehnen vom Hasse gespannt sind oder vom Übermuthe des Triumphes, sich krümmende Verwundete, ausröchelnde Sterbende? Warum jauchzte die ganze griechische Welt bei den Kampfbildern der Ilias? Ich fürchte daß wir diese nicht ‘griechisch’ genug verstehen, ja daß wir schaudern würden, wenn wir sie einmal griechisch verstünden.”

justified due to its forming the foundation of the *Gesellschaft* and its culture.³⁴ Indeed, Don Dombowsky argues that in justifying PDC, in CV 3 Nietzsche also affirms, “without utilizing the term, the Greek *agon*, or the agonal situation of competition and perpetual conflict between individuals and power-complexes.”³⁵ But can we read CV 3 and CV 5 together in this way? Or give Nietzsche’s agonism such a broad and inclusive definition? The previous chapter has already gestured towards the fact that we must answer both of these questions in the negative – however, it is worth our while giving a full explanation of why this must necessarily be the case.

We should begin by scrutinizing Nietzsche’s statements regarding violence at the beginning of CV 5. Casting his eye back to pre-Homeric Greece, he describes a savage world of unrelenting, violent strife – one in which “die Grausamkeit des Sieges ist die Spitze des Lebensjubels”. (N.B. that this roughly maps onto Burckhardt’s description of the “heroisch[e] Zeitalter”.) During this ferocious epoch, it was deemed just, “nach dem Rechte des Krieges”, to enslave or put to death the inhabitants of a conquered city as one saw fit. This ferocious world was one devoid

³⁴ CV 3 1.771: “[B]lutige Eifersucht von Stadt auf Stadt, von Partei auf Partei, diese mörderische Gier jener kleinen Kriege, der tigerartige Triumph auf dem Leichnam des erlegten Feindes, kurz die unablässige Erneuerung jener trojanischen Kampf- und Greuelszenen, in deren Anblick Homer lustvoll versunken, als ächter Hellene, vor uns steht — wohin deutet diese naive Barbarei des griechischen Staates, woher nimmt er seine Entschuldigung vor dem Richterstuhle der ewigen Gerechtigkeit? Stolz und ruhig tritt der Staat vor ihn hin: und an der Hand führt er das herrlich blühende Weib, die griechische Gesellschaft.”

³⁵ See Dombowsky (2004), pp.43-4: “Nietzsche, writing in *The Greek State*, considers the Greeks as the ‘political men in themselves’. He defines their ‘political passion’, in opposition to the liberal optimistic view rooted in ‘the doctrines of French Rationalism and the French Revolution’, in terms of the unconditional subjection of all interests to the natural ‘State-instinct’, by which he means, the artistic and passionate maintenance of a state of war, the ‘bloody jealousy of city against city, of party against party . . . the incessant renewal of . . . Trojan scenes of struggle’. Thus, Nietzsche affirms here, without utilizing the term, the Greek *agon*, or the agonal situation of competition and perpetual conflict between individuals and power-complexes (also articulated by the conservative political forces of his generation).” See also Müller (2005), p.78. Müller states that, within the Homeric world depicted in CV 3 and CV 5, “der Agon [sich] vornehmlich als heroischer Zweikampf um Leben und Tod, das Machtgefühl des Sieges wiederum als moralisch unreflektierter ‘Triumph auf dem Leichnam des erlegten Feindes’ [...] darstellt.”

of measure, in which justice was equated with the will of the heroically mighty. Reinforcing his assertion in CV 3 (and GM II 17 5.324) that the state is born out of violence, Nietzsche seeks to illuminate the violent roots of Greek civilisation: “Und wie sich in Wahrheit vom Morde und der Mordsühne aus der Begriff des griechischen Rechtes entwickelt hat, so nimmt auch die edlere Kultur ihren ersten Siegeskranz vom Altar der Mordsühne” (CV 5 1.785).

According to Nietzsche, the horror of any violent epoch has certain ramifications for the spiritual *Weltanschauung* of those enduring such times. Individuals subjected to unremittingly baleful conditions of this kind often come to equate life with suffering and punishment; hence, such an existence tends to generate a pessimistic worldview, what Nietzsche refers to as an “Ekel am Dasein” (CV 5 1.785). This form of pessimism is exemplified, he claims, in both Eastern Buddhism and Greek Orphism (though we may also group the philosophies of Anaximander and Schopenhauer in this category). Yet this is not the only possible spiritual response to such a world. The Greek genius, Nietzsche tells us, formulates a quite contrary rejoinder to the question “was will ein Leben des Kampfes und des Sieges?” Rather than deeming life-denial the appropriate response to the horrific character of existence, “der griechische Genius den einmal so furchtbar vorhandenen Trieb gelten ließ und als berechtigt erachtet” (CV 5 1.785-6). The drive (*Trieb*) that the genius acknowledges is the drive for “Kampf und der Lust des Sieges”, what he calls in WS 226 “das Siegen- und Hervorragewollen”. In Homer’s *Iliad*, this is expressed by Achilles as the desire “[e]ver to excel, to do better than others”.³⁶ What is implied by Nietzsche is that, in evaluating the heroic world, the “Genius” places the accent on the supreme joy of victory, instead of on the dispiriting prevalence of crushing defeat, subjugation, slavery and murder.

In speaking of the Greek “Genius”, Nietzsche is ostensibly referring to Homer, or at least some kind of archetypal Greek spirit epitomised in Homer.

³⁶ Homer, *Iliad*, Book 6, l.208.

Certainly, Nietzsche thought that Homer ingeniously aestheticized brutal war in such a way as to make it tolerable if not affirmable.³⁷ Thus, in Homer’s world,

werden wir bereits durch die außerordentliche künstlerische Bestimmtheit, Ruhe und Reinheit der Linien über die rein stoffliche Verschmelzung hinweggehoben: ihre Farben erscheinen, durch eine künstlerische Täuschung, lichter, milder, wärmer, ihre Menschen, in dieser farbigen warmen Beleuchtung, besser und sympathischer [...]. (CV 5 1.784)

Nietzsche also describes this poetic act of idealisation as one that overcomes the brutal *Kampf um’s Dasein* (thereby contradicting the note cited above in which he categorises Darwinian struggle as a form of *Wettkampf*): “Der Dichter überwindet den Kampf um’s Dasein, indem er ihn zu einem freien Wettkampfe [*sic*] idealisirt” (NL 16[15] 7.398). Nevertheless, he is remarkably reticent when it comes to expounding how Homer concretely contributed to the advent of the Greek agonal age (after all, as Nietzsche would have undoubtedly been aware, agonal games are depicted in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which indicates that the agon predated Homer³⁸).

If we read CV 5 in conjunction with GT, however, we get a better insight into how he might think Homer (and the communal “Genius” or “spirit” of the Greeks embodied in Homer) enabled the proliferation of non-destructive modes of contest. Thus, Nietzsche claims in GT 15 that a life of relentless violence generates a suicidal “practische[r] Pessimismus” – people simply cannot bear to go on living given the predominance of war. However, he adds, this defeatist sentiment only arose “wo

³⁷ There are two reasons why Nietzsche might not have wanted to explicitly name the aestheticizing genius as Homer. First, Heraclitus also fits the description: viewing life as justified in conflict: “man muß wissen, daß der Krieg gemeinschaftlich ist und die Δίκη Streit ist u. daß alles gemäß dem Streite geschieht” (VPP, KGW II/4, p.273). Second, Nietzsche may have been referring to a more embracing notion of “Genius” – namely, as the “spirit” of the community (we find a similar use of “Genius” in FW 354, for example, entitled “Der Genius der Gattung”). See also Chapter 3, where this conception of genius is explored in greater depth.

³⁸ For example, the funeral games held in memory of Patroclus in Book 23 of the *Iliad*, and the games played by the Phaeacians (and in which Odysseus himself participates) in Book 8 of the *Odyssey*.

nicht die Kunst in irgend welchen Formen [...] zum Heilmittel und zur Abwehr jenes Pesthauchs erschienen ist” (GT 15 1.100). Homeric art offered solace, and acted as a prophylactic against despondency. By depicting the brutality and horror of the heroic age in such a beautiful fashion, Homer enabled the Greeks to affirm life and action.³⁹ Christa Davis Acampora, though perhaps going beyond the texts themselves, has elaborated this line of interpretation, arguing that Nietzsche thought Homer enabled specifically *agonal* modes of action. In her rapprochement of CV 5 and GT, she suggests that, with Homer,

life becomes full of possibilities to seek and win, and the wisdom of Silenus is overcome, replaced with the worldview expressed in Homeric literature. Homer’s revaluation of human existence has it that what is best is to never die – to achieve some unforgettable victory. Second best is to not die too soon – that is, to live long enough to secure the meaning of one’s life through significant action.⁴⁰

Whether we accept this imaginative synthesis or not, what we can conclude from the above is that Nietzsche’s praise of the *Iliad* in CV 5 is not to be equated with a praise of its *content* (i.e. war and violence). Nietzsche is applauding the beautiful *form* Homer gives to this content – thus, he praises the *Iliad* as a “künstlerisches Spiel und Nachahmung” of the heroic world of war. Indeed, Nietzsche intimates that this ingeniously transfigured reflection is “Die Voraussetzung des Wettkampfes” (NL 16[26] 7.404); but note well that it is at most merely a *precondition* (“Voraussetzung”) of the *Wettkampf*, and not the *Wettkampf* itself. Nietzsche’s celebration of the *Iliad* in CV 5 should therefore *not* be interpreted as an affirmation of war, as it is in CV 3.

From this it should already be plain that the genius does not affirm and embrace conflict and the pleasure of victory *tout court* as the destructive reading would lead us to believe. On the contrary, Nietzsche praises how, in recognising this drive, the genius enables the Greeks to transfigure its destructive content, to forge

³⁹ See also NL 11[20] 8.205-6 and NL 5[165] 8.86-7.

⁴⁰ Acampora (2013), p.51.

ways of engaging in struggle and the pursuit of victory without engaging in war and murder. As we saw in Chapter 1, this process of channelling energy away from socially pernicious forms of conflict is the essence of the *Wettkampf*, which functions as a non-destructive means of obtaining the key *desideratum* (i.e. triumph) that was previously sought in war.

Like Burckhardt, Nietzsche also appeals to Hesiod's partition of the Eris goddesses in order to illustrate the way in which he views *Wettkampf* as *conceptually* distinguished from, but *genetically* related to, murderous forms of conflict. Indeed, in the same note, Nietzsche also describes the role of the Greek poet as that of transposing destructive drives into the good Eris (i.e. *Wettkampf*): "die tigerartigen Zerfleischungstrieb der Griechen weiß er zu übertragen in die gute Eris". Yet his representation of the good–evil Eris relation is not identical with that of Burckhardt. It is worth quoting Nietzsche's citation of Hesiod at length so as to bring this divergence fully into relief:

Die eine Eris möchte man, wenn man Verstand hat, ebenso loben als die andre tadeln; denn eine ganz getrennte Gemüthsart haben diese beiden Göttinnen. Denn die Eine fördert den schlimmen Krieg und Hader, die Grausame! Kein Sterblicher mag sie leiden, sondern unter dem Joch der Noth erweist man der schwerlastenden Eris Ehre, nach dem Rathschlusse der Unsterblichen. Diese gebar, als die ältere, die schwarze Nacht; die andre aber stellte Zeus der hochwaltende hin auf die Wurzeln der Erde und unter die Menschen, als eine viel bessere. Sie treibt auch den ungeschickten Mann zur Arbeit; und schaut einer, der des Besitzthums ermangelt, auf den Anderen, der reich ist, so eilt er sich in gleicher Weise zu säen und zu pflanzen und das Haus wohl zu bestellen; der Nachbar wetteifert mit dem Nachbarn, der zum Wohlstande hinstrebt. Gut ist diese Eris für die Menschen. Auch der Töpfer grollt dem Töpfer und der Zimmermann dem Zimmermann, es neidet der Bettler den Bettler und der Sänger den Sänger. (CV 5 1.786)⁴¹

⁴¹ On Nietzsche's use of the good–evil Eris distinction, see NL 16[19] 7.400, ST 1.545, M 38, MA 170, WS 29.

Nietzsche therefore follows Burckhardt in drawing a sharp conceptual line between the species of conflict respectively demarcated by the good and evil Eris sisters. The latter is associated with “feindseligen Vernichtungskampfe [*sic*]” – that is, the “Morde”, “Krieg” “Streit” and “Wollüstige Grausamkeit” that characterises pre-Homeric culture. By contrast, the good Eris, “als Eifersucht Groll Neid die Menschen zur That reizt, aber nicht zur That des Vernichtungskampfes, sondern zur That des Wettkampfes” (CV 5 1.787).⁴² In this way, Nietzsche unequivocally discriminates between PDC (falling under the banner of the “böse” Eris) and *Wettkampf* (falling under the banner of the “gute” Eris).

But how does this terminological distinction cash out practically? And *why* does Nietzsche endorse the *Wettkampf* as “good”? In short, the good Eris inspires envy (“Neid”) and ambition (“Ehrgeiz”) in individuals, which propels them to engage in individually and socio-culturally *constructive* modes of praxis. Otherwise put, envy and ambition push people to pursue excellence to the point of outdoing their adversaries. But as Nietzsche notes, “der Kern der hellenischen Wettkampf-Vorstellung” is not just the mutual stimulation of the contestants, but also the measure that they impose upon one another: “wie sie sich auch gegenseitig in der Grenze des Maaßes halten” (CV 5 1.789). This means that each individual’s ambition is kept within manageable bounds, and they are thereby prevented from becoming excessively dominant and stifling the contest (how this is achieved will be explored in further detail below). Evil (“böse”) Eris, contrariwise, is distinctly *unmeasured* (“grenzenlos”). It promotes detrimental modes of action such as murder and war, where one strives to win by eliminating one’s opponent.⁴³ The *Wettkampf* is therefore presented as deeply *productive* in nature. Individuals are driven by

⁴² See also NL 16[19] 7.400: “Die hesiodische Eris wird gewöhnlich falsch verstanden: was die Leute zum Krieg und Streit treibt, die böse: was sie zur ehrgeizigen That treibt, die gute.”

⁴³ See also WS 29, where Nietzsche distinguishes good and evil Eris in terms of the way in which individuals attempt to equal their opponents – that is, whether they try to do so by pulling their opponent down to their level (bad), or raising themselves up to the level of their opponents (good). While this aphorism sets the goal as *equality* and not victory (as in CV 5), it still sheds important light on the way in which Nietzsche conceives of the opposed dynamics of *Wettkampf* and *Vernichtungskampf*.

reciprocal stimulation to compete and prove themselves predominant *at a given task*, as opposed to through a direct clash of naked physical force. Nietzsche also underscores how this allows for the “mäßige Entladung” of a range of aggressive, though not necessarily destructive, human affects (such as envy, ambition, jealousy, hatred, and rage) that would otherwise have to be released in violent and even seditious activity.⁴⁴ Thus, “der Grieche [erachtete] ein volles Ausströmenlassen seines Hasses als ernste Nothwendigkeit”, and it was the agon that granted this aggressive hatred a non-destructive outlet. Diverging from Burckhardt, then, agonal victory is not figured as “ohne Feindschaft” in Nietzsche’s analysis, but is rather saturated with a controlled form of animosity. Further distinguishing himself from Burckhardt, and in spite of his affirmation of agonal animosity, Nietzsche conspicuously suppresses the often-violent practical reality of agonal contest. Thus, as Herman Siemens has stressed, Nietzsche presents us with a highly stylised vision of the ancient Greek agon, one that, I would submit, cleaves an even more definite conceptual divide between agonal and physically destructive forms of conflict.⁴⁵

Insofar as the agon promotes (self-)cultivation, Nietzsche also sees it as one of the fundamentals of ancient Greek education; thus, “[j]ede Begabung muss sich kämpfend entfalten, so gebietet die hellenische Volkspädagogik” (CV 5 1.787).⁴⁶ In parallel with Curtius and Burckhardt, he also theorises that the Greek ethos of contest was the driving force behind their cultural flourishing. Spurred on by their envy and ambition, artists strove to outdo one another: “ihre ganze Kunst ist nicht ohne Wettkampf zu denken: die hesiodische gute Eris, der Ehrgeiz, gab ihrem Genius die

⁴⁴ See NL 5[146] 8.79; see also NL 16[18] 7.399, where Nietzsche remarks “Wie die griechische Natur alle furchtbaren Eigenschaften zu benutzen weiß: die tigerartige Vernichtungswuth (der Stämme usw.) im Wettkampf”.

⁴⁵ See Herman Siemens, “Contesting Nietzsche’s Agon. On Christa Davis Acampora’s ‘Contesting Nietzsche,’” *Nietzsche-Studien*, 44 (2015), 446-461 (p.452).

⁴⁶ On the educational function of the agon, see NL 16[4] 7.394: “Hesiod und — — — Die Jesuiten — ihre antike Erziehung — der Ehrgeiz und der Wettkampf in der Erziehung. / Das Problem des Wettkampfes. / 7. Künstler im Wettkampfe. (Bei uns aus Mangel an Größen selten: Schiller und Goethe.) [...]”. See also NL 16[14] 7.397: “Die antiken Mittel der Erziehung: der Wettkampf und die Liebe.”

Flügel” (MA 170).⁴⁷ Note that in trying to justify non-destructive, agonal contention, Nietzsche is now invoking the same cultural criterion that he used in CV 3 to justify PDC.

If we simply focus on how Nietzsche parses *Wettkampf* and war, however, we risk glossing over what we have already identified as the primary purpose of CV 5: to show how man’s “furchtbaren und als unmenschlich geltenden Befähigungen [...] vielleicht sogar der fruchtbare Boden [sind], aus dem allein alle Humanität, in Regungen Thaten und Werken hervorzunehmen kann” (CV 5 1.783). We might reformulate this by saying that Nietzsche, like Burckhardt, strives to illuminate the *genetic* relation between *Vernichtungskampf* and *Wettkampf*. Though Nietzsche highlights the separate parentage of the two Eris goddesses (the evil Eris being born of “die schwarze Nacht”, and the good Eris being placed on earth by Zeus himself), he follows Burckhardt in suggesting that, in reality, one of the distinct forms of conflict that they represent is actually born out of the other. In Burckhardt’s account, as in the proem to Hesiod’s *Work and Days*, it is the *good* Eris that was born first, with the *Vernichtungskampf* emerging out of the corruption of the more originary *Wettkampf*.⁴⁸ Nietzsche, on the other hand, inverts the order of derivation. Why, we should ask, would he decide to do such a thing?

In the first place, Nietzsche’s motivation could be said to be purely philological. It appears from his lecture notes (GG), that he considered both the idea of the good Eris and the assertion of her genealogical priority, which are to be found

⁴⁷ See also CV 5 1.790: “Mißtrauisch-eifersüchtig traten die großen musikalischen Meister, Pindar und Simonides, neben einander hin; wetteifernd begegnet der Sophist, der höhere Lehrer des Alterthums, dem anderen Sophisten; selbst die allgemeinste Art der Belehrung, durch das Drama, wurde dem Volke nur ertheilt unter der Form eines ungeheuren Ringens der großen musikalischen und dramatischen Künstler. Wie wunderbar! ‘Auch der Künstler grollt dem Künstler!’”

⁴⁸ See Hesiod, *Work and Days*, in Glen Most (ed. and trans.), *Theogony, Work and Days, Testimonia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp.87-8, ll.11-26: “For the one [Eris] fosters evil war and conflict – cruel one, / no mortal loves that one, but it is by necessity that they honor / the oppressive Strife, by the plans of the immortals. But / the other one gloomy Night bore first; and Cronus' highthroned / son, who dwells in the aether, set it in the roots of / the earth, and it is much better for men.”

in the poem of *Work and Days*, to be the illegitimate additions “eines hesiodischen Rhapsoden”. According to Nietzsche, this rhapsodist invented the good Eris (along with her priority), then superimposed her onto Hesiod’s text in order to “rechtfertigen” “[d]er Wettstreit unter Dichtern [als] etwas erlaubtes.”⁴⁹ For Nietzsche, however, the true tenor of Hesiod’s thought is best captured in *Theogony*, in which “die böse ist [...] uralt”.⁵⁰

This said, Nietzsche’s motivation for inverting the order of birth given in the poem is likely more philosophical in kind. The second obvious reason that Nietzsche might have chosen this ordering, then, is on account of his interest in situating man’s origins in a horrific world devoid of measure. This would enable him to show how such brutal measurelessness is an inextricable part of our ancestry and inheritance. Cruelty and excess are not foibles of a wicked minority whose originally “good” natures have been contingently corrupted by society (as Burckhardt’s Hesiod, like Rousseau, might have it). Such a penchant for violence in fact lies at the very root of all that we vaunt as human. What lent the Greeks their potency and cultural competence was their ability to avail themselves of their natural urges for socially beneficial ends, what Nietzsche calls “[d]ie Verwendung des Schädlichen zum Nützlichen”.⁵¹ Such transformative exploitation of our primitive nature, however, presupposes that we relocate these dark impulses within ourselves and acknowledge them as an intrinsic aspect of our humanity. No wonder, then, that Nietzsche considers modern man’s attempt to hew his “natural” animalistic impulses from his concept of “humanity” as having had such a debilitating effect.

An expanded analysis of how Nietzsche thinks this transformation can be undertaken will form the subject matter of Section 3. For now we should merely note

⁴⁹ See GDG, KGW II/5, pp.360-1.

⁵⁰ Ibid.: “[W]elche [Eris] wird als die ältere ἔρις u[nd] Kind d[er] Nacht bezeichnet? In Theog. die böse. [...] Gerade die böse ist nach der Theog. uralt.” Indeed, in Nietzsche’s opinion, the “Theogony kennt die ἔρις nur als eine”, and therefore *not* as a dual godhead (ibid.).

⁵¹ NL 16[18] 7.399. In the same note, Nietzsche also remarks “Wie die griechische Natur alle furchtbaren Eigenschaften zu benutzen weiß: die tigerartige Vernichtungswuth (der Stämme usw.) im Wettkampf”. See also VM 220 and NL 11[186] 9.514.

how this genetic relation shows that the *Wettkampf* and *Vernichtungskampf* share certain qualities: particularly the fact that they are both forms of conflict driven by the desire for victory and the range of aforementioned aggressive affects. Nonetheless, the early Nietzsche holds agonal and destructive conflict to be distinguished both in terms of their socio-cultural utility and in terms of the modes of action to which they lead. *Vernichtungskampf* (i.e. war and murder) is an unmeasured species of conflict in which adversaries strive for victory in a socially injurious fashion – namely, insofar as they each seek the annihilation of their counterpart; *Wettkampf*, by contrast, is measured and promotes self-improvement. Naturally, this self-perfectionist impulse is of high socio-cultural value on account of the fact that it motivates individuals to prove themselves by undertaking great deeds and producing great cultural artefacts, both of which serve to enrich the commonweal.

2.2.3. THE LATER NIETZSCHE ON THE RELATION OF *WETTKAMPF* AND *VERNICHTUNGSKAMPF* (1881-89)

As we enter the 1880s, what I will refer to as the later phase of Nietzsche's thought, explicit discussion of agonal conflict or *Wettkampf* wanes almost to the point of disappearance. Yet as I will now argue, Nietzsche can be said to uphold his earlier conception of the relation of *Wettkampf* and PDC. In a note from 1881, for instance, Nietzsche tells us that

Die griechischen Gesetzgeber haben den agon so gefördert, um den Wettkampfgedanken vom Staate abzulenken und die politische Ruhe zu gewinnen [...] Das Nachdenken über den Staat sollte durch agonale Erhitzung abgelenkt werden — ja turnen und dichten sollte man — dies hatte den Nebenerfolg, die Bürger stark schön und fein zu machen. (NL 11[186] 9.514)⁵²

⁵² See also WS 226.

Here the agon is equated with “turnen und dichten” and “politische Ruhe”, and, furthermore, it is unambiguously opposed to civil war. However, it is once again depicted as drawing on the same energies as destructive conflict, offering a way of channelling potentially detrimental impulses into socially beneficial practices (i.e. it makes the citizens “schön und fein”).

In 1883 (around the time he was reading Schmidt), Nietzsche describes the agonal feeling (“[d]as agonale Gefühl”) as that which “vor einem Publikum siegen will und diesem Publikum verständlich sein muß” (NL 8[15] 10.339). This shows that Nietzsche’s understanding of the agon is closely related to the poetic or dramaturgical Greek contest, for it is only in such contests that one must make oneself “verständlich” before an audience (“Publikum”). We need only examine a note such as the following to remark that, even after the emergence of the notion of the will to power, Nietzsche still sees the *Wettkampf* as conceptually distinct from PDC:

Die Freien, Mässigen erfanden den Wettkampf als die immer wachsende Verfeinerung jenes Macht-Äußerungsbedürfnisses: durch den Wettkampf wurde der Hybris vorgebeugt: welche durch lange Unbefriedig<ung> des Machtgelüstes entsteht. (NL 7[161] 10.295)

The *Wettkampf* represents a *refinement* (“Verfeinerung”) of individuals’ expression of power.⁵³ It is defined, he indicates earlier in the same note, by *Aidos* – that is, “[e]ine Art Ekel vor der Verletzung des Ehrwürdigen.” It is *measure* that distinguishes agonal conflict from struggles in which one seeks the harm one’s opponent, which Nietzsche associates with “Übermaß, in dem freudigen I<nstinkt der> Hybris” (ibid.). In 1888, after a long hiatus, we then witness Nietzsche returning to the theme of the agon in his published work. Now, in GD, he is interested in how the form of philosophical debate engendered by Socrates and Plato constituted “eine neue Art agon” (GD Sokrates 8 6.71), that is, “eine Fortbildung und Verinnerlichung der alten agonalen Gymnastik” (GD Streifzüge 23 6.126).

⁵³ See also FW 13.

Although Nietzsche in many ways construes this type of spiritualised agon as a decadent form of the practice, it is nonetheless even further removed from PDC than its physical counterparts in wrestling and gymnastics.

In GD Alten 3, Nietzsche rebukes the disempowering and sanitising effect of the ancient Greek philosophers on their surrounding culture; but what should be observed is that in making this critique, he maintains a clear *conceptual* distinction between agonal practices and violent conflict, while nonetheless accenting their *genetic* relation:

Ich sah ihren stärksten Instinkt, den Willen zur Macht, ich sah sie zittern vor der unbändigen Gewalt dieses Triebs, — ich sah alle ihre Institutionen wachsen aus Schutzmaassregeln, um sich vor einander gegen ihren inwendigen Explosivstoff sicher zu stellen. [...] Und mit Festen und Künsten wollte man auch nichts Andres als sich obenauf fühlen, sich obenauf zeigen: es sind Mittel, sich selber zu verherrlichen, unter Umständen vor sich Furcht zu machen... [...] Die Philosophen sind ja die *décadents* des Griechenthums, die Gegenbewegung gegen den alten, den vornehmen Geschmack (— gegen den agonalen Instinkt, gegen die Polis, gegen den Werth der Rasse, gegen die Autorität des Herkommens) [...]. (GD Alten 3 6.157)

Nietzsche implies that agonal practices or institutions arise out of the need to effect a *Bändigung* of the destructively explosive “[unbändige] Gewalt” of the will to power. This is achieved by creating moderated, institutional spaces in which this will can at least partially discharge itself in non-destructive activity. Thus, once again Nietzsche conceptually distinguishes measured agonal conflict – which he equates with the “Festen und Künsten” enjoyed by citizen’s living in a state of peace (i.e. who “vor sich selber Ruhe fänden”) – from the unrestrained bellicose mode of conflict occurring when “Stadtgemeinden zerfleischten sich unter einander” (ibid.).

Notwithstanding this act of division, Nietzsche *is* highlighting a strong connection between the two modes of conflict. They are *both* expressions of the one will to power, and measured, agonal conflict is developed as a response to the often-deleterious effects of this impetus. Again, as in GM, Nietzsche is trying to show how the cultural strength of the Greeks – particularly their art and (agonal) institutions –

grew out of a need to restrain and moderate the “[unbändige] Gewalt” of the will to power, to transform the “agonale Trieb” for discharge and overcoming into agonal conflict proper; thus, he says “ich sah alle ihre Institutionen wachsen aus Schutzmaassregeln”. Those things that we find laudatory in Hellenic culture are, for Nietzsche, a result of the Greeks’ ability to harness the productive potential of the will to power. As we saw in Chapter 1, however, this agonal drive is highly volatile and often releases itself with destructively explosive force.⁵⁴

The conditions under which this transformation occurs will be expounded over the subsequent sections. For now the objective has been to show that, unlike Curtius, Nietzsche persistently conceptualises agonal struggle in *opposition* to PDC – that is, the two types of conflict stand in a conceptual relation of exclusive disjunction towards one another. Indeed, Nietzsche draws an even clearer conceptual distinction than Burckhardt. Nonetheless, both the early and later Nietzsche also consistently underscore the *genealogical* relation of *Wettkampf* and *Vernichtungskampf*. In reading Nietzsche’s agon as a promotion of murderous conflict, his destructive readers therefore commit a genetic fallacy insofar they confound the agon with its origins (in violent strife).

2.3. THE SCOPE OF THE AGON

Now that we have established that Nietzsche’s endorsement of the agon does indeed refer to a *measured* form of conflict – insofar as it is not physically destructive – we need to establish the *scope* of this endorsement of measured conflict. The point in contention is the degree of social inclusivity exhibited by Nietzsche’s ideal agon. Whereas democratic appropriations of his thought tend to interpret his agonism as profoundly open and inclusive, aristocratic readings emphasise its *exclusivity* and

⁵⁴ What he describes as an unmeasured, Dionysian species of “Rausch” in GD Streifzüge 8 6.116.

confinement to a ruling minority. A survey of the internally divided critical literature therefore gives us no clear idea as to the scope of Nietzsche's agonism; and indeed, without a coherent answer to this question of scope, Nietzsche's conception of the agon is left with little, if any, practical applicability.

On the democratic side, Hatab, for example, argues that although the Nietzschean agon "eschews equal results and even equal capacity", it demands equality in the sense of equal *opportunity*. In political terms, this "agonistic openness" can be taken as the "open fair opportunity for all citizens to participate in political contention".⁵⁵ Thus, for Hatab, the ideal Nietzschean agon is democratic in its openness, and only aristocratic "in apportioning appropriate judgments of superiority and inferiority."⁵⁶ Crucially, this openness is conceived as the equal opportunity of citizens to compete for *political* power, where "losers must yield to, and live under, the policies of the winner".⁵⁷ The logic behind this notion of "agonistic openness" is that excluding individuals from the contest betrays "a flight from competition, a will to eliminate challenges" and is therefore "a weakness in a Nietzschean sense". On this reading, then, agonism implies a radical state of receptivity to the challenges of others, regardless of social standing or capacity.

In the other camp, we then find Appel and Conway. Conway argues that, according to Nietzsche, the agon is limited to a select "community of agonistic

⁵⁵ See Hatab (1995), p.120. See also p.100, p.220 and pp.120-2.

⁵⁶ See Lawrence Hatab, "Prospects for a Democratic Agon: Why We Can Still Be Nietzscheans", *JNS*, 24 (2002), 132-147 (p.140; see also p.142). David Owen also suggests that the Nietzschean democratic agon is similarly aristocratic insofar as it is a contest to establish a ranking of values – i.e. to establish what counts as excellence. See David Owen, *Nietzsche, Politics and Modernity* (London: Sage, 1995), pp.144-6.

⁵⁷ He states, therefore, that we can identify "specific configurations of power, of *domination and submission* in democratic politics" (Hatab [1995], p.63). See also David Owen, "Equality, Democracy, and Self-Respect: Reflections on Nietzsche's Agonal Perfectionism", *JNS*, 24 (2002), 113-131. Following Conant, Owen argues that the inequality affirmed by Nietzsche should be conceived as interior to the parts of the self, not as an external, social form of inequality. See also Owen (1995) (esp. p.163); and for a comparable reading of Nietzsche's notion of the "Pathos der Distanz", see Thomas Fossen, "Nietzsche's Aristocratism Revisited", in H. W. Siemens and V. Roodt (eds.), *Nietzsche, Power and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche's Legacy for Political Thought* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), pp.299-318. This issue will be taken up again in ch.4.

‘friends’ founded by the *Übermensch*’.⁵⁸ On a similar note, Appel thinks that to read Nietzsche as a proponent of democratic openness is contrived and demands an excessively violent appropriation of his thought for liberal-democratic ends.⁵⁹ He contends that Nietzsche is a thoroughgoing aristocrat. But what does aristocracy mean in this context? For Appel, on the one hand, this minority is selected solely on the basis of their superior *capacity*, not according to birth-right or wealth.⁶⁰ On the other hand, Appel attributes a more conventional notion of aristocratism to Nietzsche insofar as he reads him as campaigning for the oppressive rule of a few higher individuals over an enslaved majority. The same goes for Nietzsche’s understanding of the agon, which, echoing Conway, he describes in remarkably elitist terms as “the open clash of competing wills to power *in the aristocratic inner circle*”.⁶¹

Appel also reads a line of continuity between CV 5 and Nietzsche’s later aristocratic agon. He maintains that both present “a constructive outlet for the potentially destructive wills of competitors, thereby preserving Greek community life and fostering its high culture.” Appel continues, asserting that, “[c]asting his eyes to the future, Nietzsche wishes to foster a space of contest and rivalry with a similar function. ‘Who can command, who can obey—that is experimented here!’”⁶² Thus, like Hatab, he construes the struggle as one in which political power over one’s adversaries is the main stake. Yet, according to Appel, beyond this aristocratic inner circle, Nietzsche proposes that the majority of individuals ought to be confined to a politically excluded and murderously repressed slave-body.⁶³

⁵⁸ Daniel Conway, *Nietzsche and the Political* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p.31: “The aristocratic regimes [Nietzsche] favors would shelter a pyramidal hierarchy of ethical communities, each equipped with a distinctive morality that reflects its unique needs and strengths. At the pinnacle of this pyramidal structure would stand the community of agonistic ‘friends’ founded by the *Übermensch*.” See also p.54: “Nietzsche depicts friendship as a mutually empowering *agon*, in which select individuals undergo moral development through their voluntary engagement in contest and conflict.”

⁵⁹ See Appel (1999), pp.2-5.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.140.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.141.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.140 (quoting Z III Tafeln 25 4.265).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.147.

This hermeneutic dichotomy regarding Nietzsche's agonism reflects a more general division running through the secondary literature. Namely, that which exists between aristocratic and democratic appropriations of Nietzsche's wider philosophy. In the former camp, commentators such as John Rawls and Thomas Hurka have claimed that Nietzsche's perfectionist project is delimited to an aristocratic minority.⁶⁴ Conversely, readers such as Stanley Cavell and James Conant have argued that Nietzsche's perfectionism is open to all, perfectly compatible with democracy, and in no way confined to a particular social group.⁶⁵

In the following section, then, the problem can be stated as follows: what is the social scope of Nietzsche's agonism? Must every instance of genuinely agonal conflict exhibit the openness of which Hatab speaks; or is Nietzsche's agon restricted to an aristocratic minority, excluding all others from participation? This can be divided into two sub-questions. First, does Nietzsche think that it is *possible* for anyone to participate in agonal conflict? Second, does he think it is *desirable* that anyone and everyone participate in agonal conflict, or are his positive valuations of such conflict specific to particular social groups? We should not take it for granted that Nietzsche's descriptive and normative conceptions of the agon have the same extension.

In trying to get an insight into the aristocratic aspect of Nietzsche's agon, one place we might want to begin by looking is in Burckhardt's *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, where the agon is represented as closely bound up with the noble social class. Indeed, Martin Ruehl has even claimed that, "[l]ike Burckhardt, Nietzsche regarded the *agon* as an essentially aristocratic notion that belonged to a

⁶⁴ See e.g. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp.285ff.; Thomas Hurka, *Perfectionism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); see also Bruce Detwiler (1990).

⁶⁵ See Stanley Cavell, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp.49-53; see also James Conant, "Nietzsche's Perfectionism: A Reading of Schopenhauer as Educator", in Richard Schacht (ed.), *Nietzsche's Postmoralism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp.181-256.

pre-democratic age.”⁶⁶ However, I will show that we find cogent criticisms in Burckhardt, not just of the democratic, but indeed, also of the strictly aristocratic conception of the agon. Moreover, Burckhardt rejects the idea of the agon as a direct struggle for political power. In Burckhardt we find both a socially inclusive *and* a socially exclusive or elitist conception of the agon, side by side, as it were.

In the second subsection, I then examine Nietzsche’s conception of the agon prior to 1881, where he appears to appropriate much of Burckhardt’s account. Thus, he will be seen to propound a generalised notion of the agon, according to which any roughly equal individuals – though now this equality is conceived in terms of capacity rather than heredity – can agonally compete in local struggles for excellence. However, like Burckhardt, Nietzsche more emphatically endorses another more obviously aristocratic species of the struggle for excellence. We will also see that Nietzsche’s *ideal* agon, again paralleling Burckhardt’s, is an apolitical contest for fame and glory, and so cannot be conceived as a struggle for instrumental power fought among aristocrats. Indeed, while both Burckhardt and Nietzsche hold political agonism to be *possible*, they are both averse to it due to the fact that it can very easily deteriorate into socially detrimental forms of contest.

In the third subsection, I turn to the scope of Nietzsche’s agonism after 1881. I contend that a major shift occurs at this point insofar as power (rather than fame or glory) is now figured as the principal stake sought in agonal contest; however, I nonetheless stress that this is *not* to be understood as instrumental or political power over one’s adversary. Drawing on JGB 259 and 262, which Appel uses to defend his aristocratic reading, I show that agonal conflict arises precisely where the struggle for instrumental or exploitative power *cannot* take place – namely, between any roughly equal will to power organisations. Though Nietzsche is particularly interested in how this is true of aristocratic social groups, and so undeniably

⁶⁶ Martin Ruehl, “Politeia 1871 – Nietzsche *contra* Wagner”, in Ingo Gildenhard and Martin Ruehl (eds.), *Out of Arcadia: Classics and Politics in Germany in the Age of Burckhardt, Nietzsche and Wilamowitz* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, 2003), p.78.

foregrounds this, I contend that he holds it to be possible for *all relations of approximate equals*.

2.3.1. BURCKHARDT

For Jacob Burckhardt, the ancient Greek agon was driven by the aristocratic ideal of *kalokagathia*, “der Einheit von Adel, Reichtum und Trefflichkeit”.⁶⁷ According to his account, the agon initially emerges as a cultural practice of the noble class. The freedom to engage in the ostensibly useless practice of athletic and equestrian contest was founded on the surplus labour produced by the *banauoi*. These were the members of the working-classes, who performed almost all the manual labour in the ancient Greek polis.⁶⁸ Hence, initially at least, the practice of the agon emerged by virtue of the socio-economic conditions of aristocracy. As such, Burckhardt does not think that agonal culture was possible within tyrannous societies (such a Sparta), which tend to be organised around purely utilitarian goals, and therefore proscribe such apparently extravagant behaviour in favour of work and military training.⁶⁹

Despite this emphasis on aristocracy, Burckhardt understands social inclusivity as a vital precondition of the agon. Thus, he glosses the agon as that which “bei den Griechen *jeder geborene Grieche* mitmachen durfte”, adding that such widespread participation would not have been possible within caste-based societies such as ancient Egypt. In such stratified societies, higher-caste individuals would not have wanted to compete before those belonging to lower social strata; thus, their contests tended to be fought before the king, where what was at stake was his

⁶⁷ Burckhardt (2014), vol.4, p.81.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ See *ibid.*: “Eine Feindin des Agonalen ist bei ihrem utilitarischen Charakter zwar die Tyrannis, und auch Sparta mit seinem kargen Dorismus, wo sich das Agonale auf seine besondere Weise fixiert, steht auf der Seite; denn hier findet sich nicht eine wahre Gesellschaft, sondern ein hart herrschendes Eroberervolk, dessen gymnastisches und sonstiges Tun wesentlich den praktischen Zweck hat, die Herrschaft zu behaupten”.

political favour.⁷⁰ Only in ancient Greece, that is, “[n]ur in freien und kleinen Aristokratien konnte dieser *Wille der Auszeichnung unter seinesgleichen* vor gewählten oder sonst objektiv gegebenen Richtern zur Blüte kommen”.⁷¹ However, the aristocracy envisioned by Burckhardt is far from an *exclusively* hereditary nobility. As he points out, there was a great deal of social mobility during this period of Greek history; thus, for example, lower standing Greeks could become aristocrats by simply migrating to the colonies.⁷²

Burckhardt then describes how the agonal spirit spread beyond the confines of the aristocratic sphere, becoming a widespread feature of Greek social existence; indeed, “wenn überhaupt viele Griechen zusammenkamen, sich Agone ganz von selbst ergaben”:⁷³

So wird nach dem Ausgang des heroischen Königtums alles höhere Leben der Griechen, das äußere wie das geistige, zum Agon. Dieser ist es, welcher die Trefflichkeit (*ἀρετή*) und die Rasse manifestiert, und der Agonalsieg, d.h. der edle Sieg ohne Feindschaft erscheint uns in dieser Zeit als der altertümliche Ausdruck für den friedlichen Sieg einer Individualität. Von dieser Form des Wetteifers (*φιλοτιμία*) kam man auf den verschiedensten Gebieten nicht mehr ab. Sie zeigt sich im Symposion bei den Gesprächen und wechselnden Skolien der Gäste, auf dem Gebiete der Philosophie und der Rechtshandel [...].⁷⁴

In a general sense, then, the agon was a peaceful form of contest, in which opponents sought to demonstrate their excellence at specific tasks. Any free individual could participate in this form of contest. However, note that for Burckhardt, this widespread agon “im ländlichen und bürgerlichen Leben” is “zum vornehmen und idealen Agon *nur* eine Parallele”.⁷⁵ Though Burckhardt therefore reserves his highest praise for the noble agon, he nonetheless commends the culturally stimulating effect

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.84; my italics.

⁷¹ Ibid.; my italics.

⁷² Ibid., p.81: “Emporstrebende Massen läßt man nach den Kolonien abziehen, wo sie dann ihrerseits Aristokraten werden.”

⁷³ Ibid., p.87.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.85.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp.87-8, my italics.

of this pervasive culture of agonal contest, calling it “das allgemeine Gärungselement, welches jegliches Wollen und Können, sobald die nötige Freiheit da ist, in Fermentation bringt”.⁷⁶ Even with respect to the official agonal games (such as were held at Delphi), *de jure*, anyone could participate according to Burckhardt, provided they had enough money to cover their travel, bed and board expenses, and could pay for the necessary religious offerings.⁷⁷ However, due to these costs, the *de facto* rule was that the agonal games remained a privilege of wealthy aristocratic families, which excluded women, slaves and the metics.⁷⁸

But what did Burckhardt think was the end sought by those engaging in agonal contest? Above all, he informs us, the goal was that of *excellence*, and every aspect of ancient Greek spiritual and physical life was thus defined by the struggle of individuals to excel their peers. They sought to measure the degree of excellence that they had attained by placing themselves in comparison with others.⁷⁹ Whereas in the *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*, Burckhardt saw military struggle as the primary means by which a *polis* measures itself against its counterparts (as we saw in Chapter 1), we now find that it is the practice of the agon which is conceived as the principal means of obtaining such measurement, both an individual and collective level.⁸⁰ Burckhardt also argues that the goal of the *Wettkampf* was simply being victorious over others – that is, to achieve “der Sieg an sich”, disconnected

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.83.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.94.

⁷⁸ See *ibid.*, p.94, where Burckhardt speaks of the “Zusammentreffen des Agonalen und der Aristokratie”. On the exclusion of the slaves and metics from the agon, see *ibid.*, p.83: “[...] [A]ls mit der Zeit die völlige Demokratie eintrat, war man noch immer tatsächlich eine Aristokratie und Minderzahl gegenüber von Metöken und Sklaven.” See also *ibid.*, p.105: “Beiläufig mag hier noch erwähnt sein, daß das olympische Fest (wie wohl alle wichtigen Agone) ausschließlich eine Sache von Mannsleuten war, und daß man die Weiber davon drakonisch fernhielt.” Burckhardt does however, note that women were, in some instances, allowed to compete in the agon (*ibid.*, p.140).

⁷⁹ See *ibid.*, p.89: “Überall, schon in den engsten Kreisen, stellte sich der Wettstreit ein; die volle Entwicklung des Individuums war davon abhängig, daß man sich unaufhörlich untereinander maß und verglich und zwar durch Übungen, bei denen es auf einen direkten praktischen Nutzen nicht abgesehen war.”

⁸⁰ Compare ch.1, p.36, fn.48.

from practical goals.⁸¹ It is important to recall that even in the official games, the prizes were in themselves worthless. Hence, Burckhardt is in agreement with Curtius' statement that these prizes, "[d]er Kranz von Blättern, der Laubzweig, die wollene Binde haben ja keinen andern Wert, als daß sie Symbole des Sieges sind".⁸² On the other hand, Burckhardt states that immortal glory was the goal; hence, victory at Olympia "gilt als das Höchste auf Erden, indem er [der Sieg] dem Sieger verbürgt, was im Grunde das Ziel jedes Griechen ist, daß er im Leben angestaunt und im Tode hochgepriesen werden muß." Therefore, although Burckhardt acknowledges that contestants often sought victory in the various organised games as a means to obtaining public influence, political power was not a primary motivating factor in his conception of the ideal agon, nor is it implied that the aristocratic agon established relations of command and obedience between the victors and the vanquished.⁸³ After all one might win such honours by defeating an adversary from another *polis*.

Andreas Kalyvas has argued (following others) that what distinguishes the classical from the archaic age of ancient Greece is the *democratisation* of the agon – that is, "the encounter of the democratic logic of equality with the aristocratic spirit of excellence". To be sure, Burckhardt would at least partially assent to Kalyvas' claim that, within the classical *polis*, "the aristocratic spirit became increasingly detached from its social and material bases, as additional social groups were gradually forming and participating in their own multiple agonistic spheres".⁸⁴ In this way, we might label the agon aristocratic, not by dint of the social standing of its participants, but rather on account of the ethos or set of values held by those participants, an ethos which has its roots in the aristocratic classes. However, for

⁸¹ Ibid., p.99.

⁸² Curtius (1864), p.14.

⁸³ See *ibid.*, p.202. Here Burckhardt laments the fact that, with the coming of the democratic age, "Alle Siege in Olympia usw. garantierten eben nicht mehr den mindesten Einfluß in der Polis, *wonach doch jetzt alle strebten*" (my italics). He thereby implies that political *Einfluß* was the desideratum sought in true agonal contest.

⁸⁴ See Kalyvas (2013), pp.15-41, p.24.

Burckhardt, the survival of the agon depends on it *maintaining* these roots in the aristocratic social caste. Indeed, Burckhardt is severely critical of the *over-democratisation* of the agon on account of the fact that he thinks this degrades the practice by extirpating it from its aristocratic ground.

Burckhardt theorises that it was with the emergence of the artistic contest that this process of extirpation really got under way; indeed, this relatively novel type of contest heralded the demise of the ideal agon. The aesthetic agon did not require the purchasing of equipment, or even participation in official games, and thus anyone could participate given the talent. As soon as the agon proliferated beyond the domains of athletics and horseracing, however, it became an entirely public affair. Even shepherds could now participate in singing competitions, for example.⁸⁵ In particular, Burckhardt emphasises the way in which artistic contest enflamed the cult of *celebrity* (“Zelebrität”), drawing attention away from the victors of the mostly aristocratic physical agons.⁸⁶ Unlike Curtius (or Nietzsche for that matter), he gives this form of competition – the “Musisch-Agonale” – very little attention, most of which is disparaging, and he shows an unmistakeable preference for the physical, sporting agon (e.g. gymnastics, horse-racing and athletics).

Following the advent of the *Musisch-Agonale*, philosophical dialogues and judicial trials start to take on a markedly contestatory character.⁸⁷ For Burckhardt, this ushered in the end of the true agon: as the practice of oral contest became more widespread, the now vocal and contentious democratic polis demanded its leaders subordinate themselves to the whim of the demos. Exacerbating this decline, during the same period, Socrates also worked to undermine the notion of *kalokagathia* in his philosophical agons – namely, by redefining it as a concern with the betterment of *all* individuals and even the human race; thus, he sullied the goal of excellence by

⁸⁵ Burckhardt (2014), vol.4, p.113. Burckhardt also remarks upon the low social standing of many competing artists (ibid., p.128).

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.149.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.114.

bifurcating it from its elitist, aristocratic element.⁸⁸ On account of both of these occurrences, the goal of personal excellence and predominance fell into serious disrepute and the agon descended into a base oral contest over who could most effectively fawn to the caprices of the public: “ja die ganze Praxis der Demokratie wird mit der Zeit ein *unechter* Agon, wobei die scheußliche Übelrede, die Sykophantie usw. sich in den Vordergrund drängen.”⁸⁹

As popularity came to replace the goal of noble excellence (*Edeltrefflichkeit*), the contest lost its right to be called authentically agonal according to Burckhardt; instead, he calls this type of contest a *pseudo*-agon (“ein unechter Agon”). This is the age of demagogues and conceited personalities. Within this new pseudo-agon, the element of *measure* or *restraint* is lost: “Die Macht der Persönlichkeit zeigt sich also jetzt in den großen Beispielen nicht mehr agonal, d.h. im Siege über einen oder einige Ähnliche, sondern absolut”.⁹⁰ Modesty no longer found a place in Greek society, and individuals ceased to compete for transitory, agonal victory over those of a similar capacity to themselves. Instead, they began to pursue *absolute* victory – that is, to establish themselves as tyrants. Needless to say, this had injurious repercussions for the old aristocratic agon. Burckhardt sees the case of Alcibiades as symptomatic of the destructive way in which the celebrities produced by the democratic agon eroded the noble sporting agon. Thus, Alcibiades stifled the gymnastic agon due to his scorn for participating with people of lower social standing, and in the equestrian agon, his inordinate wealth gave him such an overwhelming advantage that no one else saw any point in participating.⁹¹ In this way, he tyrannised over the games, and in his effort to obtain a complete victory, he

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.205. “War die Kalokagathie ein Sein gewesen, so tritt nun an ihre Stelle ein Wirken auf andere, nämlich das ‘die Menschen besser machen’ [...] [D]ies wird nunmehr der Maßstab, der an Menschen und Einrichtungen gelegt wird; Sokrates aber, und wer sonst noch so redete, sprach damit ein neues Ideal aus, mochte es mit der Wirklichkeit aussehen, wie es wollte. Und schon hatte man dabei nicht mehr den Edelfreien, sondern den Bürger überhaupt, ja bald den Menschen überhaupt im Auge.”

⁸⁹ Ibid.; my italics. See also pp.182ff.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.203.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.204.

effectively brought the aristocratic agon to an end. Recall that Burckhardt maintains that the foundation of Greek superiority was their ability to measure themselves against others, and exercise their “Wille der Auszeichnung”, non-violently, through the practice of the agon.⁹² Indeed, Burckhardt remarks upon the rarity of inter-Greek war during the agonal age.⁹³ However, coupled with the arrogance and ambition of the celebrity statesmen (which was inflated by victory in the first Persian War), it is no wonder that Burckhardt thought that with the corrosion of the agon – *qua* means for satisfying the desire for distinction – the seeds of the Peloponnesian war were sown and the fate of the agonal age was sealed.⁹⁴

Burckhardt’s affirmation of the aristocratic nature of the agon is therefore not to be construed as a restriction of the agon to the social strata of the landed, hereditary aristocracy. Rather, he suggests that the *sine qua non* of agonal conflict is the pursuit of the aristocratic value of excellence among one’s equals (“seinesgleichen”). Indeed, Burckhardt praises this inclusive notion of the agon as the actual foundation of Greek predominance – so long as it did not spill into oral, and especially political, contests for celebrity. Nonetheless, he thinks that the value of excellence is ultimately parasitic on the continued dominance of a noble social class, and he praises the sporting agons, which *de facto* excluded non-nobles, as the sustaining well-spring of the wider agonal culture of the Hellenes. Burckhardt’s agon should therefore be conceived as *dependent upon*, but *not limited to*, aristocratic social organisation. In Burckhardt, then, there are two Greek agons – one democratically inclusive agon, which is general to Greek society, and one that is aristocratically exclusive, which is reserved for the nobility – neither of which are directly political in nature. Moreover, Burckhardt conceives of the agon as *possible*

⁹² See *ibid.*, p.89: “die volle Entwicklung des Individuums war davon abhängig, daß man sich unaufhörlich untereinander maß und verglich und zwar durch Übungen, bei denen es auf einen direkten praktischen Nutzen nicht abgesehen war.”

⁹³ See *ibid.*, p.158: “Das schönste Distinguens der Zeit aber ist die Wenigkeit der Kriege zwischen Hellenen.”

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.258: “Ehrgeiz und Eitelkeit finden nicht mehr ihr Genüge im Proklamieren und Bejubeln von Agonalsiegern; man muß sich nach außen regen, d.h. gegen andere Poleis, andere höchst empfindliche, in letzter Instanz nur durch Zernichtung unschädlich”.

across the entire of society and all its domains, though he certainly does not advocate it within the sphere of the political. I will now argue that Nietzsche makes comparable divisions and limitations in conceptualising the agon, and that these undercut the opposition we find between Hatab and Appel.

2.3.2. THE INCLUSIVITY OF NIETZSCHE'S EARLY AGONISM

Among the preparatory *Nachlass* notes for CV 5, we find a fragment that *prima facie* supports a strong aristocratic reading of his agonism: “Der Wettkampf! Und das Aristokratische, Geburtsmäßige, Edle bei den Griechen!” (NL 16[9] 7.396). Here the implication is that the agon is directly associated with hereditary (*geburtsmäßig*) aristocracy. However, I will now argue that in this note, Nietzsche is only referring to the *origins* of the agon, and not to the limits of its social extension. Nietzsche's use of Hesiod's commercial, agrarian and generally banausic conception of the *Wettkampf* in CV 5 indicates that, like Burckhardt, he assents to a socially inclusive model of the agon. Yet Ottmann has claimed that, although Nietzsche cites Hesiod and may think that the agon is *possible* in a wider socially inclusive sense, we should not conclude that he equates agonal conflict with economic competition:

Hesiod läßt für Nietzsche gerade vermissen, was für die aristokratische Verachtung des Banausischen typische war. [...] [Nietzsche's] Ziel war der Ruhm der Stadt, die Bildung, die Kultur. [...] Das Ethos, das Nietzsche sucht, war das von Helden, nicht Arbeitern oder Bürgern.⁹⁵

Certainly, during this period we find numerous texts in which Nietzsche explicitly rebukes the pursuit of material gain (*Geldgewinn*) as a boorish and philistine endeavour, adverse to the improvement of culture.⁹⁶ But is Ottmann's heroic

⁹⁵ Ottmann (1999), p.50.

⁹⁶ See NL 10[1] 7.346; CV 3 1.774; BA 1 1.667; UB III 5 1.379. See also Ritchie Robertson, “Competition and Democracy in Burckhardt and Nietzsche”, in Herman Siemens and James Pearson (eds.), *Nietzsche on Conflict* (forthcoming, 2017).

interpretation of Nietzsche's agon justified? After all, we have already discerned the sharp distinction Burckhardt draws between the heroic and agonal ages.

In CV 5, Nietzsche does not frame agonal contest as a struggle for *Wohlstand*, which signifies prosperity, health and well-being (*Wohlfahrt* or *Wohlergehen*), but not necessarily fiscal or material wealth.⁹⁷ Nietzsche appears to be comfortable, like Burckhardt, representing this struggle for "Wohlstand" as a manifestation of the general impetus to improve and empower oneself, rather than as a base struggle for monetary gain.⁹⁸ Indeed, he is at ease ascribing this to the category of conflict he endorses as *Wettkampf* (without even making the qualification, which we find in Burckhardt, that this is only a "Parallel" of the noble *Wettkampf*).⁹⁹ As Enrico Müller has observed, CV 5 sets up a contest between the Homeric and the Hesiodic depictions of the pursuit of pre-eminence (*aristeuein*):

Gegenüber dem Elitendiskurs, dem Homer durchgehend verpflichtet bleibt, war Hesiod ausgehend von seiner bäuerlichen Lebenswelt bemüht, ein Gerechtigkeitskonzept als Korrektiv gegen die hybriden Tendenzen des ungezügelter *aristeuein* zu errichten. Seine eigene Lebensperspektive hat es ihm ermöglicht, die Agonalitätsideologie einer bestimmten sozialen Gruppe in den Gedanken einer agonalen Sozialität als solcher zu verwandeln.¹⁰⁰

So is the agon necessarily limited to "das Aristokratische, Geburtsmäßige, [und] Edle" for Nietzsche? Turning to CV 5 itself, one cannot help but notice that the

⁹⁷ See entry for "Wohlstand", in DWB, vol.30, cols.1181-1184.

⁹⁸ CV 5 1.786: "[D]er Nachbar wetteifert mit dem Nachbarn, der zum Wohlstande hinstrebt."

⁹⁹ For an example of Nietzsche seemingly endorsing the agon of the *banauoi*, see NL 16[8] 7.396. See also Tracy Strong, *Politics of Transfiguration: Expanded Edition* (California: University of California Press, 1988), p.151: "In Nietzsche's reading, Hesiod retains the agonal principle as the basis of culture, and, in his contest with Homer, manages to establish an agon that is purely human and no longer tied to the immortal gods. By emphasizing the human nature of the *agon*, Hesiod opens the contest up to potentially much richer variations." As Müller (2005) has noted, for Strong, Nietzsche's Hesiodic vision is generally opposed to the "aristokratisch kriegerischen Ausprägung des Agongedankens in den Homerischen Epen" (see p.80, fn.215).

¹⁰⁰ Enrico Müller, "Kompetitives Ethos und kulturelle Dynamik. Das Prinzip der Agonalität bei Jacob Burckhardt und Friedrich Nietzsche", in Herman Siemens and James Pearson (eds.), *Nietzsche on Conflict* (forthcoming, 2017).

nominalised adjectives “Aristokratisch” and “Geburtsmäßig” have been suppressed. It is only “Edel” that remains. Thus, Nietzsche opens his essay on the *Wettkampf* indicating that he will be scrutinising the human “in seinen höchsten und edelsten Kräften” (CV 5 1.783), then closes the piece describing the *Wettkampf* as the “edelsten hellenischen Grundgedanken” (CV 5 1.792). As has been observed in the *Nietzsche-Wörterbuch* entry for “edel”, although the term is closely bound up with the noble social class, “(hohe) Geburt [ist] keine conditio sine qua non” governing Nietzsche’s use of the adjective. The term is rather used to signify participation in a set of values that are typically *associated* with nobility, such as strength (“Stärke”), measure (“Maß”), and self-determination (“selbst-Beherrschung”). Further evidence for this thesis is that Nietzsche refers to other individuals, not necessarily of aristocratic lineage, as “edel” (e.g. the “heroische Mensch” and the “Mensch der tragischen Gesinnung”). Later, the *Wörterbuch* entry continues, around JGB, Nietzsche shows a preference for the terms “aristokratisch” and “noblesse”, and with this “der ‘höhere Rangklasse’ [...] wird sogar noch starker herausgehoben”.¹⁰¹ His decision to use the term “edel”, instead of “aristokratisch” or “geburtsmäßig”, strongly implies that he sought to connect the *Wettkampf* to certain values originating in the ancient Greek aristocracy, but without necessarily limiting participation in the *Wettkampf* to the noble social classes.¹⁰²

Further contradicting the idea of caste pedigree as a precondition of participating in agonal relations, is the fact that, echoing Burckhardt, Nietzsche stresses the condition of *equality* between contestants, without any mention of their social standing. Already in ST, he argues that as soon as two “gleichberechtigt Hauptspieler sich gegenüber standen, so erhob sich, einem tief hellenischen Triebe gemäß, der Wettkampf” (1.545). Even in the citation from Hesiod, there is a

¹⁰¹ Entry for “edel”, in Paul van Tongeren, Gerd Schank and Herman Siemens (eds.), *Nietzsche-Wörterbuch* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), p.698. See also entry for “Adel”: “der Adel wird [...] auch durch sein soziale Stelle, wie durch psychologische Züge und Gewohnheiten charakterisiert” (p.42).

¹⁰² See also Müller (2005), p.80 (esp. fn.214), who also looks at how, according to Nietzsche’s account, aristocratic values became detached from the aristocratic social class.

symmetry to the agonal adversaries (“der Töpfer grollt dem Töpfer und der Zimmermann dem Zimmermann, es neidet der Bettler den Bettler und der Sänger den Sänger”); and if we look forward to the representation of Eris in WS 29, this condition of equality is unsurprisingly emphasised: “Wo die Gleichheit wirklich durchgedrungen und dauernd begründet ist, entsteht jener, im Ganzen als unmoralisch geltende Hang, der im Naturzustande kaum begreiflich wäre: der Neid.”

In these texts, perceived equality of ability is a prerequisite of the impulse to agonal contest – namely, because such a perception is necessary to arouse the feeling of envy (as de Tocqueville also famously remarked). The perception of approximate equality acts as a *stimulant*, or fillip to *Wettkampf*. Just like Burckhardt, Nietzsche emphasises how this was also reflected in the institutionally official forms of agon; thus, he states in WS 226 that “der griechische Staat [hatte] den gymnastischen und musischen Wettkampf innerhalb der Gleichen sanctionirt”.

These texts indicate that *Wettkampf* can take place between *any* individuals of roughly equal ability, not merely the equals of the aristocratic social classes. However, as Hannah Arendt has underscored, equality had a far more restricted meaning in antiquity,

[...] and notably in the Greek city states. To belong to the few “equals” (*homoioi*) meant to be permitted to live among one's peers; but the public realm itself, the *polis*, was permeated by a fiercely agonal spirit, where everybody had constantly to distinguish himself from all others, to show through unique deeds or achievements that he was the best of all (*aim aristeuein*).¹⁰³

On this reading, it is only a minority of individuals that enjoy the status of “equals” in the Greek *polis*, and who can therefore participate in the struggle for victory and predominance. Perhaps, then, the agonal equality of which Nietzsche speaks is therefore only applicable to the highest strata of Greek society – namely, *citizens*, who are able to participate in the public space of action?

¹⁰³ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958), p.41.

In order to demonstrate that Nietzsche does not share Arendt's limited conception of agonal equality, we might look at GGL, where Nietzsche implies that agonal conflict (here referred to as "Wetteifer") is a relation reserved for equals of *any* caste:

Die Griechen verkehren mit ihren Göttern *wie eine niedere Kaste mit einer höheren mächtigeren edleren*, mit der man sich aber von gleicher Abstammung weiß. Man lebt mit ihr zusammen [und] thut alles, um dies Zusammenleben für sich wohlthätig zu gestalten: das allgem. Mittel ist, zu lieben, was jene liebt, zu hassen, was jene haßt, *aber nicht im Wetteifer mit ihr* [...]. (GGL III, KGW II/5, p.519; my italics)

Yet, Nietzsche held that, among themselves, the Gods enjoyed agonal relations, remarking in another note that the Trojan War was "ein Wettspiel der hellenischen Götter" (NL 2[6] 7.46).¹⁰⁴ Moreover, he states elsewhere that although the Greeks saw the Gods as a separate, higher caste ("Kaste"), that did not render the Greeks themselves ignoble; rather "[e]s ist ein Verhältniss, wie von niederem zu höherem Adel" (NL 5[150] 8.81). Having an aristocratic nature was not binary for Nietzsche's Greeks, but a matter of degree. This implies that for Nietzsche belonging to the aristocratic classes is by no means a precondition of engaging in nobly measured, agonal conflict. *Both* humans and the pantheon of gods could agonally struggle *within the bounds of their distinct groups*. All of this would contradict Dombowsky's thesis that for Nietzsche "agonism implies [social] inequality, class struggle and class war".¹⁰⁵

But this emphasis on caste would appear to distinguish Nietzsche from Burckhardt, since the latter expressly stated that the agon rested on a partial effacement of the boundaries between social strata (excluding slaves, of course). However, as we turn away from the relation of the Greeks to their gods, and towards the specifically human agon, it becomes doubtful whether Nietzsche held equality

¹⁰⁴ However, he also indicates that the gods engaged in destructive relations resembling the evil Eris: "Die Götter in Fehde. Die Titanenkämpfe wissen noch nichts vom Wettkampf" (NL 16[22] 7.402).

¹⁰⁵ Dombowsky (2004), p.45.

of social class to be a prerequisite of individuals entering into *Wettkampf* with one another. Like Burckhardt, he distinguishes the Greeks from the caste-based societies of the “Orientals”; moreover, he viewed the (agonal) educational institutions as concerned with *individuals* as opposed to castes: “Orientalische Völker haben Kasten. Die Institute wie Schulen, *δασδοχαί*, dienen nicht dem Stande, sondern dem Individuum” (NL 16[26] 7.404). Furthermore, the fact that Nietzsche considers the political tête-à-tête of Themistocles (of low-birth) and Aristides (of aristocratic lineage), to be a *Wettkampf* indicates that he was perfectly at ease considering individuals of different castes in *wettkämpferische* relations (see NL 16[35] 7.406). On the basis of this, it is likely that the kind of equality Nietzsche has in mind is an approximate equality of *ability*, and that his discussion of castes is a metaphor for the different “leagues” of contenders that constitute any domain of competitive practice. Indeed, Nietzsche often describes the agon as taking place between people of the same professional expertise – for example, the “Bettler”, “Sänger”, “Töpfer” and “Zimmermänner” already mentioned above, in addition to which he also explicitly mentions poets and philosophers.¹⁰⁶

2.3.3. THE ARISTOCRATIC VALUES OF NIETZSCHE’S EARLY AGONISM

An overview of Nietzsche’s early conception of agonal contest reveals that it is motivated by the pursuit of three aristocratic values: ascendancy (i.e. excellence – *ἀριστεύειν*), fame (*Ruhm*), and education (*Erziehung* and *Bildung*). We have already seen that the agonal impulse for ascendancy is socially generalizable. In this subsection, I now want to consider the values that might render Nietzsche’s *agon* socially exclusive. I will begin by arguing that the agon is not a struggle for political

¹⁰⁶ See CV 5 1.788: “Je größer und erhabener aber ein griechischer Mensch ist, um so heller bricht aus ihm die ehrgeizige Flamme heraus, jeden verzehrend, der mit ihm auf gleicher Bahn läuft”.

power – in either an aristocratic or a democratic sense – and so cannot be considered aristocratic insofar as it apportions such power (as both Hatab and Appel both claim, in different ways). However, Nietzsche’s notion of the agon, understood as a struggle for *Ruhm* and *Erziehung*, is nonetheless inextricably tied to stratified, aristocratic social order.

As we saw in the introduction to this chapter, numerous readers aside from Appel and Hatab interpret Nietzsche’s *Wettkampf* as a struggle for political power. There are two ways that we might figure the relation of agonal conflict and political power: first, as both Hatab and Appel imply, as a direct struggle for power within explicitly political fora; and second, as Burckhardt (and Curtius) suggest, as an indirect struggle for political power within the non-political, official agonal games, success in which then brings the victor certain political honours and influence.¹⁰⁷ There is of course some indication that Nietzsche saw direct political contention as an instance of *Wettkampf*; for example, where he describes the “Ringens der politischen Parteien und der Städte mit einander” as an instance of “der Wettkampfgedanke des einzelnen Griechen und des griechischen Staates” (PHG 5 1.825); or in CV 5 itself, he refers to Themistocles’ “langen Wetteifer mit Aristides” and “jener einzig merkwürdigen rein instinktiven Genialität seines politischen Handelns”. Finally, in his early lectures, he further recounts how poets were often motivated by the desire for “der persönl[iche] Vortheil, theils der Ehre, theils des Gewinns, theils zur Durchführung der eignen (politisch.) Pläne” (GGL III, KGW II/5, p.292). Yet, except for these few oblique references to political *Wettkämpfe*, in CV 5 and the early published works, the idea of the agon as a struggle for political power (be this direct or indirect) is notably suppressed. Indeed, even in CV 5, his reference to the political figure of Themistocles is used to illustrate the fact that ancient Greeks (though particularly artists and philosophers) were driven by the

¹⁰⁷ See Curtius (1864), p.9: “auch der einzelne Staat war eine Palästra bürgerlicher Tüchtigkeit, wo dem Bestbewährten als Preis Macht und Ehre erteilt wurde”.

desire to supplant the existing preeminent figure in their competitive field and thereby inherit his *fame* (i.e. his “Ruhm zu erben” [CV 5 1.788]).

Later in the 1870s, though, Nietzsche breaks his relative silence regarding the political agon, revealing himself to be actively hostile towards such an idea. In WS 226, for example, he censures political contest in no uncertain terms:

Klugheit der Griechen. — Da das Siegen- und Hervorragewollen ein unüberwindlicher Zug der Natur ist, älter und ursprünglicher, als alle Achtung und Freude der Gleichstellung, so hatte der griechische Staat den gymnastischen und musischen Wettkampf innerhalb der Gleichen sanctionirt, also einen Tummelplatz abgegränzt, wo jener Trieb sich entladen konnte, ohne die politische Ordnung in Gefahr zu bringen. Mit dem endlichen Verfall des gymnastischen und musischen Wettkampfes gerieth der griechische Staat in innere Unruhe und Auflösung.

The *Wettkampf* is only promoted as a means of diverting the desire for victory and ascendancy (“Siegen- und Hervorragewollen”) *away* from the political sphere. Though here it is implied that it is the state that encourages this, Nietzsche at other times proposes that the state is actively hostile to the agon.¹⁰⁸ The institutional agon circumscribes a space for the apolitical discharge of the drive for victory and ascendancy. The idea, echoing Burckhardt, is that a political agon jeopardises the state insofar as it so easily descends into unmeasured, violent sedition (*stasis*). Political conflict simply loses the measure necessary for it to be considered agonal.¹⁰⁹ Though Nietzsche suggests that political agonism is conceptually

¹⁰⁸ See NL 5[179] 8.91: “Die geistige Cultur Griechenlands eine Aberration des ungeheuren politischen Triebes nach ἀριστεύειν. — Die πόλις höchst ablehnend gegen neue Bildung. Trotzdem existirte die Cultur.” See also MA 474, where Nietzsche suggests that “Die griechische Polis war, wie jede organisirende politische Macht, ausschliessend und misstrauisch gegen das Wachsthum der Bildung” since it preferred a statically perfect state.

¹⁰⁹ This idea of the agon as a means of channelling potentially seditious, disgregative energies into culturally productive modes of activity is one that Nietzsche returns to on a number of occasions. See e.g. NL 5[146] 8.79: “Die Weisheit ihrer [die Griechen] Institutionen liegt in dem Mangel einer Scheidung zwischen gut und böse, schwarz und weiss. Die Natur, wie sie sich zeigt, wird nicht weggeleugnet, sondern nur ingeordnet, auf bestimmte Culte und Tage beschränkt. Dies ist die Wurzel aller Freisinnigkeit des Alterthums; man suchte für die Naturkräfte eine mässige Entladung, nicht eine Vernichtung und Verneinung. — Das ganze

possible, it is too unstable and high-risk to be profitable for the community. Agonism was a means of sustaining political order and organisation (and, as Nietzsche explains elsewhere in MA, the higher culture grounded upon that political order¹¹⁰). The criterion Nietzsche is using to distinguish between good and bad modes of agonism is the extent to which a form of agon promotes a cohesive culture. *Pace* Appel and Hatab, then, this very strongly suggests that Nietzsche's ideal agon is *not* embodied in either democratic or aristocratic struggles for political supremacy.

Mirroring Burckhardt, Nietzsche is therefore disinclined towards political agon of any kind. Hence, we can reject Ottmann's thesis that what distinguishes Nietzsche from Burckhardt is that he "will die agonale Kultur, und er will sie *ohne Abstriche*".¹¹¹ Yet, whereas Burckhardt pays special attention to the sporting agon – neglecting (and even maligning) artistic contest – the early Nietzsche is far more interested in the social contribution of the *geistig* agon.¹¹² (Though this is not to say

System von neuer Ordnung ist dann der Staat." See also NL 11[186] 9.514-5: "Die griechischen Gesetzgeber haben den agon so gefördert, um den Wettkampfgedanken vom Staate abzulenken und die politische Ruhe zu gewinnen. (Jetzt denkt man an die Concurrenz des Handels) Das Nachdenken über den Staat sollte durch agonale Erhitzung abgelenkt werden — ja turnen und dichten sollte man — dies hatte den Nebenerfolg, die Bürger stark schön und fein zu machen. — Ebenso förderten sie die Knabenliebe, einmal um der Übervölkerung vorzubeugen (welche unruhige verarmte Kreise erzeugt, auch innerhalb des Adels) sodann als Erziehungsmittel zum agon: die Jungen und die Älteren sollten bei einander bleiben, sich nicht trennen und das Interesse der Jungen festhalten — sonst hätte sich der Ehrgeiz der abgesonderten Älteren auf den Staat geworfen, aber mit Knaben konnte man nicht vom Staate sprechen. So benutzte vielleicht Richelieu die Galanterie der Männer, um die ehrgeizigen Triebe abzulenken und andere Gespräche als über den Staat in Curs zu bringen."

¹¹⁰ For a helpful overview of this, see Ansell-Pearson (1994), pp.90ff.

¹¹¹ See Ottmann (1999), p.50.

¹¹² See e.g. Nietzsche's "Einführung in das Studium der platonischen Dialoge" (KGW II/4, p.122). We also find reference to the *Wettkampf* of ancient Greek painters (see NL 1[19] 7.16.); and Nietzsche takes a special interest in the contest of Homer and Hesiod, who were of course contemporaries (see e.g. NL 1[112] 7.44; NL 3[84] 7.134; NL 6[15] 7.134; NL 16[4] 7.394. See also Nietzsche's early philological analysis of their contest in "Der Florentische Tractat über Homer und Hesiod, ihr Geschlecht und ihren Wettkampf" (KGW II/1, pp.272–337). Likewise, in his lectures on rhetoric, he analyses the way in which the culture of public agonism shaped the formal development of ancient Greek rhetoric in philosophy, poetry, drama and historical tracts (See e.g. "Darstellung der antiken Rhetorik" [KGW II/4, p.434] and "Geschichte der griechischen Beredsamkeit" [KGW II/4, p.393]). Finally, echoing Curtius, Nietzsche describes the way in which the ancient musician

that he consistently celebrates the artistic agon.¹¹³) In ST, now inverting Burckhardt's position, Nietzsche also argues that it was in fact the political-juridical agon that corrupted the artistic agon (and not the other way round) – namely, by imposing the criteria of rationality onto the artistic domain, which thrives on instinct.¹¹⁴

Nietzsche was also interested in how the aesthetic agon was able to generate *value*. But what is of particular relevance is that in his writings on this matter we find the strongest evidence that Nietzsche thought of power or *influence* – i.e. guiding the behaviour of others, particularly one's opponents – as the goal of agonal contest. Yet this power is the power to establish artistic norms over others, rather than instrumental political power, and it manifests itself as a pressure exerted upon others to conform through imitation insofar as “Das Vorbild des Grossen reizt die eitleren Naturen zum äusserlichen Nachmachen” (MA 158). As he phrases it in GGL: “Es gehörte Macht der Persönlichkeit dazu, um solche Neuerungen durchzusetzen; siegte man nicht, so wurde man bestraft; siegte man, so ward das Neue Regel” (KGW II/2, p.405).¹¹⁵ At some level then, the agon represents a contest of norms, with individuals inventing new styles and striving to institute these as norms (of what counts as a good performance). Viewed from this standpoint, cultural contest is therefore not just a struggle to prevail according to a pre-given measure, but is the further struggle to prevail by means of establishing one's own standard as

Terpander, by initiating a musical agon, brought about a great flourishing of talent, as people felt themselves enticed by the competition he presented (“Vorlesung über die griechischen Lyriker” [KGW II/2, p.402]).

¹¹³ As Siemens (2015) notes: “For a sharp dose of realism, we can do no better than to turn to his *Geschichte der griechischen Litteratur* [...] lectures, where we read of the prevalence of degeneration in Greek art; of the stifling of talent at the hands of publics utterly incapable of sound aesthetic judgement (GGL III, KGW II/5, pp.322ff.); of the fear of innovation in art and the resistance to it through harsh repressive laws (GGL III, KGW II/5, p.298); and how the agon repressed the emergence of individuals for a long time” (p.452). See also GGL III, KGW II/5, p.290, where Nietzsche argues that the pursuit of public praise could cause the agon to degenerate into mere posturing and pretense.

¹¹⁴ See ST 1.545.

¹¹⁵ See Acampora (2013), who also emphasises the ability of the agon to generate values: “He [Nietzsche] relishes the agon because of its potential for what he later describes as the ‘revaluation of values’” (p.25).

a rule.¹¹⁶ Indeed, Nietzsche states that “[n]ur im Wetteifer lernt man das Gute kennen” (NL 23[132] 8.450).¹¹⁷

Needless to say, he does not think that anyone and everyone can participate in such struggle for cultural influence; indeed, his valorisation of the *geistig* agon has an undeniably elitist streak. In his depiction of this higher cultural struggle, he not only emphasises the motivational force of the desire for ascendancy, but, along with Burckhardt, he further accents the force of the desire for glory (*Ruhm*); thus, Nietzsche tells us of the jealous desire with which Plato and the ancient Greek poets sought to overthrow Homer and “an die Stelle des gestürzten Dichters zu treten und dessen Ruhm zu erben” (CV 5 1.789). This is variously expressed as the desire for honour (*Ehre*¹¹⁸), praise (*Lob*) or posthumous fame (*Nachruhm*):

Der Dichter überwindet den Kampf um's Dasein, indem er ihn zu einem freien Wettkampfe idealisirt. Hier ist das Dasein, um das noch gekämpft wird, das Dasein im Lobe, im Nachruhm.
(NL 16[15] 7.397)

This note gestures towards the fact that, for Nietzsche, the quest for *Ruhm* is incompatible with the struggle for existence (the “Kampf um's Dasein”), and furthermore, that his conception of the agon might also be incompatible with the banausic struggle to achieve predominance through the accumulation of

¹¹⁶ See MA 170. See also NL 16[21]7.401, where Nietzsche asks, “Was ist das aesthetische Urtheil? Das Richterthum in der Tragödie. / Der Wettkampf unter Künstlern setzt das rechte Publikum voraus. Fehlt dies Publikum, dann ist er im Exil (Philoktet).” See also NL 16[6] 7.395: “Der Künstler und der Nichtkünstler. Was ist Kunsturtheil? Dies das allgemeine Problem. / Der Dichter nur möglich unter einem Publikum von Dichtern. [...] / Die Entscheidung im ἀγών ist nur das Geständniß: der und der macht uns mehr zum Dichter: dem folgen wir, da schaffen wir die Bilder schneller. Also ein künstlerisches Urtheil, aus einer Erregung der künstlerischen Fähigkeit gewonnen. Nicht aus Begriffen.” On the topic of aesthetic judgement in Nietzsche, see Herman Siemens, “Reassessing Radical Democratic Theory in Light of Nietzsche’s Ontology of Conflict”, in Keith Ansell Pearson (ed.), *Nietzsche and Political Thought* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp.83-106 (p.86).

¹¹⁷ Quoted in Paul van Tongeren, “Nietzsche’s Greek Measure”, *JNS*, 24 (2002), 5-24 (p.7).

¹¹⁸ See MA 170 and 474.

“Besitzthum”, “Reichthum” and “Wohlstand”.¹¹⁹ And to be sure, we find ample evidence to substantiate the idea that Nietzsche held the concern with “Ruhm” to be limited to an elite, non-banausic minority. In CV 1, for example, he states that “Ruhm” “ist doch an die seltensten Menschen, als Begierde, angeknüpft und wiederum an die seltensten Momente derselben.” Indeed, the struggle for immortal fame is reserved for a superior minority of individuals, whom “Das Gewöhnliche, das Kleine, das Gemein” only obstruct. The majority, according to Nietzsche, merely “wollen leben, etwas leben — um jeden Preis. Wer möchte unter ihnen jenen schwierigen Fackelwettbewerb vermuthen, durch den das Große allein weiterlebt?” (CV 1 1.756).

Evidently, the banausic struggle to excel one’s neighbour by accumulating more material wealth than them does not qualify as an instance of this higher form of *Wettkampf*. However, according to Nietzsche, it is not artists and poets that are the exemplary seekers of glory; rather “[d]ie verwegenen Ritter unter diesen Ruhmsüchtigen, die daran glauben ihr Wappen an einem Sternbild hängend zu finden, muß man bei den Philosophen suchen” (CV 1 1.757).¹²⁰ In this quote, he associates *Ruhm* with a chivalrous vision of a noble minority of knightly (*ritterlich*) individuals engaged in a quest for fame and glory; yet at the same time, he also illuminates how the pursuit of *Ruhm* has now been transferred into the realm of the *cultural* elite (i.e. of philosophers).

What further distinguishes the Nietzschean agon from the banausic contest for material wealth is Nietzsche’s association of the *Wettkampf* with the value of cultivation (*Erziehung*). This value is defined by the pursuit of excellence understood not simply as “being first” but as the cultivation of one’s highest capacities (what Nietzsche elsewhere calls “antike Tugend” and what Burckhardt

¹¹⁹ Nietzsche also describes the “Ruhm und Glück” enjoyed by victorious contestants, which was in some cases so completely overwhelming that they were led to commit heinous or sacreligious acts (CV 5 1.791).

¹²⁰ See also NL 19[170] 7.471: “Die Philosophen sind die vornehmste Klasse der Großen des Geistes. Sie haben kein Publikum, sie brauchen den Ruhm.”

refers to as *Edeltrefflichkeit* or *arête*¹²¹). He highlights how the ancient Greek agon was interwoven with their pursuit of cultivation, observing how the agonal Greeks demanded that “Jede Begabung muß sich kämpfend entfalten” (CV 5 1.789), and again, how it was ambitious envy of the excellence or virtue (“Tugend”) of others that spurred individuals to cultivate themselves (“an jeder großen Tugend entzündet sich eine neue Größe” [CV 5 1.788]).¹²² But it was not just students that unfolded their virtuosity in a field of contest – Nietzsche tells us that their teachers were correspondingly in contention with one another.¹²³ He therefore envisions the agon as inseparable from the Hellenic valuation of cultivation over and against the values of Arcadian happiness or wealth.¹²⁴ Unfortunately, however, says Nietzsche, the Socratic-Christian inheritance of modernity has led us to denigrate and devalue ambition, struggle and genuine cultivation in favour of modesty, peace and bourgeois contentment. Indeed, modern educators “[haben] vor Nichts eine so große Scheu [...] als vor der Entfesselung des sogenannten Ehrgeizes”, and “der moderne Mensch fürchtet nichts so sehr an einem Künstler als die persönliche Kampfbregung” (CV 5 1.789-90).

¹²¹ See M 195 and UB III 1.345.

¹²² In enumerating some of the empowering attributes of the Greeks, Nietzsche also underscores both good education (“gute Erziehung”) and “Eifersucht im ἀριστεύειν” – that is, the covetous desire to be the best (the fundamental value driving the agon) (NL 5[40] 8.51).

¹²³ See CV 5 1.790: “Wie aber die zu erziehenden Jünglinge mit einander wettkämpfend erzogen wurden, so waren wiederum ihre Erzieher unter sich im Wetteifer”. On the connection of *Wettkampf* and *Erziehung*, see also NL 8[77] 7.251; NL 8[80] 7.252; NL 16[4] 7.394: “Die Jesuiten — ihre antike Erziehung — der Ehrgeiz und der Wettkampf in der Erziehung.”; NL 16[14] 7.397: “Die antiken Mittel der Erziehung: der Wettkampf und die Liebe.”

¹²⁴ See e.g. NL 6[31] 8.110, where Nietzsche, quoting Schopenhauer states: “[V]orzügliche und edle Menschen werden jener Erziehung des Schicksals bald inne und fügen sich bildsam und dankbar in dieselbe; sie sehnen ein, dass in der Welt wohl Belehrung, aber nicht Glück zu finden sei [...]’ — Parerga I 439. Damit vergleiche man die Socratiker und die Jagd nach Glück!” Compare, however, NL 4[301] 9.174 and M 199, where Nietzsche suggests that the Greeks sought to become tyrants in the belief that this constituted the highest form of happiness (though it is of course most likely that Nietzsche is working with different conceptions of happiness across these texts).

In an analogous manner, Nietzsche avers that proper cultivation (*Bildung*) is incompatible with the modern liberal-capitalistic state, which is predominantly geared towards promoting the economic strength of the nation and propagating the (bourgeois) happiness of its citizens.¹²⁵ Given these beliefs, it is understandable why Nietzsche would suggest in MA 439 that artistic development depends on the state being divided into a leisure class, on the one hand, and a working- or even slave-class, on the other:

Cultur und Kaste. — Eine höhere Cultur kann allein dort entstehen, wo es zwei unterschiedene Kasten der Gesellschaft giebt: die der Arbeitenden und die der Müssigen, zu wahrer Musse Befähigten; oder mit stärkerem Ausdruck: die Kaste der Zwangs-Arbeit und die Kaste der Frei-Arbeit. Der Gesichtspunct der Vertheilung des Glücks ist nicht wesentlich, wenn es sich um die Erzeugung einer höheren Cultur handelt [...].¹²⁶

Converging with Burckhardt, Nietzsche makes the practical observation that pursuing non-utilitarian values (what he refers to in CV 3 as a “neue Welt des Bedürfnisses”) such as *Bildung* (or *Erziehung* or *Ruhm*, for that matter), upon which the higher cultural agon depends, is enabled by, *yet also foreclosed to*, the banausic

¹²⁵ See UB III 6 1.388: “Jede Bildung ist hier verhasst, die einsam macht, die über Geld und Erwerb hinaus Ziele steckt, die viel Zeit verbraucht; man pflegt wohl solche ernstere Arten der Bildung als ‘feineren Egoismus’, als ‘unsittlichen Bildungs-Epikureismus’ zu verunglimpfen. [...] Dem Menschen wird nur soviel Kultur gestattet, als im Interesse des allgemeinen Erwerbs und des Weltverkehrs ist, aber soviel wird auch von ihm gefordert. Kurz: ‘der Mensch hat einen nothwendigen Anspruch auf Erdenglück, darum ist die Bildung nothwendig, aber auch nur darum!’” See also BA IV 1.715: “Jede Erziehung aber, welche an das Ende ihrer Laufbahn ein Amt oder einen Brodgewinn in Aussicht stellt, ist keine Erziehung zur Bildung, wie wir sie verstehen, sondern nur eine Anweisung, auf welchem Wege man im Kampfe um das Dasein sein Subjekt rette und schütze.”

¹²⁶ Even in this aphorism, however, Nietzsche accepts class mobility as a fact of social existence.

working-classes.¹²⁷ As Aristotle observed long before Nietzsche or Burckhardt, the pursuit of excellence requires leisure.¹²⁸

So, does Nietzsche think that the values that he extols are necessarily confined to the landed aristocracy (as Nietzsche frames Theogonis as having argued when he made “good” and “noble” synonyms)?¹²⁹ Generally speaking, it has already been established that Nietzsche, like Burckhardt before him, thinks that agonal conflict can arise between any equal parties, so long as they seek to win by excelling rather than harming their adversaries. Thus, though Nietzsche maintains that the value of excellence originated in the nobility, it is not inextricably bound to this group or domain. Nonetheless, again recalling Burckhardt’s position, Nietzsche also identifies a higher agon that is intimately bound-up with the values of education and *Ruhm*, both of which are portrayed as incompatible with the struggle for material wealth.¹³⁰ The pursuit of these higher cultural values does therefore seem to be parasitic on social stratification and the division of labour. For Nietzsche, although the agon that takes place as individuals vie to achieve these values is only ever seriously pursued by a minority, this minority is not necessarily coextensive with the

¹²⁷ See also CV 3 1.767: “Die Bildung, die vornehmlich wahrhaftes Kunstbedürfniß ist, ruht auf einem erschrecklichen Grunde [...]. Damit es einen breiten tiefen und ergiebigen Erdboden für eine Kunstentwicklung gebe, muß die ungeheure Mehrzahl im Dienste einer Minderzahl, über das Maaß ihrer individuellen Bedürftigkeit hinaus, der Lebensnoth sklavisch unterworfen sein. Auf ihre Unkosten, durch ihre Mehrarbeit soll jene bevorzugte Klasse dem Existenzkampfe entrückt werden, um nun eine neue Welt des Bedürfnisses zu erzeugen und zu befriedigen”.

¹²⁸ See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1278a: “[U]nder some governments the mechanic and the labourer will be citizens, but not in others, as, for example, in so-called aristocracies, if there are any, in which honours are given according to excellence and merit; for no man can practise excellence who is living the life of a mechanic or labourer.”

¹²⁹ For an excellent overview of the relation of Nietzsche’s thoughts on the agon and ancient Greek aristocracy, see Anthony K. Jensen, “Anti-Politicality and Agon in Nietzsche’s Philology”, in Herman Siemens and Vasti Roodt (eds.), *Nietzsche, Power and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche’s Legacy for Political Thought* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), pp.319-46. Jensen questions the idea that Nietzsche was a committed aristocrat by illuminating his rejection of Theogonis’ attempts to segregate and purify an aristocratic race. He also argues that, for Nietzsche, “agon is not the exclusive right of either the old landed elite or the newly rich, and thus not the exclusive arena for either group’s values” (p.328).

¹³⁰ However, see MA 459, where Nietzsche describes how Diogenes was for a time a slave. We might also think of Epictetus as falling within this category.

ruling minority – i.e. the aristocracy; rather, participation is open to any individuals with the financial means and freedom to commit themselves to the contest for glory. We might therefore distance, though not fully dissociate, Nietzsche’s cultural aristocratism from an aristocratic political agenda.¹³¹

Despite the many differences between Nietzsche and Burckhardt (in their attitudes towards artistic contest, for example), both offer a two-tier model of the agon, with one tier being characterised by social inclusivity, while the other is defined by its social exclusivity. However, this does not entail that *both* Hatab and Appel are therefore correct. On the contrary, since *neither* the elitist nor the generalizable agon are conceived as political struggles to establish instrumental power over one’s adversaries, we can reject both Hatab’s and Appel’s interpretations. The question we now need to ask is how Nietzsche’s position might have evolved as he became increasingly convinced that instrumental power is the true stake in all conflictual relations.

2.3.4. THE INCLUSIVITY OF NIETZSCHE’S LATER AGONISM

From 1881 onwards, Nietzsche almost completely drops *Wettkampf* and *agon* from his philosophical vocabulary. This should come as no surprise given the fact that two of the key features of Nietzsche’s earlier notion of the agon are problematized by the emergence of his conception of the world as will to power. According to Nietzsche, will to power organisations *always* act as a will to command or dominate

¹³¹ This gainsays Hatab’s argument (2002, p.141) that, when reading Nietzsche, “[w]e need a distinction between: 1) the aristocracy-democracy encounter in the *cultural* sphere pertaining to matters of creativity and normalcy, excellence and mediocrity; and 2) the aristocracy-democracy encounter in the *political* sphere pertaining to the formation of institutions, actual political practices, the justification of coercion, and the extent of sovereignty.” Hatab himself “maintain[s] that Nietzsche’s aristocraticism is defensible regarding the first encounter but not so regarding the second encounter.”

(*Herrschen*) understood as a will to *direct* weaker wills.¹³² This conception of life as will to power seems to undermine the idea of the agon as a non-exploitative relation of approximate equals – how is such a relation possible if the world is invariably characterised by the will to power?¹³³

Neither Nietzsche's destructive nor his aristocratic readers raise this issue, however, viewing the agon as perfectly compatible, and even coextensive with the later Nietzsche's more aggressive formulations of the will to power.¹³⁴ Both Dombowsky and Appel take it as a given that in light of his desire to foster a form of human life that affirms the world as will to power, Nietzsche promotes a highly stratified type of society. Dombowsky interprets Nietzsche's later conception of the agon as the violent struggle of an elite minority to oppress a subordinate slave-class.¹³⁵ Appel, drawing mostly on JGB 265, makes the slightly less extreme claim that the Nietzschean agon takes place *among* this minority as they non-violently struggle for command over one another, although in order to enjoy this agonal space, says Appel, this elite must engage in unmeasured conflict towards a slave-class.¹³⁶ We have already vitiated Dombowsky's position in Section 1, where it was shown

¹³² NL 35[15] 11.514: "der Wille zur Macht sich spezialisierend als Wille zur Nahrung, nach Eigenthum, nach Werkzeugen, nach Dienern — Gehorchen und Herrschen: der Leib. — der stärkere Wille dirigirt den schwächeren."

¹³³ NL 2[131] 12.132: "Der Wille zur Macht. [...] Die Rangordnung als Machtordnung: Krieg und Gefahr die Voraussetzung, daß ein Rang seine Bedingungen festhält. Das grandiose Vorbild: der Mensch in der Natur, das Schwächste Klügste Wesen sich zum Herrn machend, die dümmere Gewalten sich unterjochend" (quoted in Dombowsky [2004], p.93). See also e.g. NL 25[430] 11.126: "Die Rangordnung hat sich festgestellt durch den Sieg des Stärkeren und die Unentbehrlichkeit des Schwächeren für den Stärkeren und des Stärkeren für den Schwächeren — da entstehen getrennte Funktionen: denn Gehorchen ist ebenso eine Selbst-Erhaltung-Funktion als, für das stärkere Wesen, Befehlen." Z II Ueberwindung 4.147: "Alles Lebendige ist ein Gehorchendes".

¹³⁴ Dombowsky has simply argued that we reduce Nietzsche's conception of agonal conflict to the aggressive notion of the will to power: "Nietzschean agonism is thought along with will to power, which says [...] that life operates on the basis of exploitation, and with order of rank, which says that an order of rank is an order of power which presupposes 'war and danger'" (p.93).

¹³⁵ See Dombowsky (2004), p.91: "The full benefit of freedom, in the Nietzschean sense, where freedom is the privilege of the few and not considered an inalienable right, can be appreciated only under agonal conditions where order of rank, war and inequality prevail."

¹³⁶ See Appel (1999), pp.140-7.

that the Nietzschean agon consistently signifies a non-destructive mode of conflict. It is therefore with Appel's claim that we should now concern ourselves.

The most extreme counter-position to Appel is that of Hatab, who takes a diametrically opposed line of interpretation. He attempts to read the will to power in terms of Nietzsche's earlier conception of the agon, which is to say that he reads the will to power as an inherently measured form of conflict. Indeed, Hatab has proposed that the will to power is intrinsically agonal.¹³⁷ In its most simple formulation, his position runs as follows:

[T]he will to power expresses an agonistic force-field, wherein any achievement or production of meaning is constituted by an overcoming of some opposing force. Consequently, my Other is always implicated in my nature; the annulment of my Other would be the annulment of myself.¹³⁸

Hatab uses this notion of the will to power – understood as a theory asserting that the existence of all power organisations depends on the resistance offered by opposed organisations – to argue that affirming the world as will to power at the socio-political level “entails giving all beliefs a hearing” – that is, to affirm and invite the potential resistance that these beliefs might offer us.¹³⁹

In this subsection, I demonstrate that Nietzsche's later agonism cannot be characterised in either of these ways. Both, in their own fashion, unjustifiably confound the will to power and Nietzsche's early conception of the agon. This then translates into either a socially inclusive or exclusive vision of Nietzsche's later will

¹³⁷ See Hatab (2005), p.17: “The Greek *agōn* is a historical source of what Nietzsche later generalized into the dynamic, reciprocal structure of will to power. And it is important to recognize that such a structure undermines the idea that power could or should run unchecked, either in the sense of sheer domination or chaotic indeterminacy. Will to power implies a certain measure of oppositional limits, even though such a measure could not imply an overarching order or a stable principle of balance.”

¹³⁸ Hatab (1995) p.68. See also Hatab (2005) p.16: “Since power can only involve resistance, then one's power to overcome is essentially related to a counterpower; if resistance were eliminated, if one's counterpower were destroyed or even neutralized by sheer domination, one's power would evaporate, it would no longer be power. Power is overcoming something, not annihilating it ...”

¹³⁹ Hatab (1995) p.70.

to power-based-agonism. I will contend that though we do indeed now see the later Nietzsche interpreting agonally measured conflict as a struggle for power, this is a mode of struggle that can take place between individuals of any social standing so long as they are approximately equal in power. Notwithstanding, we witness Nietzsche *emphatically* (though not exclusively) endorsing the agon that takes place within the elite social sphere of the nobility.

In 1881, while his conception of the will to power was still very much inchoate, Nietzsche develops an abstract notion of *Wettstreit*, which is perhaps most lucidly articulated in NL 11[134] 9.491.¹⁴⁰ In this text from 1881, Nietzsche's not yet fully formulated conception of life as will to power – i.e. as a push for the incorporation and exploitation of weaker entities – is undeniably discernible; yet, within the depicted dynamic, there also seems to be a clear space for agonal relations. Thus, discussing “die Eigenschaften des niedersten belebten Wesens”, he states the following:

Ein solches Wesen assimilirt sich das Nächste, verwandelt es in sein Eigenthum (Eigenthum ist zuerst Nahrung und Aufspeicherung von Nahrung), es sucht möglichst viel sich einzuverleiben, nicht nur den Verlust zu compensiren — es ist habsüchtig. So wächst es allein und endlich wird es so reproduktiv — es theilt sich in 2 Wesen. Dem unbegrenzten Aneignungstriebe folgt Wachsthum und Generation. — Dieser Trieb bringt es in die Ausnützung des Schwächeren, und in Wettstreit mit ähnlich Starken, er kämpft d.h. er haßt, fürchtet, verstellt sich. [...] (NL 11[134] 9.491¹⁴¹).

Nietzsche describes how plastidules greedily strive for nutrition and growth through the assimilation and exploitation of weaker entities (the “Ausnützung des Schwächeren”). However, this process of exploitative assimilation is distinctly unmeasured insofar as consumed entities are catabolised and then anabolised into

¹⁴⁰ See KTO, p.107. See also DWB on “Wettkampf” as a synonym of “Wettstreit” (vol.29, col.780).

¹⁴¹ Compare NL 7[3] 12.257: “Was gemeinsam ist: die herrschenden Triebe wollen auch als höchste Werth-Instanzen überhaupt, ja als schöpferische und regierende Gewalten betrachtet werden. Es versteht sich, daß diese Triebe sich gegenseitig entweder anfeinden oder unterwerfen (synthetisch auch wohl binden) oder in der Herrschaft wechseln.”

new, utilisable compounds. This is the activity of the “*unbegrenzten Aneignungstrieb*”. Nonetheless, Nietzsche indicates that situations of *Begrenzung* do arise in this environment of rapacious contention. These are situations of approximate equality, where the *Aneignungstrieb* cannot be immediately satisfied through the incorporation of the other. In such cases of struggle “mit ähnlich Starken”, a *Wettstreit* ensues. With respect to our current concerns, one of the most pertinent features of this *Wettstreit* is that it occurs under (it would seem) *any* condition of approximate equality or *Gleichgewicht*. However, during this period, Nietzsche also stresses that the conditions of such non-exploitative interrelation are extremely rare: “Ein labiles Gleichgewicht kommt in der Natur so wenig vor, wie zwei congruente Dreiecke” (NL 11[190] 9.516).¹⁴² Let us now examine how these ideas come into play later, when he returns to the ancient Greek conception of the agon, having more comprehensively formulated his notion of the world as will to power.

2.3.4.1. NIETZSCHE’S APPROPRIATION OF SCHMIDT (1883)

In Nietzsche’s writings from 1883, we bear witness to a resurgence of interest in the *Wettkampf* as he turns his gaze back towards the Greek conception of the agon. This shift is at least partially attributable to his reading of Schmidt’s *Die Ethik der alten Griechen* in the same year. In Schmidt’s philological treatment of the agon, the Greek practice is first and foremost conceived as a struggle for *Geltung* and *Ehre* as individuals strove to validate their high self-estimations.¹⁴³ Indeed, in the second

¹⁴² See also NL 11[231] 9.530.

¹⁴³ Schmidt (1882), vol.1, pp.193-4: “So waren alle ernsten wie alle heitern Seiten des Lebens von einer Neigung durchzogen, welche unverständlich sein würde, wenn sie nicht mit einer Grundauffassung des Daseins im engsten Zusammenhange stände, nach welcher der Mann bestimmt ist sich hervorzuthun und seines Gleichen zu übertreffen. Aus ihr entspringt die Beliertheit einer bildlichen Ausdrucksweise, welche jede auf ein höheres Ziel gerichtete Anstrengung des Menschen als einen Agon, d. h. als einem um eines Preises willen unternommenen Wettkampf, bezeichnet.”

volume of *Die Ethik der alten Griechen*, Schmidt informs us of how the ancient Greeks rebuked a life of isolationism and solitude; the reason for this being that the duty to “know oneself” – and avoid falling into a state of vanity or undue modesty – could only be fulfilled by testing oneself against others.¹⁴⁴ Accordingly, the desire for self-validation and honour (*Ehrliebe* or *φιλότιμο*) was praised by the Greeks so long as it did not exceed certain ethical boundaries by descending into wild self-pursuit.¹⁴⁵

Schmidt also foregrounds how a strong understanding of honour also had an important limiting effect on this tendency for self-pursuit, namely, insofar as it discouraged individuals from harming the honour of others. This is what Schmidt variously calls *Aidos*, *Ehrfurcht* and *Ehrgefühl* (which we might translate as “reverence”): “das Streben Anderen, denen aus irgend einem Grunde Ehrerbietung gezollt wird, nicht wehe zu thun”.¹⁴⁶ Schmidt distinguishes this noble affect of reverence from what the Greeks held to be the baser, though likewise limiting, affect of *Aischyne* (“shame” or “Schamgefühl”), “die Scheu sich selbst Tadel zuzuziehen”. Schmidt further discriminates between the two affects insofar as *Aidos* “wurzelt in der Reflexion auf das Fremde”, whereas *Aischyne* is rooted in reflection “auf das eigene Gefühl”, which is to say in *self*-concern.¹⁴⁷

In Schmidt’s conceptions of the agon and *Aidos*, we uncover a tension between social inclusivity and exclusivity that recalls Burckhardt and the early Nietzsche. On the one hand, Schmidt claims that the desire to prove oneself in *Wettkampf* permeated all social strata – that is, it “[durchdrang] das Bewusstsein

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., vol.2, pp.394-8.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., vol.2, p.394.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., vol.1, p.168. However, Schmidt, like Burckhardt, Curtius, and Nietzsche in his early lectures, thought that success in the agon translated into political favours. Indeed, Schmidt quotes Thucydides’ Pericles as promising that the state would pay for the education of Miltiades’ children, “denn bei denen, bei welchen die grössten Preise für die Tugend ausgesetzt sind, sind auch die besten Männer im Staat thätig” (see *ibid.*, vol.1, p.195). Schmidt also gives further evidence for the claim that individuals fought for posthumous fame (*Ruhm*) (see *ibid.*, vol.1, p.197).

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., vol.1, p.168.

aller Schichten des griechischen Volkes”.¹⁴⁸ His depiction of *Aidos*, however, is more equivocal. Unlike the feeling of shame, which is an affect that only arises in relation to figures of authority, Schmidt states that for the Greeks, *Aidos* “kann sich auch auf Gleichstehende richten, ja sie wendet sich gern auf Hülflöse und Unglückliche [...] und kann so selbst gleichbedeutend mit Mitleid werden”.¹⁴⁹ The feeling of not wishing to harm the honour of another therefore arises, according to Schmidt, in relation not only to one’s superiors, but also in relation to one’s equals, and even subordinates. On the other hand, however, it is an exclusive affect, of which some individuals are not worthy: as he points out, in the *Odyssey*, *Aidos* is pronounced “nicht angemessen” for beggars.¹⁵⁰ Thus, the fact that it is considered appropriate to feel *Aidos* towards the “Hülflöse und Unglückliche” does not entail that it is proper to feel it towards those beyond one’s own caste. So far, I have sketched Schmidt’s thoughts on the agon, *Aidos* and *Aischyne*, but we should now examine how Nietzsche, in his appropriation of Schmidt, uniquely combines these ideas. As we will now see, tracking the way Nietzsche calls upon these philological theses is illuminating with respect to our current goal of ascertaining the social inclusivity of Nietzsche’s later agonism.

Under the unmistakable influence of Schmidt, in 1883 Nietzsche tries to appropriate features of the Greek *Wettkampf* for his project of cultivating a minority of superior, ruling *Übermenschen*.¹⁵¹ In a preparatory note for Book 3 of *Z*, we can identify the end to which Nietzsche is going to enlist Schmidt’s notion of the agon:

[D]er Übergang vom Freigeist und Einsiedler zum Herrschen-Müssen:
das Schenken verwandelt sich — aus dem Geben entstand der Wille,

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., vol.1, p.190. Schmidt cites *Work and Days* and the *Iliad* to substantiate his claim that *Wettkampf* was present among both aristocratic and working class social strata.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., vol.1, p.169.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., vol.1, p.177.

¹⁵¹ NL 35[72] 11.541: “Es muß viele Übermenschen geben: alle Güte entwickelt sich nur unter seines Gleichen. Ein Gott wäre immer ein Teufel! Eine herrschende Rasse. Zu ‘die Herrn der Erde.’” See also NL 35[73] 11.541: “Die Rangordnung durchgeführt in einem Systeme der Erdregierung: die Herrn der Erde zuletzt, eine neue herrschende Kaste.” *Z* III Tafeln 21 4.263: “[D]as Beste soll herrschen, das Beste will auch herrschen! Und wo die Lehre anders lautet, da fehlt es am Besten”.

Zwang-zum-Nehmen zu üben. Die Tyrannei des Künstlers zuerst als Selbst-Bezwungung und -Verhärtung! (NL 16[51] 10.516)

Nietzsche is clearly seeking to overcome the Epicurean isolationism that dominates the free-spirit trilogy.¹⁵² His *Übermensch* cannot simply close themselves off from society (as they might like). The future of humanity depends on their returning from hermitude and taking a commanding role in society. Indeed, dissatisfied with the isolationist tendencies of Zarathustra, he explicitly latches onto Schmidt's conception of the agon, which framed the practice as both a locus of public action, and a means of self-validation. Nietzsche therefore calls the minority of isolated *Freigeister* to convene for the sake of engaging in a *Wettkampf*; however, Nietzsche's ideal agon now has a markedly political dimension insofar as it is figured as a struggle of aspiring rulers for socio-political power – i.e. to command (“herrschen”) the people (“Volk”):

Gerade jene zum Wettkampfe um Macht aufrufen, welche sich gerne verstecken und für sich leben möchten — auch die Weisen, Frommen, Stillen im Lande! Hohn über ihre genießende Einsamkeit!

Alle schöpferischen Naturen ringen um Einfluß, auch wenn sie allein leben — ‘Nachruhm’ ist nur ein falscher Ausdruck für das, was sie wollen.

Die ungeheure Aufgabe des Herrschenden, der sich selber erzieht — die Art Menschen und Volk, über welche er herrschen will, muß in ihm vorgebildet sein: da muß er erst Herr geworden sein! (NL 16[86] 10.529)¹⁵³

¹⁵² See e.g. FW 388: “Lebe im Verborgenen, damit du dir leben kannst! Lebe unwissend über Das, was deinem Zeitalter das Wichtigste dünkt! Lege zwischen dich und heute wenigstens die Haut von drei Jahrhunderten! Und das Geschrei von heute, der Lärm der Kriege und Revolutionen, soll dir ein Gemurmel sein!”

¹⁵³ See also NL 15[21] 10.485: “Problem! / Zum agon aufrufen! gerade die, welche sich gern verstecken möchten, die Stillen, Frommen, — Bewerbung um Herrschaft! / Einsamkeit nur Mittel der Erziehung! / gegen alle bloß Genießenden!” See also NL 8[15] 10.339: “Das agonale Gefühl, welches vor einem Publikum siegen will und diesem Publikum verständlich sein muß.” For an early example of Nietzsche emphasizing this public dimension of the agon, see also “Darstellung der antiken Rhetorik” (KGW II/4, p.434): “[A]lles öffentliche Auftreten des Individuums ist ein Wettkampf”.

Needless to say, this appeal for a contemporary *Wettkampf* is not socially inclusive in nature; rather, it is specifically directed towards the scattering of higher individuals caged in self-imposed isolation, whom Nietzsche wishes to draw into the public domain. However, whereas in Schmidt the emphasis is still massively on *Ehre* and *Ruhm*, Nietzsche conceives of this public struggle as one fought over *power* (“Macht”). Indeed, Nietzsche now construes the quest for *Ruhm* as a masquerade for the pursuit of *influence* (“Einfluß”) over others. Whereas *Einfluß* was posited as a motivating goal of agonal contest in an exclusively aesthetic sense in his early agonism, the final three lines of the above note unmistakably evoke the idea of a struggle for influence *qua political* domination. At the very least, it mixes the political and the aesthetical in a manner reminiscent of his portrayal of “Künstler-Tyrannen” (NL 16[51] 10.516; NL 2[57] 12.87). The supposition informing this plan for Z is that a society built upon the principle of contest will be a proficient, noble one akin to that of the ancient Greeks.¹⁵⁴

In these texts, we therefore find that Nietzsche’s endorsement of the agon is restricted to a minority of individuals whom he perceives as potentially worthy of ruling, and whom he seeks to bring into society and subject to selective pressure. However, in other texts we discover Nietzsche advocating a far more inclusive form of *Wettkampf*—for example, in a key *Nachlass* fragment in which he takes Schmidt’s notion of *Aidos* and brings it directly to bear on the concept of the agon:

[...] Aidos ist die Regung und Scheu, nicht Götter, Menschen und ewige Gesetze zu verletzen: also der Instinkt der Ehrfurcht als habituell bei dem Guten. Eine Art Ekel vor der Verletzung des Ehrwürdigen. Die griechische Abneigung gegen das Übermaß, in dem freudigen I<nstinkt der> Hybris, <gegen> die Überschreitung seiner Grenzen, ist sehr vornehm — und altadelig! Es ist die Verletzung des Aidos ein schrecklicher Anblick für den, welcher an Aidos gewöhnt ist. [...] Die Freien, Mässigen erfanden den Wettkampf als die immer wachsende

¹⁵⁴ See also NL 16[50] 10.515: “Neuer Adel, durch Züchtung. Die Gründungs-Feste von Familien. / Der Tag neu eintheilt; die körperlichen Übungen für alle Lebensalter. Der Wettkampf als Princip. / Die Geschlechts-Liebe als Wettkampf um das Princip im werdenden, Kommenden. — Das ‘Herrschen’ wird gelehrt, geübt, die Härte ebenso wie die Milde. Sobald ein Zustand meisterlich gekonnt wird, muß ein neuer erstrebt werden.”

Verfeinerung jenes Macht-Äußerungsbedürfnisses: durch den Wettkampf wurde der Hybris vorgebeugt: welche durch lange Unbefriedig<ung> des Machtgelüstes entsteht. (NL 7[161] 10.295)

While Nietzsche is ostensibly merely describing Greek culture in this note, his account has a strong normative dimension; indeed, it is reasonable to infer that he is picking out the features of Greek agonal culture that should to some extent be reprised by modern society. Notably, in his account, it is *prima facie* only a select group who are able to limit themselves in a manner necessary for agonal conflict. These are the “Guten”, who are “an Aidos gewöhnt”. However, there is no evidence to suggest that this group is necessarily tied to the aristocratic social classes. Indeed, though Nietzsche underscores the aristocratic *origins* of *Aidos* and the *Wettkampf* – describing the former as “altadelig”, and claiming the latter to have been *invented* (“erfand”) by “[d]ie Freien, Mässigen” – he in no way claims that they are *still* confined to the nobility. As in his early writings, Nietzsche’s suggestion that this agonal virtue *originated* in the nobility should not be equated with the proposition that it did not, or could not, proliferate beyond this social caste. We should now examine how he develops these ideas in JGB, where his conception of the agon becomes even more inclusive.

2.3.4.2. AIDOS AND AGONAL CONFLICT IN JGB

While neither *Wettkampf* nor agon are explicitly mentioned in JGB, the species of conflict that they denote is conspicuously present in a number of aphorisms. Thus, the kinds of struggle depicted in JGB 259 and 265 fulfil many of the defining criteria of agonal conflict. Moreover, in JGB 259, *Aidos* is present in all but name as the noble ethos of “[s]ich gegenseitig der Verletzung, der Gewalt, der Ausbeutung enthalten”; again, in JGB 265, the disposition is present as “Feinheit und Selbstbeschränkung im Verkehre mit ihres Gleichen”. What is of further interest about these aphorisms is that both have been used by Appel to corroborate his

assertion that Nietzsche's agonism is restricted to an aristocratic minority.¹⁵⁵ But do they permit such a conclusion?

The argument for a socially exclusive interpretation of these texts runs as follows. First, Nietzsche asserts that “Leben selbst ist wesentlich Aneignung, Verletzung, Überwältigung des Fremden und Schwächeren, Unterdrückung, Härte, Aufzwingung eigener Formen, Einverleibung und mindestens, mildestens, Ausbeutung” (JGB 259). If self-restraint, the treatment of others as one's equals, and the renunciation of exploitation are to be life-enhancing, then, they cannot universally pertain, even within a society – in other words, they cannot form social “Grundprinzip[ien]” (as socialists, Christians and utilitarians would have it). For Nietzsche, this constitutes an attempt to suppress life's essential characteristics – it is a case of the “Wille zur Verneinung des Lebens” – and so, such values represent “Auflösungs- und Verfalls-Prinzip[ien]”. Thriving life depends on struggle for Nietzsche; hence, such restrained behaviour must be radically limited:

Auch jener Körper, innerhalb dessen, wie vorher angenommen wurde, die Einzelnen sich als gleich behandeln — es geschieht in jeder gesunden Aristokratie —, muss selber, falls er ein lebendiger und nicht ein absterbender Körper ist, alles Das gegen andre Körper thun, wessen sich die Einzelnen in ihm gegen einander enthalten: er wird der leibhafte Wille zur Macht sein müssen, er wird wachsen, um sich greifen, an sich ziehn, Übergewicht gewinnen wollen [...]. (JGB 259)¹⁵⁶

Of course, this is not to say that within such bodies of equals there is an absence of conflict. For Nietzsche (echoing Wilhelm Roux, as we will see in Chapter 4), the vitality of any body is conditioned by *inner* struggle. However, since between such mutually dependent equals this struggle can neither be destructive nor exploitative, I suggest that we think of it as an *agonal* mode of struggle – let us now look at some of the reasons for doing so.

¹⁵⁵ See Appel (1999), p.141.

¹⁵⁶ See also GM II 11 5.312-3.

We have just recounted how Nietzsche figures *Ehrfurcht* as a relation exclusively reserved for nobly-minded, higher individuals.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, during this phase of his thought, he maintains that these higher individuals are in the minority, “denn alles, was hervorragt, ist seinem Wesen nach, selten [...]” (NL 7[70] 12.321). However, it would constitute a *non-sequitur* to conclude from these premises that Nietzsche thinks that the kind of *Ehrfurcht* undergirding agonal conflict is restricted to the aristocratic classes. The conditions stated for agonal limitation in JGB 259 are simply “thatsächliche Ähnlichkeit in Kraftmengen und Werthmaassen und ihre Zusammengehörigkeit innerhalb Eines Körpers”. It is incidental that this “geschieht in jeder gesunden Aristokratie” in an exemplary fashion. This is absolutely *not* to be confused with the claim that such limitation *only* occurs within healthy aristocracies. An aristocracy is just one example of such a body; indeed, a guild of tradesman would equally seem to qualify. So, though we still see Nietzsche taking an especial interest in the noble agon practiced by the aristocratic classes, he nevertheless endeavours to keep this radically open for all those willing to take on the task of cultivating noble virtues.

Nietzsche pushes this line further in JGB 265. Having again stressed the necessity of exploitation, he also goes on to state that “[d]ie vornehme Seele”

gesteht sich, unter Umständen, die sie anfangs zögern lassen, zu, dass es mit ihr Gleichberechtigte giebt; sobald sie über diese Frage des Rangs im Reinen ist, bewegt sie sich unter diesen Gleichen und Gleichberechtigten mit der gleichen Sicherheit in Scham und zarter Ehrfurcht, welche sie im Verkehre mit sich selbst hat, — gemäss einer eingebornen himmlischen Mechanik, auf welche sich alle Sterne verstehn. Es ist ein Stück ihres Egoismus mehr, diese Feinheit und Selbstbeschränkung im Verkehre mit ihres Gleichen — jeder Stern ist ein solcher Egoist —: sie ehrt sich in ihnen und in den Rechten, welche sie an dieselben abgiebt, sie zweifelt nicht, dass der Austausch von Ehren und Rechten als Wesen alles Verkehrs ebenfalls zum naturgemässen Zustand der Dinge gehört. (JGB 265)

¹⁵⁷ Though N.B. that Nietzsche also refers to another form of *Ehrfurcht* for things that are superior. See e.g. JGB 263.

What is noble is the ability to exhibit self-restraint towards an equal out of complete egoism – that is, insofar as one merely views one’s relation to that individual as analogous to one’s own *self*-relation. While the vital limiting effect that Nietzsche attributes to *Ehrfurcht* within this dynamic is strongly reminiscent of Schmidt, he has nonetheless given the concept a notable modification: it is no longer primarily other-oriented in opposition to *Schamgefühl*, which, for Schmidt, was self-oriented; indeed, for Nietzsche, “Scham und zarter Ehrfurcht” are not represented as being defined by different relations to alterity – *both* are the result of overt *egoism*, and in no way to be confused with mercy or (we can assume) *Mitleid*.¹⁵⁸

Across these two aphorisms, in making the claim that *Ehrfurcht* is limited to equals, Nietzsche draws an analogy between three domains: the biological, the social and the physical. Agonal self-restraint inheres, according to Nietzsche, within a “lebendiger und nicht ein absterbender Körper”, between equal individuals, and between stars, in accordance with an “eingeborn himmlisch Mechanik”. The biological thesis draws on his reading of Roux, who proposed that an organism is a dynamic *Gleichgewicht* of struggling parts.¹⁵⁹ The physical thesis appears to be a reconfiguration of his early Heraclitean worldview concerning the dynamic equilibrium of inanimate entities, now projected into the celestial realm.¹⁶⁰ The social thesis then draws upon his early representation of the agon as a non-exploitative, conflictual relation between equals. Nietzsche’s assertion that inanimate entities (such as stars) can act with reverence and shame towards one another may strike us as odd, if not as a patent example of the anthropomorphic fallacy.¹⁶¹ We will return to this problem in the final section. Let it suffice for now

¹⁵⁸ As Paul van Tongeren has emphasised, one of the virtues that Nietzsche wants to foster is “Ehrfurcht *vor sich*”, a form of endogenous self-belief that does not rely on the judgement of others. See *Die Moral von Nietzsche’s Moralkritik* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1989), pp.228-31.

¹⁵⁹ See ch.4, §4.3.

¹⁶⁰ See PHG §§5-6 (1.822-30) and VPP §10 (KGW II/4, pp.261-82).

¹⁶¹ Nietzsche seems to admit so much in NL 7[55] 10.259 when, speaking of the state, he asserts the following: “Wie kann der Staat Rache übernehmen! Erstens ist er kalt und handelt nicht im Affekt: was der Rache-Übende thut. Dann ist er keine Person, am wenigsten eine noble Person: kann also auch nicht im Maßhalten (im ‘Gleiches mit Gleichem’) seine noblesse und Selbstzucht beweisen.”

to note how, in drawing these analogies, Nietzsche is gesturing towards the fact that *locally* restraining the will to power need not entail a denial of nature insofar as such restraint is manifest in nature itself, and can indeed be seen to facilitate the exercise of power.

How can agonal conflict be an expression of power, however, if it is non-exploitative? How is this possible if command and instrumentalisation are essential to the activity of will to power? Looking back to Nietzsche's Mayer-inspired conception of the will to power, which was explicated in Chapter 1, we can begin to formulate a response to these queries. Will to power does not just express itself as the *accumulation* and organisation of force, but also as the *discharge* of this force, which does not have to directly generate exploitative relations. There are three alternatives. First, power can be expressed purely for the sake of the sensation of relieving pent up force and experiencing how much command one has over *oneself* (and one's "Auslösungsapparat") – as can be the case in sport. We find this conception of agonal contest as an otherwise useless vent for force in a fragment where he affirms how the Greeks held "Die 'unnütze' Kraftvergeudung (im Agon jeder Art) als Ideal" (NL 8[15] 10.336).¹⁶² Second, discharge can be purely motivated by the desire to experience how much force one has accumulated *relative to others* – that is, a nominal dominance, without exercising any actual instrumental power over those dominated. As Nietzsche says of the Greek agon in GD Alten 3,

¹⁶² See also JGB 260: "Die Fähigkeit und Pflicht zu langer Dankbarkeit und langer Rache — beides nur innerhalb seines Gleichen —, die Feinheit in der Wiedervergeltung, das Begriffs-Raffinement in der Freundschaft, eine gewisse Nothwendigkeit, Feinde zu haben (gleichsam als Abzugsgräben für die Affekte Neid Streitsucht Übermuth, — im Grunde, um gut freund sein zu können)". It is crucial to observe that Nietzsche's notion of enmity is by no means necessarily purely negative in kind. One's enemy should ideally be an equal who gives us the opportunity to cleanse, exercise and improve ourselves. Indeed, although in JGB 260 Nietzsche distinguishes the friend from the enemy (the enemy being the necessary condition for the friend), we find in Z I Freunde that friend and foe are not depicted as standing in a relation of exclusive disjunction towards one another: "In seinem Freunde soll man seinen besten Feind haben. Du sollst ihm am nächsten mit dem Herzen sein, wenn du ihm widerstrebst." (4.72). See also Z I Krieg 4.59, where Nietzsche entreats us to rejoice in the successes of our enemies: "Ihr müsst stolz auf euern Feind sein: dann sind die Erfolge eures Feindes auch eure Erfolge."

“mit Festen und Künsten wollte man auch nichts Andres als sich obenauf fühlen, sich obenauf zeigen: es sind Mittel, sich selber zu verherrlichen” (6.157). The accent is on *feeling* and *showing* oneself as “obenauf”, but not on *exercising* this dominance by controlling the behaviour of defeated adversaries. Finally, Nietzsche also conceives of agonal conflict as a means to strengthening and training oneself, or the community, for the exploitative struggle against others outside of the given agonal contest or community. As such, we might think of the form of restraint inherent to the agon in the same way Nietzsche thinks of law in GM II 11, namely, as a *means* (*Mittel*) in the exploitative, unmeasured “Kampf von Macht-Complexen” (5.313). As he also says in GD Alten 3, with agonal institutions, “[d]ie ungeheure Spannung im Innern entlud sich dann in furchtbarer und rücksichtsloser Feindschaft nach Aussen” (6.157). Such institutions did not *replace* exploitative or destructive conflict, but rather enabled it to be more effectively directed towards the outside. Thus, Nietzsche’s later conception of agonal conflict can be understood as cohering with his notion of the world as will to power, namely, insofar as such measured struggle represents a “Verfeinerung jenes Macht-Äußerungsbedürfnisses” (NL 7[161] 10.295).

The will to power can express itself variously in destructive conflict, exploitative conflict or agonal conflict. It is *not* necessarily agonal, and any agonal unity exhibited by a social group is always local and can never be extended across an entire community. Within the framework of Nietzsche’s argumentation, to conceive of the agon, as Hatab does, as embodied in the democratic principle of “open fair opportunity for all citizens to participate in political contention” is precisely to attempt to turn agonal equality into a “Grundprinzip der Gesellschaft”. This is because, for Nietzsche, agonal relations only subsist between approximate equals. The strong should not limit themselves agonally towards the weak. He does not advise the strong to exhibit *Ehrfurcht* towards the less fortunate and helpless, as Schmidt considers the Greeks to have done. Such behaviour would be a symptom of decline. Hatab suggests that the logic of the will to power demands not only that we show agonal moderation towards less capable individuals, but that we actively strive

to render them worthy opponents.¹⁶³ However, Nietzsche's later writings suggest that what takes place in nature and what must take place within any healthy society is that inferior individuals are excluded from agonal contest with their superiors, who should always opt to establish exploitative relations with those weaker than them.

Nonetheless, *pace* Appel, this is once again perfectly compatible with Nietzsche's conviction that *any* social subgroup of equals (i.e. equal in terms of capacity, rather than class) can engage in agonal conflict. However, the vibrancy of the agon is again conditioned by social stratification, since any social group of agonal equals can only sustain this equality on the basis of exploiting others within society (JGB 259). Thus, we see that Nietzsche's later agonism, like his earlier agonism, is socially inclusive while at the same time demanding social stratification.

Casting our mind back to Burckhardt, we can see the misleading nature of Martin Ruehl's thesis that, "[l]ike Burckhardt, Nietzsche regarded the agon as an essentially aristocratic notion that belonged to a pre-democratic age."¹⁶⁴ The relation of agonal measure to aristocratic social order is complex and multifaceted for both Burckhardt and Nietzsche. Both appear to propound the idea that the values of the agon originate, and can be appreciated in their purest form, within an aristocratic social class, and that an agonal culture is best conceived as situated within a stratified society; however, both also bring into relief how agonal relations can proliferate *beyond* that class.

¹⁶³ See Hatab (2005), p.142: "As in athletics, defeating an incapable or incapacitated competitor winds up being meaningless. So I should not only will the presence of others in an agon, I should also want that they be able adversaries, that they have opportunities and capacities to succeed in the contest."

¹⁶⁴ See fn.67.

2.4. ON THE SOURCES OF AGONAL MEASURE

We are left with the third and final obstacle to our having a clear picture of what agonal conflict practically signifies. This concerns the question as to how measure is imposed on evil Eris, which is to say the primal tendency to engage in unmeasured destructive conflict. As was established above, the agon draws upon, and harnesses, a range of the drives and affects that underpin the *Vernichtungskampf*: for example, the “so furchtbar vorhandenen Trieb” for “Kampf und die Lust des Sieges”, along with envy (*Neid*) and ambition (*Ehrgeiz*). Yet, even once these have been bridled and canalised into culturally productive *Wettkampf*, they are nonetheless constantly pushing towards excess (“Übermaß”). Indeed, Nietzsche recounts how the ancient Greek *Wettkampf* stimulated the ambition and envy of competitors to such an extent that, in their struggle to excel their adversaries, they were often tempted to resort to unmeasured means that were antithetical to the measured ethos of the *Wettkampf* itself.

The first risk is that superdominant contestants will strive for the unmeasured goal of tyrannising over the contest and establishing a permanent victory, or what Nietzsche calls an *Alleinherrschaft*. Should an individual be sufficiently talented to dominate a given contest – that is, to become *hors de concours*, as Alcibiades does in Burckhardt’s account of the equestrian agon – the contest dries up due to the fact that others are no longer motivated to compete. As such, in the first place, measure is a precondition of agonal conflict insofar as approximate equality must be maintained in order to arouse the affects of envy and ambition, which represent the driving force of such contest. The loss of constant measured tension, Nietzsche thought, led the Greeks back into the *Vernichtungskampf*, since

ohne Neid Eifersucht und wettkämpfenden Ehrgeiz der hellenische Staat wie der hellenische Mensch entartet. Er wird böse und grausam,

er wird rachsüchtig und gottlos, kurz, er wird “vorhomerisch” — und dann bedarf es nur eines panischen Schreckens, um ihn zum Fall zu bringen und zu zerschmettern. (CV 5 1.792)

Since the Greeks needed the *Wettkampf* as a means of releasing their competitive energies, it makes sense that with the loss of such measured non-violent means, they would revert to violent, unmeasured forms of contest. The second risk, however, is that individuals will directly resort to violent or murderous means in an attempt to secure victory. Thus, Nietzsche warns of the situation in which “einer der großen um die Wette kämpfenden Politiker und Parteihäupter [fühlt sich] zu schädlichen und zerstörenden Mitteln und zu bedenklichen Staatsstreichen, in der Hitze des Kampfes, [...] gereizt [...]” (CV 5 1.789).

Nonetheless, Nietzsche maintains that “[d]er Wettkampf entfesselt das Individuum: und zugleich bändigt er dasselbe nach ewigen Gesetzen” (NL 16[22] 7.402; my italics). How, then, does Nietzsche think that the two risks just outlined were staved off? How did the agon contain (*bändig*) individuals at the same time as it released (*entfesselt*) them in provoking their personal ambitions? How was the ambition and envy of contestants curbed or *begrenzt* and the descent back into pre-Homeric violence forestalled?

In the critical literature, there is a deep disagreement regarding Nietzsche’s proposed solution to this problem. On the one hand, there are those who propound what I will call the *respect* reading; on the other, there are those who defend what I will call the *counterbalancing* reading. The former is put forward by Hatab and Connolly, while the latter is to be found in Herman Siemens, and to some extent, also Bonnie Honig. I will briefly reconstruct these readings before examining what Nietzsche’s historical sources on the ancient Greek agon (*viz.* Curtius, Burckhardt and Grote) say about agonal moderation. I will then argue that an appreciation of how Nietzsche develops their thoughts reveals an interesting, and more convincing, alternative to both the respect and counterbalancing readings.

It should be emphatically stated at the outset that my intention is in no way to fully reconstruct, deflate or debunk the particular brands of democratic agonism

that the aforementioned political philosophers develop out of their interpretations of Nietzsche. Excepting Herman Siemens, they all proffer their readings as *appropriations* of Nietzsche's thought, rather than strictly representative exegeses. I am not contending that their appropriations are in themselves without worth, but only that they take us farther than we might think from the tenor of Nietzsche's thought, which in fact presents us with an as yet unremarked solution to the problem at hand. I will therefore be reconstructing their readings of Nietzsche only with a view to delineating two fallacious ways in which we might be tempted to read him on the question of agonal moderation.

The foremost representatives of the respect reading are Hatab and Connolly. Both to some degree construe agonal measure as a subjectively imposed form of self-restraint that one exercises in relation to one's adversaries. Nonetheless, each does so in their own way, and we should highlight some of the points of convergence and divergence in their Nietzschean (or arguably *post-Nietzschean*) visions. Thus, in *Political Theory and Modernity* (1988) and *Identity and Difference* (1991) Connolly marshals Nietzsche in his effort to sketch a democratic ethos of "respect" able to safeguard social pluralism – that is "agonistic care and self-limitation" towards one's adversaries.¹⁶⁵ Connolly refers to texts from throughout the corpus (though notably none in which the agon is explicitly discussed) in trying to illuminate Nietzsche's affirmation of both the contingency and relationality of identity. In brief, the idea is that, though one might define oneself (or one's community) as Christian, heterosexual, republican and non-violent, these features are contingent, which is to say that one *could* have been born elsewhere and *could* have developed a quite different identity.¹⁶⁶ According to Connolly, this means that identity is always an artificial construction for Nietzsche, and *not* the expression of an essence. Connolly invokes NL 9[151] 12.424, which states that "Der Wille zur Macht kann sich nur an Widerständen äußern", in an effort to demonstrate that the

¹⁶⁵ William Connolly, *Identity/Difference* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), p.185.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.174.

identity of the modern subject is, for Nietzsche, defined in opposition or resistance to the aspects of itself and its society that fail fit that identity. Hence, on this reading, the modern subject is conditioned by difference. We do not “contain an inner essence which draws us toward stasis and subjectivity”; rather, the modern subject is ineluctably “the locus of a struggle one strives to suppress”.¹⁶⁷

It is the modern subject’s “refus[al] to accept difference in itself and others”, and its desire to deny and escape this irreducible state of strife, that tempts it to assert its identity in a universalising, intolerant and even aggressive manner.¹⁶⁸ This will to conquer, convert, exclude or eliminate otherness is what Connolly understands to be the basis of modern suffering, what he glosses as Nietzschean *ressentiment*. As an alternative to the gnawing resentment of pursuing this unachievable goal, Connolly recommends a Nietzschean ethic by which we “come to terms with difference and [...] seek ways to enable difference to be”.¹⁶⁹ He maintains that this ethic can be cultivated by means of an “acceptance of [Nietzsche’s] ontology of resistance” – namely, insofar as this ontology “calls into question the project of perfecting mastery of the world” on the grounds that resistance is ineffaceable.¹⁷⁰ This fosters what he calls an “agonistic respect for difference”:

Recognition of these conditions of strife and interdependence, especially when such recognition contains an element of mutuality, can flow into an ethic in which adversaries are respected and maintained in a mode of agonistic mutuality, an ethic in which alter-identities foster agonistic respect for the differences that constitute them [...].¹⁷¹

Connolly reads Nietzsche as commending that each take a more “ironic” stance towards the norms and ideals that they endorse in order to avoid falling into a

¹⁶⁷ William Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p.156. For his invocation of NL 9[151] 12.424, see p.146.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.158. Within the history of political philosophy, Connolly sees thinkers such as Hobbes, Hegel and Rousseau, who try to convert or excise those deviating from their ideal visions of society, as exemplary of such practices (see *ibid.*, p.175).

¹⁶⁹ Hatab (1995), p.161.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.161.

¹⁷¹ Connolly (1991), p.166

disaffected state of *ressentiment*.¹⁷² As opposed to asserting one's ideals dogmatically, one should a) acknowledge the aspects of oneself, and the members of one's community, that fail to fit one's ideals; and then b) engage in the necessary struggle with them in a measured manner – i.e. without seeking their eradication. In this way, Connolly appeals to us to “convert an antagonism of identity into an agonism of difference”.¹⁷³

While Connolly does not refer to Hesiod or CV 5, we can read the above as a summary of his Nietzsche-inspired account of how evil *Eris* can be stably transformed into good *Eris*. Thus, in order to prevent bloody forms of conflict, he tells us,

Each must overcome its own fear and loathing to enter into equitable relations with others, and only an entity which has made progress in that respect is in a position to let others be what they are or must be.¹⁷⁴

Nonetheless, Connolly does not think that this shift in disposition towards the Other is wholly sufficient to ensure that social struggle remains non-violent. Sometimes violent behaviour will be too deeply ingrained in a person's identity for her to be able to agonistically struggle with others. In such cases, the state must be capable of taking “the minimum legal action needed to protect others from the danger of violence”.¹⁷⁵ We should note, then, Connolly's ethical project therefore relies on the existence of an institutional safety-net (though some have argued that this is not sufficiently fleshed out by Connolly).¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Ibid., p.165; see also Connolly (1991), p.183.

¹⁷³ See *ibid.*, p.178.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p.167. Connolly does not view this as the mere tolerance of subordinate minorities within hegemonic systems, but rather as the “relations between a variety of *intersecting and interdependent constituencies*, none of which sets the unquestioned matrix within which others are placed”. See William Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralisation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), p.92.

¹⁷⁵ Connolly (1991), p.180.

¹⁷⁶ Indeed, Mark Wenman has accused Connolly of excessively focussing on the ethical, subjective aspect of social problems, and neglecting the wider institutional sources of, and solutions to, these problems. See Mark Wenman, *Agonistic Democracy: Constituent Power*

Resonating with Connolly, Hatab argues that it is by means of acknowledging the will to power as that which “can manifest itself only against resistances” that we are able to cultivate a “civic attitude” of “agonistic respect” based on “equal regard”. This, he believes, can act as the foundation of an agonally organised democracy. However, alluding to Connolly, Hatab warns us that this attitude is not to be confused with a positive regard of compassion for one’s adversaries. It should rather be thought of as a minimal affirmation of the Other *qua* legitimate opponent, or in other words, as an acknowledgement of their equality of opportunity (to agonally compete with me). Indeed, Hatab rejects Connolly’s vision of a democracy founded upon an “ethics of letting-be” and “delight in difference” as a sanguine vision of a political community based upon just such a positive regard.

Hatab accepts that “agonistic respect” can often be found wanting and that democratic institutional measures are required to counteract individuals’ or groups’ attempts to exclude their potential adversaries and thereby shut down the contest.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, Hatab also notes the need for non-procedural forms of political resistance, such as were deployed during the civil rights movement. However, he asserts that such protesters must “submit to the penalties of violating a law they think is unjust.”¹⁷⁸ Thus, as in Connolly, we again find that he must take recourse to an institutional safety-net.

Though both Hatab and Connolly therefore affirm the need for such institutional safeguards, both predominantly attribute agonal limitation to a dispositional shift on the part of democratic adversaries. As Herman Siemens has remarked, both “approach the question of limits *from the position of the subject* and the kind of ethos or attitude that must be adopted for political antagonism to remain this side of mutual destruction.”¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, this ethos is conditioned by an

in the Era of Globalisation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.116, p.120, p.123.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.192.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.92.

¹⁷⁹ Siemens (2013), p.90. See also Herman Siemens, “Nietzsche’s Political Philosophy: A Review of Recent Literature”, *Nietzsche-Studien*, 30 (2001b), 509-526 (esp. pp.521-2).

acknowledgement of the irreducible and constitutive function of resistance and struggle with respect to personal identity.

On the other side, Herman Siemens, and, to some extent Bonnie Honig, present us with a picture of agonal measure that contrasts sharply with that of Connolly and Hatab. Both Honig and Siemens cite the same passage in CV 5 where Nietzsche states that the essence of the “hellenischen Wettkampf-Vorstellung” is that it “verabscheut die Alleinherrschaft und fürchtet ihre Gefahren, sie begehrt, als Schutzmittel gegen das Genie — ein zweites Genie” (CV 5 1.789).¹⁸⁰ This is Nietzsche’s conception of reciprocally limiting forces. Within this vision of agonal measure, competing individuals invariably hold tyrannical aspirations, but so long as these individuals are roughly equal in strength, and are therefore able to keep one another’s ambitions in check, neither will be able to gain the upper-hand and tyranny will be (at least temporarily) foreclosed. Honig compares this to Machiavelli’s account of the mutual limitation of the people and the nobles in the Roman republic:

[W]ere it not for their fear of being dominated by the nobles, the people would withdraw from politics [...]. Were it not for the people’s active, political resistance to them, the nobles would put an end to all liberty, public and private, and impose a tyrannical rule on the republic. Because the nobles in a republic are always moved by their ambition to dominate the people, and the people moved always by their desire to secure their liberty, their struggle is perpetual. The perpetuity of their struggle, and the institutional obstacles to its resolution, prevent any one party from dominating and closing the public space of law, liberty and *virtù*.¹⁸¹

Siemens similarly conceives of Nietzsche’s notion of agonal measure as “the result of a given equilibrium of forces” (i.e. as an instance of *counterbalancing*).¹⁸² He uses this conception of the agon to rebut Hatab’s and Connolly’s claim that agonal

¹⁸⁰ See Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), p.71; see e.g. Herman Siemens, “Agonal Communities of Taste: Law and Community in Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Transvaluation”, *JNS*, 24 (2002), 83-112 (p.90 and p.104).

¹⁸¹ Bonnie Honig (1993), pp.70-1.

¹⁸² Siemens (2001b), p.521.

measure is above all a matter of the *self*-limitation of contestants. As evidence that Nietzsche did not think that agonal conflict involved the softening of contestants' aspirations, Siemens cites NL 4[301] 9.175 (among other notes), in which Nietzsche explicitly states that “[d]ie Gleichheit der Bürger ist das Mittel zur Verhinderung der Tyrannis, ihre gegenseitige Bewachung und Niederhaltung.”¹⁸³ We also find this belief in the uncompromising disposition of agonal contestants in Nietzsche's description of the *Wettkampfgedanke* in PHG 5 1.825: “jeder Grieche kämpft *als ob er allein im Recht sei*, und ein unendlich sicheres Maaß des richterlichen Urtheils in jedem Augenblick bestimmt” (my italics).¹⁸⁴ In this way, says Siemens, measure is imposed *medially* at the same time as both parties reciprocally stimulate one another:

Equilibrium is, then, an “intersubjective” or relational phenomenon, a function of the *relations between* more-or-less equal forces, each striving for supremacy. So once again, the relational concept of equilibrium inserts a *radical disjunction* between the subject-position of the antagonists – their desires, intentions and claims – and the qualities of their resulting agonal interaction: each wants to be the best, yet an equilibrium is, or can be, achieved; each is tempted to excess and *hubris*, yet limits or measure can be achieved. The relational sense of the agon means that the measure or limit on action is determined *not* by the players' goals, interests or disposition; rather it is the contingent result of dynamic relations that emerge between social forces competing for supremacy.¹⁸⁵

Like Hatab and Connolly, both Honig and Siemens also acknowledge the need for institutional safeguards. Indeed, both draw on the importance of the practice of ostracism within Nietzsche's early account of the agon. As Nietzsche informs us in

¹⁸³ Siemens (2002), p.105. To further substantiate his reading, Siemens also refers us to MA 261, NL 5[146] 8.78-9; NL 23[1] 7.537; NL 6[7] 8.99: “In seinen geheimen Wünschen war jeder Grieche Tyrann”.

¹⁸⁴ We might also cite NL 16[18] 7.399, where Nietzsche observes “[w]ie die griechische Natur alle furchtbaren Eigenschaften zu benutzen weiß: die tigerartige Vernichtungswuth (der Stämme usw.) im Wettkampf”. Insofar as they exercised their “tigerartige Vernichtungswuth im Wettkampf”, it would appear that their affective disposition towards their opponents was not in the slightest restrained.

¹⁸⁵ Siemens (2013), p.91.

CV 5, ostracism was the practice whereby the ancient Greeks banished any individual who was deemed excessively predominant and who might therefore repress a given contest. As the Ephesians said upon exiling Hermador: “Unter uns soll Niemand der Beste sein; ist Jemand es aber, so sei er anderswo und bei Anderen” (CV 5 1.788). For Honig, a vital part of the agon’s measure is continually maintained by means of institutional checks and balances, as well as the oral institutional channels through which the agon is forced.¹⁸⁶ For Siemens, however, the institution of ostracism is depicted as a last-resort or fall-back option, where pure mutual limitation is figured as the normal means of sustaining measure: “The function of ostracism was precisely to enforce limits where the emergence of absolute victors undid the mutual resistance offered by a *Gegeneinander* of more-or-less equal forces”.¹⁸⁷

We have now delineated two quite commonsensical, though nonetheless fundamentally opposed, models of how agonal moderation might be achieved: one prioritising the role played by adversaries’ *self*-limitation, while the other emphasises the importance of their *reciprocal* limitation. What is more, their proponents claim that these models are either representative of Nietzsche’s thought, or at least inspired thereby. In the remaining two subsections, I will propose that a historically contextualised reading of Nietzsche’s early thought in fact presents us with a philosophically interesting third-way – one that can in many ways be said to combine aspects from both of the conflicting models, and indeed, even sublimate their antagonism.

2.4.1. NIETZSCHE’S CONTEMPORARIES

The philological work of Nietzsche’s contemporaries again represents a fruitful point of entry with respect to our current task: that of resolving the aforementioned

¹⁸⁶ See Honig (1993), ch.3.

¹⁸⁷ Siemens (2001b), p. 521.

dilemma and bringing Nietzsche's synthetic alternative to the fore. The reason for this is that, as I will contend, we find his alternative model of moderation prefigured in their philological studies of the *Wettkampf*.

In "Der Wettkampf", Curtius observes how the agonal culture of the ancient Greeks, by overly stimulating individual ambition, would often descend into bloody sedition and civil war: "so ist die vom Wetteifer entfachte Flamme der Begeisterung ein Feuer geworden, das im Brande des Bürgerkriegs die Blüte der Staaten frühzeitig vernichtet hat." Consequently, he continues, the Greeks were "weit entfernt, den Trieb, welchen der Wetteifer anregt, seiner natürlichen Beschaffenheit zu überlassen, in welcher er mehr zum Schlechten als zum Guten führt."¹⁸⁸ But how, we ought to ask, was this drive ("Trieb") transformed?

It was *religion*, according to Curtius, that restrained these socially harmful affects: "Sie [die Griechen] haben den wilden Trieb gezähmt, sie haben ihn gesittigt und veredelt, indem sie ihn der Religion dienstbar gemacht haben."¹⁸⁹ But how did religion enable this act of transfiguration? In short, according to Curtius, religion propagated a sense of subservience to the god-head of the *polis*, which in turn had the effect of counteracting the individualism normally concomitant with such struggle. This thereby rendered the Hellenic desire for contention serviceable to the *polis*. The reason organised agons were located at sites of religious significance (e.g. Delphi and Olympia), says Curtius, was that this encouraged contestants to view their performance as a tribute to the gods. In participating in the agon, the pious contestant sought to demonstrate the extent to which they had cultivated the mind and body bestowed upon them from above. Moreover, following the games, all prizes had to be bequeathed to the gods in their respective temples. Failure to do so would result in divine wrath, and the community would treat the offending individual as they would a temple robber.¹⁹⁰ Hence, religion both *spurred* people to agonally cultivate themselves (so as to impress the gods), while simultaneously

¹⁸⁸ Curtius (1864), p.9.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.12.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.14.

placing a cap on their dangerous egoism insofar as they were forced to dedicate their trophies to the gods out of fear of both social and divine retribution. Contestants had to willingly submit themselves to these religious norms; thus, as Curtius states, “keiner empfing den Siegerkranz, welcher sich nicht allen feierlich beschworen Normen des Kampfes willig unterworfen hatte.” This explains why, says Curtius, “alle regelmäßigen Wettkämpfe [sind] [...] an Götterfeste geknüpft [...] [und] ihre Schauplätze sind ursprünglich die Tempelhöfe, die eigentlichen Zuschauer die Götter.”¹⁹¹

In contrast to Curtius, Burckhardt primarily attributes agonal measure to the rigorous style of education practiced by the Greeks during the agonal age (sixth-century BC). On the one hand, Burckhardt informs us, gymnastic education had a cultivating effect, allowing military training to be substituted by the “vollendete Durchbildung des Leibes zur Schönheit”. But crucially, in order to achieve this, “[mußte] das Individuum sich so gut als für das Musische einer sehr methodischen Lehre unterziehen [...] und [durfte] sich keine eigenwillige sogenannte Genialität erlauben”.¹⁹² The role of education, both in gymnastics and the arts, was therefore to simultaneously cultivate *and curtail* the individuality and ambition of individual contestants. The socially salubrious effects of this dual function were so marked that there was an “allgemeine Überzeugung vom Werte der Schulung (παίδευσις) [...], die so stark war, daß der Staat (abgesehen davon, daß er die Gymnasien errichtete) seinerseits für die Sache nicht bemüht zu werden brauchte.”¹⁹³

Finally, whereas Curtius underlines the function of religion, and Burckhardt that of education, in limiting the ambitions of those competing in the agon, Grote underscores the importance of patriotic feeling, and communal subscription to a shared moral framework. Grote first describes the Corcyrean sedition – as recounted by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War* – as an historical example of the complete loss of measure. Indeed, Nietzsche himself explicitly cites Grote’s

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p.13.

¹⁹² Burckhardt (2014), vol.4, p.82; my italics.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

account of this event in order to gloss his conception of *Vernichtungskampf*.¹⁹⁴ Grote describes the pandemonium of butchery that erupted as two Corcyrean social groups vied for political power – namely, the oligarchs, who sought to ally Corcyra with Sparta and Corinth, and the demos, who wished to remain loyal to Athens.¹⁹⁵ A violent and internecine revolution broke out, during which half of the main town was raised to the ground. Grote refers to the week of massacre as a “deplorable suspension of legal, as well as moral restraints”, which allowed the “fierce sentiment out of which [the slaughter] arose” to be “satiated”.¹⁹⁶ Grote points out the fact that such states of frenzied *stasis* are a perennial feature of human history (he explicitly mentions the French revolution, for example). The Corcyrean revolution is, according to Grote, merely an archetype of this state of disarray.¹⁹⁷ Grote describes some of the paradigmatic features of such chaotic upheavals as follows:

[C]onstitutional maxims [...] [cease] to carry authority either as restraint or as protection – the superior popularity of the man who is most forward with the sword, or runs down his enemies in the most unmeasured language, coupled with the disposition to treat both prudence in action and candour in speech as if it were nothing but treachery or cowardice – [...] *the loss of respect for legal authority* [...], the unnatural predominance of the ambitious and contentious passions, overpowering in men’s minds all real public objects...¹⁹⁸

Since the propensity for destructive excess is “deeply seated in the human mind”, Grote warns us that “unless the bases of constitutional morality” are firmly and surely laid, we are condemned to continually fall back into the dissolute mayhem of the *Vernichtungskampf*.

¹⁹⁴ See NL 16[39] 7.407: “Die korcyräische Revolution als Vernichtungskampf zweier Parteien. / In Athen dagegen eine Art Wettkampf. Grote, 3, p.536. [Vgl. George Grote, *Geschichte Griechenlands*. Dritter Band. Leipzig: Dyk, 1853:535-6.]” See also CV 5 1.784.

¹⁹⁵ For the original English version of Grote’s comparison of Corcyra and Athens (from which I shall be working), see Grote (1851), vol.6, pp.362-86.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.377.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.380 (my italics).

The contrary of this lamentable condition is, according to Grote, exemplified in Athenian democracy, which, though non-violent, is nonetheless conflictual; indeed, Nietzsche labels Grote's description of Athens "eine Art Wettkampf" (NL 16[39] 7.407). In classical Athens, says Grote, citizens were able to both exercise their combative instincts and express their political discontent by means of institutionalised debate, that is, in lieu of bloodshed.¹⁹⁹ Thus, with ancient Athenian democracy, one bears witness to

how much the habit of active participation in political and judicial affairs – of open, conflicting discussion, discharging the malignant passions by way of speech, and followed by appeal to the vote – *of having constantly present, to the mind of every citizen [...] the conditions of a pacific society, and the paramount authority of a constitutional majority* – how much all these circumstances, brought home as they were at Athens more than in any other democracy to the feelings of individuals, contributed to soften the instincts of intestine violence and revenge, even under very great provocation.²⁰⁰

Grote identifies how the Athenians granted their destructively aggressive instincts a controlled outlet in impassioned democratic debate. Victory was then decided not by direct brute force but indirectly, by appeal to a vote. As such, we can see how within this account, moderation is imposed both by virtue of a constitutional legal edifice as well as by means of individual self-restraint – that is, insofar as citizens exercise respect for legal norms. Furthermore, moderation is also founded on the fact that individuals appreciate the needs of the state and the conditions of "pacific

¹⁹⁹ This cathartic vision of democracy bears a great deal of resemblance to Machiavelli's conception of the Roman practice of accusation, which he describes as an outlet "by which to vent, in some mode against some citizen, those humors that grow up in cities; and when these humours do not have an outlet by which they may be vented ordinarily, they have recourse to extraordinary modes that bring a whole republic to ruin. So there is nothing that makes a republic so stable and steady as to order it in a mode so that those alternating humors that agitate it can be vented in a way ordered by laws." See Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. by Harvey Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996), p.23 (see also ch.7 and ch.8).

²⁰⁰ Grote (1851), vol.6, p.386 (emphasis added).

society” over and against their desire to give free reign to their instincts for violence and revenge.

What recurs across the accounts of Curtius, Burckhardt and Grote, therefore, is an emphasis on the limiting (and enlivening) function of institutions such as religion, formal education and law. This reason for this is that each serve to check the egoistic excesses of agonal adversaries. However, what has also been brought into relief is that such institutions modify the disposition of opponents insofar as they promote the virtue of continence or self-restraint. For Curtius, religion contained the egoism of competitors, and they were only permitted to compete once they had voluntarily acquiesced to the constitutive (religious) norms of the agon. For Burckhardt, it was then regimented education that kept contestants’ pretensions of grandeur under control. And finally, for Grote, participation in political and juridical affairs helped instil a sense of patriotic concern for the commonweal. In none of these cases, however, does respect for one’s adversary come into the picture. Where we do find respect figuring prominently – i.e. with Curtius and Grote – it is conceived as respect for religious or juridical authority, or for the good of the *polis*. In the following subsection, I will illuminate how Nietzsche’s conception of agonal moderation is informed by analogous notions of respect and self-restraint.

2.4.2. A NIETZSCHEAN MODEL OF AGONAL MODERATION

As we have seen, some conception of equality is fundamental to both the counterbalancing and respect models of agonal moderation. However, it is conspicuously absent from the accounts of Curtius, Burckhardt and Grote. Thus, before taking a broader look at how Nietzsche conceives of agonal measure, it behoves us to answer the following question: what kind of role does equality play within Nietzsche’s conception of the agon?

2.4.2.1. EQUALITY AND THE AGON

We should begin by cross-examining some of the evidence cited in support of the counterbalancing reading as presented by Herman Siemens (since his version of this reading is substantially more developed than that of Honig). Since the notion of equality is, unsurprisingly, foundational within the counterbalancing model, we should first try to ascertain the way in which this kind of relation is intrinsic to Nietzsche's vision of the agon.

One conception of equality that is often thought to be fundamental to Nietzsche's conception of the agon is the notion of equilibrium (*Gleichgewicht*), particularly as this is articulated by Volker Gerhardt in his paper "Das 'Princip des Gleichgewichts'".²⁰¹ In trying to shed light upon how agonally counterbalanced tyrants stand in a relation of equality to one another, Herman Siemens has drawn extensively on Gerhardt's analysis:

By "equality of power," Nietzsche does not mean a quantitative measure of objective magnitudes, nor a judgement made from an external standpoint, but the expression of an estimated correspondence between powers, where each power judges itself (as equal) in relation to another power. Unlike the measure of equality, however, the concept of "equilibrium" can *not* be understood from the subject-position, the standpoint of the single antagonists or powers as their conscious goal. For the antagonists do not *aim* at equilibrium; rather, each strives for supremacy (*Übermacht*) – to be the best.²⁰²

Here we have a lucid account of precisely what is being counterbalanced in Siemens' model of agonal moderation. Yet, it is odd that the measure of the agon should at one and the same time be based in the *judgement* of each of the contestants, without this judgement in some way altering their subjective aims and dispositions. How does this judgement bring measure to the

²⁰¹ Volker Gerhardt, "Das 'Princip des Gleichgewichts'", *Nietzsche-Studien*, 12 (1983), 111-133. For examples of the influence of this study on recent accounts of Nietzsche's agonism, see e.g. Enrico Müller, (2005), p.87 (fn.230); and Acampora (2013), p.236.

²⁰² Siemens (2013), p.91.

conflictual state of affairs if not by affecting the intentional stance of those making the judgement? I might interpret my adversary as roughly equal to me, but if I do not give up the pursuit of tyranny, this judgement has no practical effect. Let us now turn to the key texts from MA and WS, as well as to Gerhardt's analysis itself, in order to assess whether such *Gleichgewicht* accurately describes the kind of equality that undergirds Nietzsche's agonism.

In MA 92, Nietzsche presents us with a theory of justice that counters the idea of transcendent or natural rights. In an Aristotelian fashion, he tries to ground the idea of law in a notion of equality. The concept of justice ("Gerechtigkeit", "Billigkeit"), he tells us, emerges when "ungefähr gleich Mächtigen" come face-to-face with one another in the state of nature (be these powers individuals or communities). Where each assesses the other to be of roughly equal power, and where, therefore, "es keine deutlich erkennbare Uebergewalt giebt und ein Kampf zum erfolglosen, gegenseitigen Schädigen würde, da entsteht der Gedanke sich zu verständigen und über die beiderseitigen Ansprüche zu verhandeln [...]" (MA 92). What Volker Gerhardt brings into relief is the fact that the equality (*Gleichheit*) that is being discussed in these texts does not refer to an objective state of equality, "vom Standpunkt eines neutralen Beobachters festgestellt"; it is rather based on the mutual evaluation each party makes of their counterpart. We should remark that this is not a simple case of each measuring the other in terms of brute physical strength, but also in terms of the myriad other capacities that contribute to martial might; thus, for example, "[d]er physische Kraft des einen kann die größere List des anderen gegenüberstehen".²⁰³

²⁰³ See Gerhardt (1983), p.117.

In such circumstances, *each* renounces the goal of physically overpowering the other in favour of self-preservation (“Selbsterhaltung”): “Gerechtigkeit geht natürlich auf den Gesichtspunct einer einsichtigen Selbsterhaltung zurück, also auf den Egoismus jener Ueberlegung: ‘wozu sollte ich mich nutzlos schädigen und mein Ziel vielleicht doch nicht erreichen?’” (MA 92; see also WS 22). *Pace* Siemens, it therefore turns out that *Gleichgewicht* does occasion the exercise of self-control. There *is* a decisive shift in the intentional disposition of each of the contestants insofar as they choose to renounce the goal of martially overpowering one another by means of physical destruction. In place of this, they decide to pursue the end of compromise. Justice is basically the terms of this compromise, which is to say that it represents a type of contract (*Vertrag*). Punishment then represents a form of exchange (*Austausch*) through which this *Gleichgewicht* is reestablished by forcing he who has broken this contract to resubmit to the law and exercise self-restraint.²⁰⁴ In this case, then, the claim that “the measure or limit on action is determined *not* by the players’ goals, interests or disposition” is supported by neither Nietzsche’s writings on *Gleichgewicht* nor Volker Gerhardt’s analysis thereof.

Reading these aphorisms together with CV 5, Volker Gerhardt interprets this as a pivotal moment in the movement from the state of nature (i.e. the quasi-Darwinian *Kampf ums Dasein*) to a culture of *Wettkampf*. Gerhardt further asserts that equally opposed organisations (classes, states or individuals) still “streben nach Übermacht” once they have entered into this condition of justice; the difference is that now “Die Machtsteigerung wird auch im übertragenen Sinn in der *Selbstherrschaft*, im spielerischen *Wettkampf* und überhaupt in den Produktionen der

²⁰⁴ See MA 446; see also WS 22, where Nietzsche describes punishment as follows: “[S]ie [die Strafe] stellt gegen das Uebergewicht, das sich jeder Verbrecher zuspricht, ein viel grösseres Gegengewicht auf, gegen Gewaltthat den Kerkerzwang, gegen den Diebstahl den Wiederersatz und die Strafsumme. So wird der Frevler erinnert, dass er mit seiner Handlung aus der Gemeinde und deren Moral-Vortheilen ausschied: sie behandelt ihn wie einen Ungleichen, Schwachen, ausser ihr Stehenden; deshalb ist Strafe nicht nur Wiedervergeltung, sondern hat ein Mehr, ein Etwas von der Härte des Naturzustandes; an diesen will sie eben erinnern.”

Kultur und der Kunst gesucht.”²⁰⁵ So while the element of striving for supremacy is preserved in the shift to a social condition of justice, the key moment of limitation, which is the laying down of one’s arms, emerges from a definite change in the disposition and aims of the contending parties.

In addition to this, Nietzsche also rejects the idea that adversaries invariably aim at supremacy, asserting that they *do* sometimes aim at equilibrium. However, contrary to the respect reading, the stronger party does not endeavour to “constitute adversaries worthy of agonistic respect”.²⁰⁶ Rather, a *weaker* power will sometimes pursue this goal vis-à-vis a stronger power:

[Z]ieht die Gemeinde vor, ihre Macht zu Vertheidigung und Angriff genau auf die Höhe zu bringen, auf der die Macht des gefährlichen Nachbars ist, und ihm zu verstehen zu geben, dass in ihrer Wagschale jetzt gleichviel Erz liege: warum wolle man nicht gut Freund mit einander sein? (WS 22)

Thus, a weaker party may pursue the more modest objective of establishing a relation of equilibrium and friendship, rather than trying to achieve physical *Übermacht*. This is because achieving *Übermacht*, or the destruction of the stronger power, is often not worth the effort. Nonetheless, one of Nietzsche’s wider aims is to show how this state of compromise and mutual self-control – which he describes as a condition in which there exists “rule of law” (a *Rechtszustand*) – does not obtain between unequal parties. Where inequality arises, according to Nietzsche, relations of subjugation (“Unterwerfung”) will be established since any compacts (“Verträge”) upon which law had been founded will become void:

Dieser [der Rechtszustand] aber ist ebenso endgültig ein Ende gemacht, wenn der eine Theil entschieden schwächer, als der andere, geworden ist: dann tritt Unterwerfung ein und das Recht hört auf, aber der Erfolg ist der selbe wie der, welcher bisher durch das Recht erreicht wurde. (WS 26)

²⁰⁵ Gerhardt (1983), p.125 (my italics); see also p.124.

²⁰⁶ See fn.165; see also Connolly (1991), p.165.

Though the weaker party may strive for equilibrium out of economic interest, the stronger does not stand to gain anything in bringing this about. Indeed, in the state of nature, there is no way of reestablishing *Gleichgewicht* should it be lost since there is no overarching institutional or juridical framework able to reimpose balance (for example, though practices such as ostracism). Should one party become stronger, there is nothing to stop this party monopolising all available power. This would seem to contradict the idea we found in the respect model, namely, that we should raise other weaker powers into a state of equality with us in order to agonally compete with them. Notwithstanding, what has been demonstrated is that if we want to think of the Nietzschean agon as based on some form of *Gleichgewicht*, we must concede that it *does* involve self-limitation, which is to say a renunciation of violent means of pursuing preponderance (*Übergewicht*), even if the goal of preponderance is itself preserved.

But what about the agonal conflict that takes place *within* the state of justice, where there *is* an overarching power, or where individuals exist within a community that has already renounced physical violence and are competing for dominance within a given pacific contest? What prevents *these* adversaries from erecting a tyrannical hegemony? To be sure, Nietzsche thinks that, in a “natural order of things”, counterbalancing serves just this purpose:

[I]n einer natürlichen Ordnung der Dinge, [gibt] es immer mehrere Genies [...], die sich gegenseitig zur That reizen, wie sie sich auch gegenseitig in der Grenze des Maaßes halten. Das ist der Kern der hellenischen Wettkampf-Vorstellung: sie verabscheut die Alleinherrschaft und fürchtet ihre Gefahren, sie begehrt, als Schutzmittel gegen das Genie — ein zweites Genie. (CV 5 1.789)

The ideal situation is one in which no single competitor is able to tyrannise over the contest due to the fact that their opponent is always strong enough to remain, on average, neck and neck with them. However, what is notable is that, *contra* Siemens’ account of the counterbalancing model, this is *not* a mutually *perceived* equality, but

a *de facto* form of equality: contestants striving maximally to achieve predominance within a given competitive practice are unable to conclusively prevail due to the approximately equal ability of their adversaries. Unlike the situation of *Gleichgewicht*, their *perception* of the equality of their counterpart does not have a limiting effect in this context. We might imagine a pair of wrestlers who, despite struggling to the utmost of their abilities, and each believing themselves to be superior in strength, are nonetheless unable to conclusively force their opponent into submission (without resorting to illegitimate means) due to their actual relative equality.

This is not the only characterisation of the agon in Nietzsche's writings that fails to fit Siemens' counterbalancing reading. For another example, we might turn to MA 158:

Verhängniss der Grösse. — Jeder grossen Erscheinung folgt die Entartung nach, namentlich im Bereiche der Kunst. Das Vorbild des Grossen reizt die eitleren Naturen zum äusserlichen Nachmachen oder zum Ueberbieten; dazu haben alle grossen Begabungen das Verhängnissvolle an sich, viele schwächere Kräfte und Keime zu erdrücken und um sich herum gleichsam die Natur zu veröden. Der glücklichste Fall in der Entwicklung einer Kunst ist der, dass mehrere Genie's sich gegenseitig in Schranken halten; bei diesem Kampfe wird gewöhnlich den schwächeren und zarteren Naturen auch Luft und Licht gegönnt.

This state of affairs contrasts sharply with that depicted in the aphorisms on *Gleichgewicht*. The task is no longer that of foreclosing violent or internecine struggle, but rather that of preventing the suffocation of burgeoning talents. In their pursuit of glory, the artist does not limit themselves; furthermore, they are already committed to a non-violent mode of contest; and finally, their acknowledgement of others of a similar ability is not going to cause them to abandon the goal of preponderance out of concerns for their self-preservation (as was the case with *Gleichgewicht*). Consequently, a *Wettkampf* in the arts is rare and difficult to actively sustain. It overexcites the desire to establish absolute ascendancy and therefore constantly threatens to arrest cultural development; thus, in the arts at any rate, “[d]as

Agonale ist auch die Gefahr bei aller Entwicklung” (NL 5[146] 8.78). Indeed, Nietzsche portrays the history of art as a concatenation of tyrants. Thus, with reference to Homer, and his suffocation of the ancient Greek aesthetic agon:

Alles Gute stammt doch von ihm her: aber zugleich ist er die gewaltigste Schranke geblieben, die es gab. Er verflachte, und deshalb kämpften die Ernstern so gegen ihn, umsonst. Homer siegte immer. (NL 5[146] 8.78)

In this transgenerational contest of artists, there is no mutual assessment and subsequent adjustment of goals such as is occasioned by the kind of *Gleichgewicht* that occasionally arises in the state of nature. There is at most a one-way assessment of equality as the new contender feels themselves worthy of assuming the mantle of their predecessor.²⁰⁷ And yet, Homer “always triumphed”, even in death. Indeed, no institutional mechanism, such as ostracism for example, is able to remove excessively dominant individuals if they are deceased. In such cases, it *is* a third party – namely, an *audience* – who must judge the adversaries as being equal. An agon arises in this context when a plurality of artists are actually incapable of monopolising critical acclaim (despite their best efforts). The equality implied here is an *actual* equality in the adversaries’ relative abilities to win the favour of their audience.²⁰⁸ Since there are no institutions to enforce this counterbalancing of great cultural figures, it is simply “[d]er *glücklichste* Fall” when “mehrere Genie’s sich gegenseitig in Schranken halten”.

In CV 5, while Nietzsche does refer to the transgenerational contest of cultural figures, his focus on the practice of ostracism as a limiting mechanism shows that he primarily has the contention of *living* individuals in mind. We should observe that his conception of ostracism is quite different from that of Aristotle, for whom

²⁰⁷ See CV 5 1.787.

²⁰⁸ Indeed, Nietzsche stresses the importance of third-party judgement in a number of notes. See e.g. NL 16[22] 7.402, where Nietzsche describes the *Wettkampf* as a “Kampf vor einem Tribunal.” See also NL 16[21] 7.401: “Was ist das aesthetische Urtheil? Das Richterthum in der Tragödie. / Der Wettkampf unter Künstlern setzt das rechte Publikum voraus.” See also PHG §6 1.826-7.

banishing “those who seemed to predominate too much through their wealth, or the number of their friends, or through any other political influence” fulfilled the function of levelling citizens so as to create harmonious proportion within the state. Moreover, according to Aristotle, ostracism secures the equality needed to sustain a legal order insofar as excessively preeminent individuals stand above, and are therefore unanswerable to, the laws of ordinary men.²⁰⁹ For Nietzsche, however, the Aristotelian conception of ostracism as a means to counteracting the rise of tyrants only emerged later in Greek history – namely, within the explicitly political context, when, as was already mentioned above, “die Gefahr offenkundig [war], daß einer der großen um die Wette kämpfenden Politiker und Parteihäupter zu schädlichen und zerstörenden Mitteln und zu bedenklichen Staatsstreichen, in der Hitze des Kampfes, sich gereizt fühlt” (CV 5 I.789). In this guise, then, ostracism is conceived as a prophylactic against violent *Vernichtungskampf*.

In contrast to this levelling or stabilising construal of ostracism, by which the pursuit of excellence was *curtailed*, Nietzsche asserts that the *original* function of ostracism was not only to reestablish the *de facto* form of mutual moderation referred to above, but also to *stimulate* the pursuit of excellence. He claims that with the emergence of an overly dominant individual, “damit der Wettkampf versiegen würde und der ewige Lebensgrund des hellenischen Staates gefährdet wäre” (ibid.). The reason excessive dominance dries up agonal contest is that such contest is driven by *envy*, and envy only arises under conditions of approximately equality of ability.²¹⁰ Adversaries must feel themselves capable of defeating their peers, and as equal to them in the sense of belonging to the same competitive league as them.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1284a3-1284b3.

²¹⁰ This is strongly suggested by WS 29: “Wo die Gleichheit wirklich durchgedrungen und dauernd begründet ist, entsteht jener, im Ganzen als unmoralisch geltende Hang, der im Naturzustande kaum begreiflich wäre: der Neid. Der Neidische fühlt jedes Hervorragende des Anderen über das gemeinsame Maass und will ihn bis dahin herabdrücken — oder sich bis dorthin erheben [...]”

²¹¹ We find a similar idea in Aristotle (and de Tocqueville, for that matter). See *Rhetoric*, 1388a5f.: “It is clear also what kind of people we envy; that was included in what has been said already; we envy those who are near us in time, place, age, or reputation. [...] Also our

Ostracism, in preventing any individual from setting up a permanent hegemony, thereby maintains the flow of contest; that is, it protects “das Wettspiel der Kräfte” (ibid.). What should be remarked, however, is that in this case, the equality that is safeguarded *is* the mutually perceived (i.e. envy eliciting) equality of the contestants.

What we can conclude from these observations, then, is that there are multiple conceptions of equality informing Nietzsche’s early conception of the *Wettkampf*:

1. A form of equality that *prevents* violent struggle and thereby *enables* agonal contest; namely, *Gleichgewicht*: a mutually perceived equality of martial capacity, which causes opposed parties to renounce the goal of violently overpowering one another;
2. A *de facto* equality established independently of third-party adjudicators. This is an equality of ability such that maximally striving opponents cannot conclusively defeat one another at a given non-violent competitive practice;
3. A *de facto* equality in the eyes of third-party adjudicators, which concretely limits the opposed contestants’ claims to predominance (particularly in the context of aesthetic agonal struggle);
4. A form of equality that *provokes* agonal struggle; namely, the mutually perceived equality of agonistic adversaries with respect to their proficiency at a particular non-violent task. This elicits contestants’ envy and, correspondingly, their desire to enter into contest with one another.

We now have a clear insight into how, for Nietzsche, the mechanics of the agon rely on distinct, and equally indispensable, forms of equality. It should now be evident how Siemens’ counterbalancing model obfuscates the way in which a) *self*-restraint

fellow-competitors, [...] [are not] those whom, in our opinion or that of others, we take to be far below us or far above us.”

is a necessary *enabling* condition of the agon insofar as it gets us out of the unmeasured state of nature; and, b) judgements of equality from a third-party standpoint are often a necessary component of agonal limitation.

Nonetheless, from the analysis so far, it may appear as though ostracism and *de facto* equality (i.e. either [2] or [3]) are the only available sources of agonal moderation. Self-restraint has only been shown to be involved in getting parties out of the initial state of nature and preventing violence, but not necessarily in preventing individuals from tyrannising over a given agon while obeying the rules. Is self-restraint, even within the norms of a given agonal practice, irrelevant for Nietzsche? By Gerhardt's and Siemens' interpretations, if contestants are not of roughly equal capacity, ostracism is the only available corrective, since the opposed parties will always strive maximally for supremacy over the competitive practice in question. However, as we will now see, there is abundant evidence that controverts this interpretation and which demonstrates the importance of self-restraint within Nietzsche's understanding of agonal measure.

2.4.2.2. AN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTION OF AGONAL RESPECT

Nietzsche was undoubtedly aware of the role played by religion and myth within Greek agonal culture. Already in his 1875-6 lecture notes on "Der Gottesdienst der Griechen", he reiterates Curtius' observation that victors in the various official agons were obliged to bequeath their prizes to the gods.²¹² But as we look beyond the *Philologica*, we see that Nietzsche uses the term "mythisch" to refer to two quite distinct ideas within the context of the agon. First, he uses the term to denote the violently heroic world of *Homeric* myth, which Nietzsche, like Burckhardt, thought

²¹² See GDG, KGW II/5, pp.424-5: "Alle Siegespreise, die in den Agonen gewonnen wurden, mußten vom Sieger dem Gott wieder geweiht werden." Nietzsche also notes how there were temples used solely for crowning the victors of the agonal games (see *ibid.*, pp.418-9).

was antagonistic to the agonal world of pacifically competing individuals.²¹³ On the other hand, he uses the term to refer to the ancient Greek institution of religion and religious belief. This latter form of the *mythisch* is figured as integral to agonal culture insofar as it functions as a brake on the affect of ambition:

Gegensatz zu dem Wettkampf der mythische Zug: d.h. er verhindert die Selbstsucht des Individuums. Der Mensch kommt in Betracht als Resultat einer Vergangenheit: in ihm wird die Vergangenheit geehrt.

Welches Mittel wendet der hellenische Wille an, um die nackte Selbstsucht in diesem Kampfe zu verhüten und sie in den Dienst des Ganzen zu stellen? Das Mythische.

Beispiel: Aeschylus' Oresteia und die politischen Ereignisse. [...]

Dieser mythische Geist erklärt es nun auch, wie die Künstler wetteifern durften: ihre Selbstsucht war gereinigt, insofern sie sich als Medium fühlten: wie der Priester ohne Eitelkeit war, wenn er als sein Gott auftrat. (NL 8[68] 7.248)

From this rather fragmentary *Nachlass* note, we can extrapolate a number of different ways in which religious myth served to delimit Greek agonal ambition according to Nietzsche. First, religious myth reminds contestants of the importance of their ancestry or past (“Vergangenheit”) – that is, it reminds them that they compete not for their own glory, but for the glory of their ancestral line. Second, myth serves as a *warning*. In Aeschylus’ Orestian trilogy, the excessive political ambition of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (who murder Agamemnon upon his return from Troy) is brutally punished, with Apollo ordering Orestes to murder the usurpers and Athena sanctioning the act of vengeance. Finally, religious sensibility purified artists’ personal ambition insofar as they felt that they were personally channelling

²¹³ See e.g. NL 16[21] 7.401. “Kampf des Heroisch-Mythischen mit dem Individuum: Bevor das Individuum erwacht, erwacht die Heroenwelt als Welt von Individuen. Kampf des Heroisch-Repräsentativen und des agonalen Individuums: bei Pindar. Hesiods Eris und Homer selbst”.

the divinity in their artistic activity; on account of this, they did not hold their talent to be strictly attributable to themselves.²¹⁴

Note that all of the aforementioned restraining effects of religion take the form of a modification of contestants' dispositions. In their consideration of myth, the tyrannous ambition of the individual is hindered (*verhindert*) in such a way as to corral it into the "Dienst des Ganzen". This idea is already articulated in CV 5, and in far more lucid terms:

Der Grieche ist neidisch und empfindet diese Eigenschaft nicht als Makel, sondern als Wirkung einer wohlthätigen Gottheit: welche Kluft des ethischen Urtheils zwischen uns und ihm! Weil er neidisch ist, fühlt er auch, bei jedem Übermaaß von Ehre Reichthum Glanz und Glück, das neidische Auge eines Gottes auf sich ruhen und er fürchtet diesen Neid; in diesem Falle mahnt er ihn an das Vergängliche jedes Menschenlooses, ihm graut vor seinem Glücke und das Beste davon opfernd beugt er sich vor dem göttlichen Neide. (CV 5 1.787)²¹⁵

In chorus with Curtius, Nietzsche portrays religious belief as having both a stimulating and restraining effect. For Nietzsche, the Greeks felt that their envy could be affirmed and acted upon on account of the fact that they thought it bestowed upon them by a "wohlthätige Gottheit". Simultaneously though, the Greeks feared divine envy, which they felt would bring the scourge of *nemesis* upon them should they pursue their hubristic ambitions or achieve immoderate success. Myths such as those of Thamyris, Marsyas and Niobe, helped inculcate this fear into the mind of every Greek, and with it, some modicum of prudence and self-restraint (what we might call *sōphrosynē*). We can deduce from these considerations that Nietzsche did not think that the Greeks pursued supremacy in an unrestrained fashion (only being limited by the tyrannical desires of others); rather, out of fear, they would willingly remove themselves from any competition in which they sensed their success was becoming disproportionate.

²¹⁴ See also GGL III, KGW II/5, p.299: "[D]as siegreiche Individuum gilt als Incarnation des Gottes, tritt in den Gott zurück."

²¹⁵ On the envy of the gods, see also WS 30.

A similar dynamic of self-limitation can be identified in Nietzsche's conception of patriotism. Already in an early *Nachlass* fragment, Nietzsche presents "der Heimatsinstinkt" as one of the most effective means in the struggle "gegen die maßlose Selbstsucht des Individuums" (NL 16[16] 7.398). Or as he expresses it in another note: "Was ist es, was die mächtigen Triebe in die Bahn der Wohlfahrt bringt? Im Allgemeinen die Liebe. Die Liebe zur Heimatstadt umschließt und bändigt den agonalen Trieb" (NL 21[14] 7.526). Again, this thought given a more comprehensive treatment in CV 5:

Für die Alten aber war das Ziel der agonalen Erziehung die Wohlfahrt des Ganzen, der staatlichen Gesellschaft. Jeder Athener z.B. sollte sein Selbst im Wettkampfe soweit entwickeln, als es Athen vom höchsten Nutzen sei und am wenigsten Schaden bringe. Es war kein Ehrgeiz in's Ungemessene und Unzumessende, wie meistens der moderne Ehrgeiz: an das Wohl seiner Mutterstadt dachte der Jüngling, wenn er um die Wette lief oder warf oder sang; ihren Ruhm wollte er in dem seinigen mehren; seinen Stadtgöttern weihte er die Kränze, die die Kampfrichter ehrend auf sein Haupt setzten. Jeder Grieche empfand in sich von Kindheit an den brennenden Wunsch, im Wettkampf der Städte ein Werkzeug zum Heile seiner Stadt zu sein: darin war seine Selbstsucht entflammt, darin war sie gezügelt und umschränkt. (CV 5 1.789-90)

Nietzsche thus marries the at once stimulating ("entflammend") and restraining ("zügelnd") effects of both religion and patriotism in a manner strongly recalling Curtius. Agonal contestants are compelled to compete out of love for the commonweal (i.e. "die Wohlfahrt des Ganzen") and their national godheads ("Stadtgötter"). Notwithstanding, these ideas (of the state and of the national godheads) also exert a restrictive force insofar as they impel the individual to check their agonal drives as soon as they threaten to come into conflict with the higher interests of the *polis*. Agonal education was therefore motivated by what Nietzsche calls a "burning wish" to serve the public good – one that must have ideally outweighed their egoistic aspirations. We can therefore infer from this that individuals would, *of their own accord*, rein in their personal ambitions were they to come into conflict with the ends of the state. Obviously, this requires the inculcation

of, and widespread submission to, the moral authority of the state – just as Grote thought the democratic *Wettkampf* relied on there being “*constantly present, to the mind of every citizen [...] the conditions of a pacific society*” and a thoroughgoing respect for “constitutional morality”. This does not necessarily vitiate the idea that every Greek also secretly yearned to tyrannise over the particular agons in which they participated, or even over society as a whole. The agonal Greeks may well have been characterised by a degree of cognitive dissonance as their egoistic and social concerns fought for psychological priority. However, the supposition of the above texts is that the latter would usually win out in the event of a serious clash of such interests.

These findings, which illuminate the persistent importance of *self*-limitation within Nietzsche’s early agonism, decisively undermine the validity of the counterbalancing model; yet, it would be erroneous to conclude from this that our study stands in support of its opponent, the respect reading. While my exegesis has revealed a model in which subjects adjust their own aspirations, this does not occur in the way described by either Hatab’s or Connolly’s Nietzsche-inspired accounts of agonal moderation – that is, due to contestants acknowledging a particular ontology of difference and accordingly respecting their opponents’ right to participate. It is rather a mode of self-restraint that emerges *as a result of social inculcation*; moreover, though I would argue that we should conceive of this self-restraint as marked by the affect of respect, this is a respect for one’s *community* and the religious traditions of that community, *not respect for one’s adversary*.

2.4.2.3. THE LATER NIETZSCHE ON EQUALITY AND SELF-RESTRAINT

Given the critique of collective morality and law that Nietzsche develops during his middle period (and which is already thematised in UB III²¹⁶), it should come as no surprise that, as we move into the mid-1880s, the need for a religious and patriotic moral framework is no longer posited as a precondition of agonal conflict.²¹⁷ However, the same cannot be said for self-restraint and equality, which are essential to his later notion of agonal struggle.

We should first consider how Nietzsche characterises the will to power in JGB 22, namely, as “gerade die tyrannisch-rücksichtenlose und unerbittliche Durchsetzung von Machtansprüchen”. According to this *Weltanschauung*, “[zieht] jede Macht in jedem Augenblicke ihre letzte Konsequenz”. At first glance, there seems to be no ontological space for agonal self-restraint within this formulation of the will power. The only possible source of moderation would appear to be approximate *de facto* equality of power. Nonetheless, in JGB 265, Nietzsche indicates that where equal forces are opposed, they do in fact exhibit *self*-restraint. This is what we have already seen Nietzsche describe as the “eingebornen himmlischen Mechanik” according to which even stars (“Sterne”) act with “Feinheit und *Selbstbeschränkung* im Verkehre mit ihres Gleichen” (my italics). But how can there be what he refers to as an egoistic “Austausch von Ehren und Rechten als Wesen alles Verkehrs”, which “zum naturgemässen Zustand der Dinge gehört”? Is this not, as was indicated above, a manifest case of the anthropomorphic fallacy? Surely celestial bodies are not capable of granting rights to one another? Though this may partly be the case, I will now suggest that through a close reading of JGB 22 and 265, we might be able to elucidate Nietzsche’s somewhat abstruse hypotheses.

²¹⁶ See UB III 1.337. See also Herman Siemens, “(Self-)legislation, Life and Love in Nietzsche’s Philosophy”, in I. Wienand (ed.), *Neue Beiträge zu Nietzsches Moral-, Politik- und Kulturphilosophie* (Fribourg, CH: Academic Press Fribourg, 2009), pp.67-90 (pp.73ff).

²¹⁷ N.B., however, that Nietzsche speaks affirmatively of the need for religion in JGB 61.

In JGB 22, Nietzsche seeks to reconceptualise nature as an interaction of *active* forces. In doing so, he aims to contest the idea of natural law as conceived within the mechanistic worldview – that is, the idea that all natural events “obey” the dictates of nature in the sense of being merely the reactive response to exogenous causes in accordance with preordained natural laws.²¹⁸ By contrast, Nietzsche’s active vision of nature conceives of natural events as being the result of a plurality of actively striving power organisations that obey no law, yet, in their maximally striving against one another, exhibit necessity (“Notwendigkeit”) and predictability (“Berechenbarkeit”). But if all activity is the result of an endogenously initiated, active striving, and not mere reactivity to external causes, then there must, Nietzsche tells us, be action at a distance. The reason for this is that, as will be further explicated in Chapter 4, a will to power organisation must be able to assess the relative power of that to which it is opposed before actively striving to overcome and assimilate it.²¹⁹ Thus, Nietzsche claims that even “[i]n der chemischen Welt herrscht die schärfste Wahrnehmung der Kraftverschiedenheit” (NL 35[58] 11.537).

What we can discern from JGB 265 is that a will to power organisation does not set out to overpower an opposed organisation that it perceives as roughly equal to its own strength – hence the apparent celestial order. Within Nietzsche’s account, the heavenly bodies *actively* restrain themselves. Moreover, their acknowledgement of the equal power of their counterparts should not be conceived as a concession made in the face of an insurmountable obstacle, but as a *positive* affect of reverence, whereby entities recognise and honour their *own strength* in the other: “sie ehrt sich in ihnen und in den Rechten, welche sie an dieselben abgiebt.” Rather than generating a relation free of tension, this leads to a mode of non-destructive and non-exploitative contest – a “Wettstreit”, as Nietzsche describes it in NL 11[134] 9.491.

²¹⁸ See also NL 40[42] 11.650: “[D]ie einzige Kraft, die es giebt, ist gleicher Art wie die des Willens: ein commandiren an andere Subjekte, welche sich daraufhin verändern.”

²¹⁹ See NL 12[27] 10.404-5: “Die Wirkung des Unorganischen auf einander ist zu studiren (sie ist immer eine Wirkung in die Ferne, also ein ‘Erkennen’ ist nothwendig allem Wirken vorher: das Ferne muß percipirt werden. Der Tast- und Muskelsinn muß sein Analogon haben:).”

Thus, even at a cosmological-metaphysical level, what we might refer to as agonal conflict involves some form of self-imposed measure, which emerges from the *perceived equality* (*Gleichgewicht*) of an opposed entity.

It should be pointed out that the experimental verifiability or falsifiability of this hypothesis is not what is of philosophical importance (indeed, it will be seen in Chapter 4 that the will to power is not a falsifiable theory). What matters is whether it can account for the same observable phenomena as effectively as, or even better than, the passive, mechanical model of nature. And needless to say, Nietzsche does indeed think that his hypothesis is better able to describe the “intelligible Charakter” of the world (JGB 36). Thus, if this is the case, and we are given a choice between the two, then Nietzsche thinks it worth our while choosing the active vision, since the reactive notion of mechanism supports a plethora of philosophical prejudices that negatively impact upon our practical life. Indeed, Nietzsche claims that the mechanical theoretical worldview betrays “ein artiger Hintergedanke, in dem noch einmal die pöbelmännische Feindschaft gegen alles Bevorrechtete und Selbstherrliche [...] verkleidet liegt” – namely, the Christian-democratic notion of universal “Gleichheit vor dem Gesetz” (JGB 22).²²⁰

By demoralising nature, and thereby de-essentialising the idea of universal equality, Nietzsche thinks we can open up a logical space of possibility for novel modes of social agency. Indeed, Nietzsche’s thoughts on social organisation can be viewed, at least in part, as an attempt to envisage modes of living together that affirm and embody the world as will to power to as great a degree as possible. An apposite place to begin our inquiry into how his theoretical conception of the will to power cashes out practically is with his polemical description of the society of the blond beasts. As was emphasised in Chapter 1, we should not read Nietzsche as advocating the murderous behaviour of the blond beasts; nonetheless, his portrayal of the

²²⁰ See also NL 7[54] 12.313: “Werden als Erfinden Wollen Selbstverneinen, Sich-selbst-Überwinden: kein Subjekt, sondern ein Thun, Setzen, schöpferisch, keine ‘Ursachen und Wirkungen’. [...] Unbrauchbarkeit der mechanistischen Theorie — giebt den Eindruck der Sinnlosigkeit.”

sources of their social stability is illuminating and elaborates upon many of the themes he develops in MA and WS. Thus, he describes the community of blond beasts as being composed of individuals who are

[...] so streng durch Sitte, Verehrung, Brauch, Dankbarkeit, noch mehr durch gegenseitige Bewachung, durch Eifersucht inter pares in Schranken gehalten [...], die andererseits im Verhalten zu einander so erfinderisch in Rücksicht, Selbstbeherrschung, Zartsinn, Treue, Stolz und Freundschaft sich beweisen (GM I 11 5.274).

Toward those excluded from their community, of course, the blond beasts unleash their will without restraint. But what are the internal sources of measure that allow the blond beasts to socially cohere and displace their aggressive pathos onto foreigners? In this text, equality is clearly functioning as a fundamental source of measure. First, we can infer that a type of equality analogous to that of the *Gleichgewicht* described in MA is operating in this society: members mutually perceive, or *recognise*, one another as *pares* and accordingly exercise *self*-restraint towards their apparent equals (e.g. “Verehrung”). Yet Nietzsche also portrays these individuals as *mutually* restraining one another: it seems that despite the prevalence of self-limitation, they are nonetheless always pushing to overstep their bounds, but, due to their being roughly equal in their *Eifersucht* (i.e. there is “Eifersucht inter pares”), they are alert enough to identify and actively thwart one another’s attempts to attain predominance.

In keeping with his description of the will to power, this idea of acting with a customary reverence (“Verehrung”) towards one’s equals is not understood by Nietzsche as a heteronomous act of subordination to the mores of one’s society; it is rather conceived as active and egoistic in kind. To exercise the “Sitte” of one’s society is not the same as “Sittlichkeit”, the passive submission to the morality of one’s milieu.²²¹ This is manifest in his characterisation of the sovereign individual

²²¹ See also NL 9[145] 12.419, where Nietzsche directly associates *Sittlichkeit* with passivity and obedience: “Das Unvermögen zur Macht: seine Hypokrisie und Klugheit: als Gehorsam (Einordnung, Pflicht-Stolz, Sittlichkeit...) als Ergebung, Hingebung, Liebe”.

in GM II 2, whom he describes as “das autonome übersittliche Individuum”, adding that “‘autonom’ und ‘sittlich’ schliesst sich aus”:

Der “freie” Mensch, der Inhaber eines langen unzerbrechlichen Willens, hat in diesem Besitz auch sein Werthmaass: von sich aus nach den Andern hinblickend, ehrt er oder verachtet er; und eben so nothwendig als er die ihm Gleichen, die Starken und Zuverlässigen (die welche versprechen dürfen) ehrt [...]. (5.294)

We might be tempted to equate this with the Kantian ideal of autonomy; however, there are critical differences. In the first place, there is the fact that Nietzschean sovereignty is not the result of rational reflection, as is conformity to the categorical imperative; it is rather the culmination of a lengthy pre-history of social conditioning, which fashions humans in such a way that they are left inclined to act customarily without need of external compulsion: “der Mensch wurde mit Hülfe der Sittlichkeit der Sitte und der socialen Zwangsjacke wirklich berechenbar gemacht”. Moreover, this freedom is *embodied* – i.e. “in allen Muskeln [zuckend]” – as opposed to being purely intellectual in kind. It furthermore does not result from counteracting the instincts; rather, “Verantwortlichkeit, [...] dieser Macht über sich und das Geschick hat sich bei ihm bis in seine unterste Tiefe hinabgesenkt und ist zum Instinkt geworden, zum dominirenden Instinkt”. It is by means of custom, legal institutions and disciplinary practices that this tenacity of will has been bred into the human animal. Instead of being a mere slave to his momentary instincts, the fruit of this long labour of breeding – i.e. the sovereign individual – can now resist his desires, and his drives are organised firmly enough for him to be able to fulfil his promises, without being diverted by caprice. But whereas Nietzsche previously valorised the capacity to resist personal whim insofar as it enables individuals to better serve the higher goals of their community (as in CV 5), this aptitude is now exalted for enabling the sovereign individual to realise *his own* projects. He is in no way answerable to the moral authority of the community, but “[dürfen für] sich gut sagen [...] und mit Stolz, also [dürfen] auch zu sich Ja sagen [...].” (GM II 3 5.294-5).

Nietzsche sees himself further diverging from the Kantian notion of moral autonomy insofar as he thinks Kantian morality demands that one treat everyone as equals.²²² Conversely, the way in which Nietzsche's sovereign individual acts towards others depends on his particular evaluation of the specific individual in question. Hence, he honours ("ehrt") his equals while having contempt ("Verachtung") for those beneath him. Furthermore, he honours his equals not out of fear of them, or from passive submission to an external moral authority, but out of his personal, active and affirmative assessment of such equals according to his own "Wertmaass".

Although it may appear as though mutually perceived equality is sufficient to induce agonal self-restraint according to Nietzsche's later agonism, this is not the case. This self-restraint is based in a feeling of reverence or veneration ("Verehrung") for one's equals, and it is important to recall that a predilection for this kind of response to the perception of equality is impressed by means of custom (i.e. "Sitte" or "Brauch") and institutional inculcation. The perception of such quality alone in no way entails self-restraint. On the contrary, perceived approximate equality *can* be the grounds for destructive conflict. Take duels, for example, of which Nietzsche says, "Gleichheit vor dem Feinde — erste Voraussetzung zu einem rechtschaffnen Duell. Wo man verachtet, kann man nicht Krieg führen; wo man befiehlt, wo man Etwas unter sich sieht, hat man nicht Krieg zu führen" (EH weise 7 6.274).²²³

This is where the cosmological notion of an "Austausch von Ehren und Rechten" departs most radically from his notion of society as a collective founded

²²² See JGB 187 and 188: See also Tom Bailey, "Nietzsche the Kantian?", in Ken Gemes and John Richardson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.134-59 (p.151).

²²³ Compare FW 13. See also NL 8[9] 10.331: "Voraussetzung der Blutrache ist zunächst, daß sie eine Familien-Angelegenheit ist: die Gaugenossenschaft oder der Staat mischt sich zunächst nicht ein. Aber sie setzt die höhere Organisation schon voraus: es ist Zweikampf zwischen Gleichgeordneten, Einem Ganzen Zugehörigen. Die Feindschaft gegen die Familie des Blutschuldigen ist grundverschieden von der Feindschaft gegen alles, was nicht zur höheren gemeinsamen Organisation gehört. Es fehlt die Verachtung, der Glaube an die tiefere Rasse des Feindes: in der Blutrache ist Ehre und Gleichberechtigung."

on *Verehrung* and *Ehrfurcht*: at the cosmological level, there is no need for the institutions and cultural mores that are demanded at the social level. Looking back to his thoughts on Schmidt, we can see that Nietzsche, like the Greeks in Schmidt's analysis, considers the virtue of *Ehrfurcht* or *Aidos* as one that must be *cultivated*: "Zur Ehrfurcht erziehen, in diesem pöbelhaften Zeitalter, welches selber im Huldigen noch pöbelhaft ist, für gewöhnlich aber zudringlich und schamlos [...]" (NL 26[244] 11.214).²²⁴ He also tellingly describes the Greek disdain for hubris as follows: "es ist die Verletzung des Aidos ein schrecklicher Anblick für den, *welcher an Aidos gewöhnt ist*" (NL 7[161] 10.295; my italics). *Ehrfurcht* is a matter of *Erziehung* and *Gewöhnung*.²²⁵

Though ostracism has now dropped out of the picture, the interconnection of self-restraint, education and some form of conventional morality evidently have not – and in this sense, Nietzsche's later thought still reverberates with that of Curtius, Burckhardt and Grote. This shows that even in the later works, Nietzsche still does not view agonal measure as grounded in a counterbalancing of aspiring tyrants (*pace* Siemens). It is rather by virtue of various educational practices that, when individuals identify those of equal standing, they agonally adjust their disposition towards their counterparts.²²⁶ In a manner echoing Burckhardt, therefore, education is the means by which the self-restraint of contestants' ambitions is engendered. Again, this continence is not elicited by a sense of positive regard for the other; rather, in honouring their *semblables*, individuals egoistically honour *themselves* ("sie ehrt *sich in ihnen*" [JGB 265; my italics]). This, then, is the chief motivation for honouring one's equals. Though Honig notes the need for institutions

²²⁴ See also Schmidt (1882), vol.1, p.173, where he recounts how Democritus "[behandelt] die Weckung und Befestigung der Aidos als das wesentlich Ziel der Knabenerziehung". Schmidt also views the state and state institutions as indispensable foundations of social measure. By implication, therefore, he does not think that *Aidos* and *Aischyne* are on their own sufficient explains for the phenomenon of social measure (see *ibid.*, pp.198ff.).

²²⁵ See also JGB 259, where Nietzsche states that "Sich gegenseitig der Verletzung, der Gewalt, der Ausbeutung enthalten, seinen Willen dem des Andern gleich setzen" can *become customary* ("zur guten Sitte werden").

²²⁶ On the importance of religious education in the later Nietzsche's thought, see also JGB 61 and GM II 23 5.333ff.

in the later Nietzsche, she misconceives of these as sites for safely venting pent up aggression or removing superdominant contestants; what we have discovered, however, is that institutions primarily maintain social measure by dint of their capacity for instilling the related virtues of *contenance* and *tenacity* (as components of *Verantwortlichkeit*) into individuals.²²⁷

But how does this analysis bear upon the respect and counterbalancing readings? First, it demonstrates that, contrary to the respect reading, and consistent with his early thought, Nietzsche does not posit equal opportunity as a ground of agonal conflict. Rather, it is two other forms of equality that condition the agon; namely, *perceived* equality of power, which, *contra* the counterbalancing model, evokes agonal *self-restraint*, and approximate equality in the degree to which individuals are jealous (*eifersüchtig*) of one another, which underpins *mutual* restraint.²²⁸ The second point of disagreement between Nietzsche's later agonism and the respect model is that the latter suggests that self-limitation is occasioned by the appreciation of a certain ontology of difference (and the fact that one's own existence depends on the continued existence of one's other). Yet our analysis has revealed that Nietzsche understands such restraint as based on the fulfilment of two quite different conditions: socio-cultural inculcation and the perception of equality. Lastly, we have witnessed that in continuity with his early thought, he does not believe that stronger individuals can treat those weaker than them with agonal respect without jeopardising the vitality of the social body to which they belong.

There is nevertheless a striking problem with Nietzsche's model. First, in JGB 259, he claims that self-restraint can only become customary ("zur guten Sitte

²²⁷ See also GD Streifzüge 39, where Nietzsche also traces *Verantwortlichkeit* back to social institutions: "Der ganze Westen hat jene Instinkte nicht mehr, aus denen Institutionen wachsen, aus denen Zukunft wächst: seinem 'modernen Geiste' geht vielleicht Nichts so sehr wider den Strich. Man lebt für heute, man lebt sehr geschwind, — man lebt sehr unverantwortlich [...]" (6.141).

²²⁸ In this way, Nietzsche follows Aristotle's notion of *Megalopsychos*, insofar as one is not meant to act towards one's inferiors with a noble disposition, and there is a golden mean or measure dictating the degree to which it is proper to pursue honour. See Tongeren (1989), p.157.

warden”), “wenn die Bedingungen dazu gegeben sind (nämlich deren thatsächliche Ähnlichkeit in Kraftmengen und Werthmaassen und ihre Zusammengehörigkeit innerhalb Eines Körpers).” However, as the texts from MA highlighted, it seems that establishing social bonds and institutions (“Zusammengehörigkeit innerhalb Eines Körpers”) presupposes just such self-restraint from violence. We therefore find ourselves in a circle: self-restraint presupposes social institutions, yet social institutions presuppose self-restraint. Where there is both an absence of self-restraint *and* an absence of institutions able to instil such self-restraint – say in the wake of extended periods of *Vernichtungskampf*, or under the conditions of *bellum omnium contra omnes* – it remains to be seen how Nietzsche thinks this *Ehrfurcht* can be generated.

2.5. CONCLUSION

We have now rebutted the idea that Nietzsche should, in general, be thought of as a thinker who sanctions destructive, unmeasured conflict. It has been demonstrated at length that in both his early and later writings, Nietzsche endorses a measured species of conflict, which I have referred to as “agonal”. This type of conflict has been shown to be measured insofar as it excludes both PDC *and* tyrannical struggles of exploitation (though it was shown to emerge from, and frequently descend back into, these forms of conflict).

However, there were three problems that we faced us in our endeavour to clarify Nietzsche’s conception of agonal conflict: first, it was unclear whether such conflict is intrinsically measured at all, or whether it is in fact inclusive of certain forms of PDC; second, if it is indeed a measured form of conflict, it was ambiguous what social scope this measure has – there was evidence for and against the idea that he was in favour of a socially inclusive form of agonal struggle; finally, exactly *how* agonal measure is concretely achieved was unclear: is it secured by dint of

counterbalancing tyrants against one another, or by virtue of some form of endogenous self-limitation on the part of contestants?

In trying to overcome these three obstacles, the writings of Nietzsche's contemporaries were found to be of indispensable value. Indeed, it should now be plain that his notion of agonal struggle does not emerge *ex nihilo* but rather stands in a relation of continuity with the historical conceptions of the Greek agon put forward by Curtius, Burckhardt, Grote and Schmidt. This said, in each instance he makes a highly selective appropriation. For example, he rejects Curtius' expansive use of the term *Wettkampf* in favour of Burckhardt's Hesiodic distinction of war and *Wettkampf*. However, the relation of dependency that Nietzsche identifies between aristocratic social order and the *Wettkampf* is looser than in Burckhardt, even though both similarly affirm a socially inclusive notion of the agon. Finally, Nietzsche reprises Curtius' and Grote's conviction that stable agonal conflict requires an authoritative and institutionalised moral order, be this juridical or religious in kind. Indeed, it has been taking these sources as a starting point that has enabled us to avoid many of the errors into which previous interpreters of Nietzsche's conception of agonal conflict have fallen. Situating his writings on the agon within the context of nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft* is therefore vital if we are to soundly reconstruct his notion of *Wettkampf* from the scant texts that explicitly deal with the theme. But let us now briefly recap how we resolved the three aforementioned problems

In response to the first problem, it was demonstrated that in both the early and the later writings, Nietzsche defines agonal conflict *in opposition to* murderous forms of conflict. To be sure, though, it was found that these two concepts of conflict have certain qualities in common. For example, competitors' in both are driven by a desire for predominance and a desire to give vent to their aggressive affects. Nonetheless, the two refer to mutually exclusive states of affairs. Whereas Nietzsche praises *Wettkampf* as a form of culturally productive conflict that spurs individuals to self-improvement and great deeds, he censures the *Vernichtungskampf* as a culturally harmful species of conflict that incites individuals to strive for the physical destruction of their adversary. Nonetheless, we should not lose sight of what was

ascertained in Chapter 1; namely, that Nietzsche often conceives of PDC as an *Urfaktum* of human existence, and that under some circumstances it can even be culturally beneficial.

Despite the *conceptual* disjunction that I establish between Nietzsche's opposed notions of agonal and destructive conflict, we nonetheless identified a strong *genetic* relation between these two forms of struggle. Agonal conflict is born out of *Vernichtungskampf* insofar as it is constituted by means of bridling the affects that, in their uncontrolled originary state, drive the latter. Hence, there is no strict dichotomy or dualism between humanity's higher capacities and its natural state. The relation is rather one of uncanny doubleness (the "unheimlich[.] Doppelcharakter" of the human being [CV 5 1.783]). Commentators have mistakenly held Nietzsche to confound *Vernichtungskampf* and *Wettkampf* on account of the fact that they fail to remark that in CV 5 he valorises the artistic affirmation of PDC *as a means of transforming such conflict into agonal contest*, and not because he himself celebrates such PDC (along with the agon).

A serious point is at stake here. If we elide the distinction Nietzsche draws between *Wettkampf* and *Vernichtungskampf*, we lose sight of the difficult work we have to perform *on destructive conflict* in order to reap the cultural fruit of agonal contest. Fascist readings of Nietzsche's agonism as a promotion of war (such as we find in Bäumler, Ruehl and Dombowsky) neutralise the transformative project before it has even got off the ground – this is because they confuse the starting point of the transformation depicted in CV 5 (i.e. *Vernichtungskampf*) with its goal (i.e. *Wettkampf*). In sharpening the conceptual disjunction and genetic relation of *Vernichtungskampf* and *Wettkampf*, I have tried to underscore the work that is demanded by Nietzsche's analysis of agonism.

The second problem, regarding the scope, or aristocratism, of Nietzsche's agonism was made tractable by paring Nietzsche's notion of the agon in two. On the one hand, he views a socially inclusive form of agonism, understood as the pursuit of predominance through self-improvement, as both possible and socially expedient. In the second place, however, we uncovered a form of artistic agon that added the

goal of glory and eternal fame to the aim of preponderance. This struggle was found to be reserved for a minority of individuals characterised by their superior creative capacity. While this is a socially exclusive form of agon, it is by no means aristocratic in the sense of being restricted to individuals on account of their lineage, nor does Nietzsche envisage this as a struggle for political power – indeed, it was seen to be antithetical to political activity in a variety of different ways. Nonetheless, we also saw that this agon *was* parasitic on an oligarchical form of society (i.e. one in which the few rule) organised around a division of labour. This was for two reasons. First, the values of proper self-cultivation and glory are incompatible with the struggle for material wealth and the realm of necessity. Moreover, individuals must be free from the burdens of manual labour if they are to have the time to cultivate themselves. There is therefore an indirect, practical connection between this higher agon and traditional aristocratic social order. This is an important finding, since, in the advanced industrial, and even post-industrial, societies of today, in which a far greater number of individuals can be freed from the struggle for life's necessities, there seems to be no reason why this higher type of agon cannot become correspondingly more inclusive and detached from aristocratic modes of governance.

We also established how, in his later writings, with the advent of the idea of the world as will to power, power becomes the main stake in the agon. However, Nietzsche still wishes to distinguish the agon from forms of conflict in which entities struggle to instrumentalise one another. Indeed, agonal conflict arises where the other *cannot* be overpowered, or where two opposed entities both *believe* the overpowering of the other to be unfeasible or unprofitable. The agon then becomes a means for opposed entities to discharge excess force and attain the feeling of power without instrumentalising (i.e. commanding) or physically harming their counterparts. In the later writings, agonal conflict also represents a means by which entities and individuals can strengthen themselves in their struggle to exploit *other* entities. The idea of the world as will to power is thus *compatible* with, but not reducible to, the idea of agonal conflict, which is just one form among many that the

will to power can take (including, for example, the struggle to eradicate or exploitatively command others). Although agonal struggle cannot be equated with the will to power, just as a species cannot be equated with its genus, such conflict also cannot be dissociated from exploitative or destructive forms of conflict in Nietzsche's thought – agonal measure can only ever *locally* inhibit, and thereby displace, violent and exploitative modes of struggle. The upshot of this is that it is doubtful how much mileage democratic agonists can get out of the later Nietzsche's conception of the agon understood as an alternative to unmeasured conflict.

With respect to the third problem, I demonstrated that there were two stages to the measure of the agon. The first stage enables the formation of (agonal) culture by freeing individuals and societies from the state of nature. This is based on mutually perceived approximate equality of martial capacity, which motivates the opposed parties to lay down their arms (realising they could not profitably defeat their counterpart in war); instead, they enter into a state of law. This allows the cultural agon to be established in which individuals compete to outdo one another in specific non-violent practices. The question then arose, however, as to how the emergence of excessively strong victors who stifle the competition can be averted. This is the second stage of measure. Within this stage we identified a range of different sources of moderation. There was an approximate *de facto* form of equality that did not rely on third-party judgement, and which engendered mutual-restraint (exemplified in an equally matched wrestling contest). There was then an approximate equality of ability according to the judgement of a third party (exemplified in aesthetic agons). Lastly, there was also ostracism, which could reestablish these forms of equality. However, it was also seen that measure was not only externally imposed on contestants – i.e. through ostracism or the restraint exerted upon them by their opponent – but was also endogenous insofar as agonal opponents can be said to exercise *self*-restraint.

This should make it a little clearer just what is at stake if we approach the problem of agonal moderation exclusively from the standpoint of either the respect model or the counterbalancing model. In viewing agonal struggle as based on a

combination of ostracism and the balance of powers (à la the counterbalancing model), we risk overlooking the vital way in which *self*-limitation might contribute to sustaining the agon. Indeed, we also risk neglecting the need to develop educational institutions able cultivate this virtue. Those propounding the respect model, however, risk overlooking the possibility that agonal moderation might be cultivated by means of inculcating respect for one's community – and this may represent a far simpler means of fostering agonal moderation than that of pushing for the acknowledgement of an ontology of difference and the corresponding respect of other individuals.

It is also worth recapping what was uncovered concerning equality in the final section. In the early works, aside from enabling the agon, the principal effect of mutually perceived equality was figured as its ability to elicit envy; in the later works, by contrast, we saw that mutually perceived equality of power played a far greater limiting role insofar as it occasioned *Ehrfurcht*. In both cases, however, perceived equality of ability represents a *sine qua non* of agonal engagement. Against the respect reading, then, Nietzsche does not assert the equal opportunity of all to compete in any given agonal contest. He rather holds the realist position that without perceived equality of ability, the kind of conflict that emerges is one that naturally leans towards exploitative or destructive modes of opposition. This has severe implications for those that wish to formulate a left-wing Nietzschean politics based on the “agonist respect” of weaker minority groups (such as Connolly or Alan Schrift²²⁹). For Nietzsche, it is not possible for healthy individuals or social groups to agonistically relate to their inferiors since the conditions of perceived equality of ability simply do not obtain. This does not mean these minority groups are excluded from Nietzsche's agonal recommendations, but that they must cultivate agonism amongst themselves and strive to raise themselves up to, or beyond, the level of their superiors.

²²⁹ See Alan D. Schrift, “Nietzsche's Contest: Nietzsche and the Culture Wars”, in A. Schrift (ed.), *Why Nietzsche Still? Reflections on Drama, Culture, and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp.184-201.

One issue that the fundamentality of equality raises for reading Nietzsche as a primarily agonal thinker, however, is the *rarity* that he increasingly attributes to equality as we move into the 1880s. As he claims in one note, “Ein labiles Gleichgewicht kommt in der Natur so wenig vor, wie zwei congruente Dreiecke” (NL 11[190] 9.516).²³⁰ Congruent with this, Nietzsche becomes increasingly interested in hierarchical organisation – that is, how functional, and particularly organismic, unities are formed through relations of command and obedience and the instrumentalisation of the weak by the strong.²³¹ Correspondingly, within Nietzsche’s later view of the world as conflict, agonism can account for only a small portion of this conflict. At the same time, as we shall see in the following chapters, the conflict to form and maintain hierarchical organisations does not seem to fit into the category of *destructive* conflict – since it tends to preserve that which has been overpowered, albeit in a position of subjugation. Therefore, as it stands, our investigation into Nietzsche’s thoughts on conflict, which has so far inquired into the nature of destructive and agonal contention, leaves us with a significant gap. As such, the two questions with which we must now concern ourselves in the following two chapters are as follows: is Nietzsche’s thought characterised by another *sui generis* form of conflict? And, if so, what is the nature and value of this distinct form of conflict?

²³⁰ See also M 112: “Der ‘billige Mensch’ bedarf fortwährend des feinen Tactes einer Wage: für die Macht- und Rechtsgrade, welche, bei der vergänglichen Art der menschlichen Dinge, immer nur eine kurze Zeit im Gleichgewichte schweben werden, zumeist aber sinken oder steigen [...]”. See also NL 11[132] 9.490: “Verschiedenheit herrscht in den kleinsten Dingen [...] — die Gleichheit ist ein großer Wahn.”

²³¹ See e.g. NL 26[272] 11.221: “Selbst-Regulierung, also die Fähigkeit der Herrschaft über ein Gemeinwesen vorausgesetzt d.h. aber, die Fortentwicklung des Organischen ist nicht an die Ernährung angeknüpft, sondern an das Befehlen und Beherrschen-können [...]”

CHAPTER 3

THE EARLY NIETZSCHE ON THE STRUGGLE FOR ORGANISATION

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Over the previous two chapters, we have analysed Nietzsche's thoughts concerning two conceptually distinct forms of conflict – namely, *Vernichtungskampf* and *Wettkampf*. However, this division of conflict into two discrete kinds implies a dichotomy that is at odds with Nietzsche's rejection of binary oppositions (“[m]an darf [...] zweifeln, [...] ob es Gegensätze überhaupt giebt” [JGB 2]).¹ As I will argue in the following two chapters, consistent with his suspicion of any dualism, closer scrutiny reveals that Nietzsche's thoughts on conflict in fact cannot be divided into a neat dichotomy of measured and unmeasured struggle; rather, if we explore the lacuna left by the previous chapters, we uncover a third fundamental species of

¹ See also JGB 24: “Mag nämlich auch die Sprache, hier wie anderwärts, nicht über ihre Plumpheit hinauskönnen und fortfahren, von Gegensätzen zu reden, wo es nur Grade und mancherlei Feinheit der Stufen giebt [...]” NL 9[91] 12.384: “Es giebt keine Gegensätze: nur von denen der Logik her haben wir den Begriff des Gegensatzes – und von denen aus fälschlich in die Dinge übertragen.” In NL 9[121] 12.406, Nietzsche then indicates that it is imperative “[d]aß man die Gegensätze herausnimmt aus den Dingen, nachdem man begreift, daß wir sie hineingelegt haben.” See also FW 112, where, contesting the objective validity of the cause and effect opposition, Nietzsche argues that reality is a “continuum” and that “eine solche Zweiheit giebt es wahrscheinlich nie”. See also WS 67. See also Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche: His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of his Philosophy*, trans. by David J. Parent (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), pp.10f.

struggle – one that cannot be subsumed under the heading of either *Wettkampf* or *Vernichtungskampf*.

As should now be clear, for Nietzsche, agonal struggle presupposes the approximate equality of the relata at variance with one another; however, we have also remarked that he deems this kind equality an exceptional rarity. If for Nietzsche, as for Schopenhauer and Heraclitus, “alles Geschehen ist ein Kampf” (NL 1[92] 12.33), we have to ask ourselves: what type(s) of conflict does Nietzsche think define(s) relations of *in*-equality? And what type(s) of conflict does he think *should* define such relations? In light of his wider criticisms of *Vernichtungskampf*, and the very limited conditions under which he endorses such conflict, it would be surprising if he recommended destructive relations. Such observations should further motivate us to probe the possible existence of categories of conflict that do not fit the *Vernichtungskampf*–*Wettkampf* dichotomy, which Nietzsche himself sets up in CV 5.

In a note written while reading Roux’s *Kampf der Theile des Organismus*, Nietzsche gives us an indication as to what types of conflict might define relations of inequality: namely, “Kampf mit Zerstörung oder Assimilation des Schwächeren” (NL 7[86] 10.272). And, to be sure, in 1886, he states that under conditions of inequality, “stoßen zwei zu verschiedene Macht-Quanten auf einander, so greift das stärkere über nach dem schwächeren zu dessen fortgesetzter Schwächung, bis endlich Unterwerfung, Anpassung, Einordnung, Einverleibung eintritt” (NL 5[82] 12.221). Reading this in conjunction with JGB 259, it becomes evident that the type of conflict that takes place in lieu of the struggle for the “Zerstörung” of subordinate forces is one directed at their incorporation and exploitation: “wesentlich Aneignung, Verletzung, Überwältigung des Fremden und Schwächeren, Unterdrückung, Härte, Aufzwingung eigener Formen, Einverleibung und mindestens, mildestens, Ausbeutung”. The principal thesis that I defend over the following two chapters is that, in formulating alternatives to harmfully unmeasured

conflict, Nietzsche also posits a measured species of struggle that does not fit under the rubric of agonal conflict – namely, what I will call *incorporative* conflict.²

My secondary thesis, however, will be that although this species of conflict is measured, it is inextricably associated with, and even conditioned by, an unmeasured form of struggle that cannot be subsumed under the concept of *Vernichtungskampf* – namely, that directed towards the excretion or repulsion of that which is harmful. As mentioned in the introduction, we find this expressed in his calls for a “Kampf [zu ausscheiden] [...] gewaltsam eingepflanzter fremder Elemente” (GT 23 1.149); or again later in his designating the “Trieb etwas zurückzustoßen” a fundamental drive of nature (NL 36[21] 11.560); or at the end of his working life, in his warning that a society, just like any organism, must “ausschneiden” its “entartenden Theilen” (NL 23[1] 13.600). Although I acknowledge the fact that these processes are of course not entirely co-extensive, I will be referring to them all under the umbrella term *exclusionary* conflict, since the verb “to exclude” can signify both the action of shutting external entities out, as well as that of expelling internal ones.³

The *combination* of these two forms of struggle – i.e. incorporative (measured) and exclusionary (unmeasured) struggle – is what I will then refer to with the overarching term “organisational” struggle. I have termed it thus, since both of these conflictual processes are similarly directed at the expansion and strengthening of the internal hierarchy that Nietzsche views as essential to any vital organisation. Although the above quotes make clear that this form of conflict is perhaps most discernable in Nietzsche’s later writings, in this chapter, I will contend that it already plays a pivotal role in his early writings, particularly during the period of UB (1873-6). Subsequently, in Chapter 4, I will then inquire into how organisational conflict features in his later writings.

² For “incorporation”, Nietzsche tends to use either *Einverleibung* or *Assimilation*. I will be treating both of these terms under the heading of incorporation.

³ See entry for “exclude, v.”, OED.

In the first place, this chapter is a *normative* study aimed at expounding the grounds on which Nietzsche valorises organisational struggle. I maintain that in UB and the *Nachlass* from this period, he presents organisational conflict as a remedy for a destructive form of struggle he thinks threatens modern individuals, societies and cultures alike. In his own words, in modernity, “[wir] sehen [...] alles feindselig gegen einander und alle edlen Kräfte in gegenseitigem aufreibendem Vernichtungskrieg” (NL 30[8] 7.734). However, his diagnosis remains obscure and difficult to pin down; indeed, during this period of his thought, his complaints about the problem of disgregation do not only concern *social* disgregation, but are multifaceted and split across a number of ontological domains. For example, as we shall see, we find Nietzsche describing such conflict at the axiological level of our ethical values, the subjective level of our behavioural inclinations, and at the cultural level of our aesthetic tastes, and so on. Thus, with a view to better understanding his remedy (i.e. organisational struggle), I begin by dissecting his complex diagnosis of this crisis (Section 1).

Having delineated the problem identified by Nietzsche, I then turn to the solutions he proposes to this state of disgregation (Section 2). Insofar as he views modernity as a maelstrom of mutually neutralising forces, which we have just seen him describe as a *Vernichtungskrieg*, we might want to draw an analogy between this and the *Vernichtungskampf* he depicts in CV 5. Given this apparent analogy then, it would make sense to look toward the *Wettkampf* as the principal remedy or alternative to this widespread condition of measurelessness. Indeed, it has previously been claimed that Nietzsche conceives of his idealised vision of the Greek agon as a socio-culturally *unifying* principle of organisation.⁴ Moreover, as we saw in the

⁴ See Christa Davis Acampora, “Naturalism and Nietzsche’s Moral Psychology”, in Keith Ansell-Pearson (ed.), *A Companion to Nietzsche* (London: Blackwell, 2006), pp.314–34. In her treatment of the agon, Acampora emphasises how, for Nietzsche, “competitive relations serve as an organising force of culture by bringing together diverse elements [and] coordinating heterogeneous interests” (p.327). See also Müller (forthcoming, 2017), “Die Etablierung der Polis und die Institutionalisierung des Agonalwesens bilden einen wechselseitigen Zusammenhang” (p.14). Müller also states that “Nietzsches idealtypische Vorstellung einer agonalen Situation setzt eine Pluralität von Begabten und Ambitionierten

previous chapter, his agonistic democrat readers have claimed that he proposes a model of social organisation founded on the “agonistic” co-existence of discordant values – i.e. a society that, rather than being based on the domination or suppression of dissonant values, is characterised by an agonistic ethos of respectful and egalitarian engagement with those holding opposed values.⁵ Comparably, at the level of the subject, it has also been asserted that Nietzsche’s normative ideal is a self in which the various drives of the individual are said to be in a state of struggle analogous to his vision of the ancient Greek agon (indeed, this manner of talking about Nietzsche’s ideal self has become common currency in the critical literature).⁶ And to be sure, UB itself has frequently been interpreted as an example of Nietzsche

voraus. Erst deren Gegeneinanderagieren erzeugt und variiert die dynamischen Verhältnisse der griechischen Lebenswelt. Die autonome Polis ist somit vor allem ein Produkt agonaler Selbstdisziplinierung” (p.18). Yunus Tuncel, in *Agon in Nietzsche* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2013) has also defended this position (see ch.6).

⁵ See e.g. William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 2002) (p.171): “It is pertinent to underline again that this advocate of ‘nobility of many kinds’ and ‘the spiritualization of enmity’ does not demand that every noble practice of artistry endorse the same fundamental interpretation of being he himself embraces. While he contests many who endorse, say, Christian love, Buddhist compassion, Judaic responsibility to a nameless divinity, or the Kantian presumption of pure practical reason, Nietzsche at his best [...] seeks to establish noble relations of agonistic respect between the carriers of such alternative faiths, as participants in each come to terms with the contestability of their fundamental faith in an affirmative rather than resentful way.” See also David Owen (1995): “[F]or Nietzsche, tolerance for other views, a willingness to engage with them in an open and fair-minded way, is a condition of claiming to hold one’s own beliefs to be true. [...] [T]his position commits citizens to a form of society which is characterised by the cultivation of the conditions of honest and just argument between free and equal citizens” (pp.161-2).

⁶ Hatab, for example refers to Nietzsche’s “agonistic psychology”. See Lawrence Hatab, “Breaking the Contract Theory: The Individual and the Law in Nietzsche’s *Genealogy*”, in Herman Siemens and Vasti Roodt (eds.), *Nietzsche, Power and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche’s Legacy for Political Thought* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), pp.169-90 (p.173). Douglas Burnham, entry for “Agon”, in *The Nietzsche Dictionary* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015): “[S]ince the individual self is comprised of a multiplicity of drives, an agonistic ‘society’ is also found within the self” (p.16). Ken Gemes, “Freud and Nietzsche on Sublimation”, *JNS*, 38(1) (2009), 38-59: “Nietzsche often emphasizes the need for a kind of agonal struggle between the drives”. Gemes also states that he does “not believe that there is genuine conflict between the Nietzschean ideal of a unified self and the Nietzschean ideal of a self engaged in agonal struggle” (p.56, fn.21; see also pp.49-52, where Gemes repeatedly refers to Nietzsche’s vision of an “agonal struggle between drives”). See also Honig (1993), p.229.

agonally struggling against his times, or at least inciting his readers to do so.⁷ In this chapter, then, these agonal interpretations of Nietzsche's early philosophy will constitute my primary polemical target.

The real stumbling block for these unifying visions of Nietzsche's agon is not merely the lack of textual evidence, but the fact that his portrayals of healthy unified cultures and individuals are dominated by a form of instrumentalisation that is incompatible with his conception of agonal conflict. Thus, in UB, he endeavours to persuade us of the need for a "Beherrschung" and "Unterordnung" of the historical influence of other cultures (i.e. their values and ideals).⁸ He then speaks of "die zwingende und herrschende Uebergewalt" required to shape the self into a "harmonisches System von Bewegungen" (UB III 2 1.342). In UB III, as commentators such as Rawls have noted, he apparently advocates an aristocratic strain of perfectionism, endorsing the oppression of the majority in the name of a cultural elite: "wie erhält dein, des Einzelnen Leben den höchsten Werth, die tiefste Bedeutung? [...] Gewiss nur dadurch, dass du zum Vortheile der seltensten und werthvollsten Exemplare lebst [...]" (UB III 6 1.384).⁹ Contrary to the agonistic reading of Nietzsche's thought, I will therefore argue that he consistently

⁷ See e.g. Herman Siemens, "Agonal Configurations in the *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*", *Nietzsche-Studien*, 30 (2001a), 80-106. Vanessa Lemm has argued that, contrary to the overly individualistic political philosophies of Rawls and Cavell, Nietzsche's vision of freedom is inherently public and characterised by agonal struggle – that is, "a public struggle (*agon*) between the individual and society". See Vanessa Lemm, "Is Nietzsche a Perfectionist? Rawls, Cavell, and the Politics of Culture in Nietzsche's 'Schopenhauer as Educator,'" *JNS*, 34 (2007), 5-27 (p.14). See also Nathalie Lachance "Nietzsche's Ethics of Reading: Education in a Postmodern World", in Horst Hutter and Eli Friedland (eds.), *Nietzsche's Therapeutic Teaching: For Individuals and Culture* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp.31-46. Lachance states: "If there is an agon in Schopenhauer as Educator, it is [...] between Nietzsche and the academic world" (p.35).

⁸ See UB II 4 1.271: "[J]eder Mensch und jedes Volk braucht je nach seinen Zielen, Kräften und Nöthen eine gewisse Kenntniss der Vergangenheit, [...] [aber] immer nur zum Zweck des Lebens und also auch unter der Herrschaft und obersten Führung dieses Zweckes." See also UB II 1 1.257: "Die historische Bildung ist vielmehr nur im Gefolge einer mächtigen neuen Lebensströmung, einer werdenden Cultur zum Beispiel, etwas Heilsames und Zukunft-Verheissendes, also nur dann, wenn sie von einer höheren Kraft beherrscht und geführt wird und nicht selber herrscht und führt."

⁹ Quoted in Rawls (1971), p.325.

recommends an ongoing struggle to establish, sustain and renew *instrumental hierarchies* – that is, an un-agonistic, organisational form of conflict, which he thinks can remedy the problem of disintegration. Yet insofar as this is conceived as a struggle to *preserve* the overpowered entity in an exploited subordinate state, I propose that it should nonetheless be designated a *measured* form of conflict.

However, as we try to ascertain more precisely *what* organisational conflict is, and hence what *exactly* Nietzsche is commending, the agonistic reading can be found to face yet another serious difficulty. The issue is that the measured struggle promoted by Nietzsche in UB is inseparable from his calls for a form of struggle that is distinctly unmeasured – i.e. *exclusionary* conflict. This is the unmeasured (though not necessarily destructive) struggle to be rid of all engagement with a given entity. Thus, in UB II he lauds the “kämpfenden, ausscheidenden, zertheilenden Macht” of the German youth of his day (UB II 10 1.331) as well as promoting the “vergessen” of superfluous cultural influences in such a way that they are “nicht mehr da, der Horizont ist geschlossen und ganz” (UB II 1 1.251). He then advocates a similarly unmeasured species of conflict with respect to spiritual or psychological entities, such as desires, instincts and behavioural inclinations. In UB, for example, Nietzsche (albeit warily) affirms the necessity of critical history, and the (albeit difficult) “Vernichtung” of outdated traditions – by which he means the struggle to impose “eine neue Gewöhnung, einen neuen Instinct, eine zweite Natur an, *so dass die erste Natur abdorrt*” (UB II 3 1.270; my italics).

This presents us with two questions, to which I will proffer solutions in the course of this chapter. First, *what* could Nietzsche mean by *Ausscheidung* and *Vernichtung* in the context of *geistig* entities such as values, behavioural dispositions, and aesthetic preferences? Second, how can we bring this promotion of unmeasured conflict into accord with his simultaneous promotion of measured, incorporative conflict? Is there not a contradiction here? With respect to the latter issue, I will demonstrate that which of these two approaches he recommends depends upon our evaluation of the entity in question; furthermore, by employing the model of organisational conflict, we will be able to make coherent sense of *both*

his calls to measured *and* unmeasured struggle as part of a single organisational impetus.

Another obstacle that the descriptive aspect of our study needs to tackle, concerns the fact that, as we have seen in the previous chapters, Nietzsche's conception of both PDC and agonism undergo a profound shift as he repudiates Schopenhauerian metaphysics and develops his conception of the world as will to power. Over the next two chapters, it will become evident that this is no less true of organisational conflict. Indeed, I will draw on UB in order to show that the model of organisational conflict prescribed by the early Nietzsche is fundamentally grounded in a quasi-Schopenhauerian *Weltanschauung*. The reason for this is that his prescription demands that we each gain an insight into a metaphysically essential aspect of our self (the "wahre Ursinn und Grundstoff [seines] Wesens" [UB III 1 1.341]), and a realisation that man (particularly the genius *qua* the paragon of man) represents the final end towards which nature strives ("sie [Natur] sich zum Menschen hindrängt" [UB III 6 1.385]). For Nietzsche, conscious knowledge of these quasi-Schopenhauerian metaphysical truths serves as a fixed archimedean point from which we can engage in the struggle for organisation. In Section 2, we will see that Nietzsche posits such metaphysical bases as a precondition of incorporative conflict on account of the fact that he is operating with a largely Schopenhauerian model of how health is conditioned by a struggle for organisation.

Yet what happens when he abandons his Schopenhauerian heritage? My contention in Section 3 is that Nietzsche's repudiation of metaphysics undermines the model of organisational conflict he develops in UB to the point that it becomes wholly untenable. This will present us with the problematic to be resolved in the Chapter 4: can Nietzsche formulate a model of organisational conflict that does not rely on these dubious metaphysical foundations?

3.2. THE CRISIS OF CULTURAL DISINTEGRATION

Nietzsche reproaches the Germans in UB I for having fallen into the delusion (“Wahn”) or error (“Irrthum”) that the defeat of the French in the Franco-Prussian War was as much cultural as it was martial. He deems the Germans deluded for believing themselves to have any real culture whatsoever. Indeed, he castigates them for being cultural philistines (“Bildungsphilister”) and barbarians (“Barbaren”), who are, in truth, fundamentally opposed to culture.¹⁰ The military victory over France bred, according to Nietzsche, an attitude of self-congratulatory complacency: “[J]edermann [ist] überzeugt [...], dass es eines Kampfes [...] gar nicht mehr bedürfe, dass vielmehr das Meiste so schön wie möglich geordnet [...] sei” (UB I 1 1.161).

But to what kind of cultural *Kampf* is Nietzsche rallying his countrymen? What is it a struggle *against*? And what is it a struggle *for*? With respect to these queries, his oft-cited definition of culture, and its contrary, barbarism, is instructive:

Kultur ist vor allem Einheit des künstlerischen Stiles in allen Lebensäusserungen eines Volkes. Vieles Wissen und Gelernthaben ist aber weder ein nothwendiges Mittel der Kultur, noch ein Zeichen derselben und verträgt sich nöthigenfalls auf das beste mit dem Gegensatze der Kultur, der Barbarei, das heisst: der Stilllosigkeit oder dem chaotischen Durcheinander aller Stile. (UB I 1.163)¹¹

Evidently, he believes the Germans must fight *for* some kind of cultural unity (“Einheit”) and, contrariwise, *against* the incoherence (“chaotisch[es]

¹⁰ See UB I 2 1.166: “[D]ie systematische und zur Herrschaft gebrachte Philisterei [in Deutschland] ist deshalb, weil sie System hat, noch nicht Kultur und nicht einmal schlechte Kultur, sondern immer nur das Gegenstück derselben, nämlich dauerhaft begründete Barbarei.”

¹¹ See also UB II 4 1.274, where Nietzsche reiterates this definition of culture: “Die Cultur eines Volkes als der Gegensatz jener Barbarei ist einmal, wie ich meine, mit einigem Rechte, als Einheit des künstlerischen Stiles in allen Lebensäusserungen eines Volkes bezeichnet worden”.

Durcheinander”) of modern Germany’s bric-a-brac pastiche culture (what he calls “jene moderne Jahrmarkts-Buntheit [UB I 1 1.163]). Indeed, in the opening section of UB I, the essentials of Nietzsche’s rhetorical strategy are already fully discernible. He commences by creating an ideal normative vision of a true unified culture, then he indicates that the Germans do not possess this unity despite their beliefs to the contrary. It is an attempt to awaken his readers to the fact that unity is a task, not a given.¹² He accordingly reprimands Germany’s pseudo-culture on account of its being “zerbröckelt” (UB II 10 1.329) and in a state of “atomistische Chaos” (UB III 4 1.367). Needless to say, then, Nietzsche valorises cultural unity; but before we analyse the nature of this ideal unity, we should ask: what would its counterpart, “der Stillosigkeit oder dem chaotischen Durcheinander aller Stile”, actually look like? And *why* does he vilify this condition?

As he repeatedly states throughout the early period, one of the root causes of modern fragmentation is an imprudent policy with respect to knowledge accumulation. This manifests itself as both the tendency of individuals to amass an excess of historical *Wissenschaft* and the superficiality of the German approach to

¹² In this respect, Nietzsche follows thinkers such as Schiller and Wagner in pronouncing Germans and German culture to be pathologically lacking in cultural wholeness. See Friedrich Schiller, *Über die Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2010), Brief VI (p.22): “Die Kultur selbst war es, welche der neuern Menschheit diese Wunde schlug. Sobald auf der einen Seite die erweiterte Erfahrung und das bestimmtere Denken eine schärfere Scheidung der Wissenschaften, auf der andern das verwickeltere Uhrwerk der Staaten eine strengere Absonderung der Stände und Geschäfte nothwendig machte, so zerriß auch der innere Bund der menschlichen Natur, und ein verderblicher Streit entzweite ihre harmonischen Kräfte.” On the struggle of art and science, see also Brief IX, p.34. See also Richard Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (Leipzig: Verlag von Otto Wigand, 1850), where he claims that the German *Volk* has been divided by a pernicious egoism and the pursuit of luxury. He also claims that science has become divorced from life (§2). As a remedy to this, he states that “der Bruderkuß, der diesen Bund besiegelt, wird das gemeinsame Kunstwerk der Zukunft sein” (p.14). He further maintains that the various domains of art have become “splintered”, and that his tragic artwork of the future can reunite them. It should also be borne in mind, that Germany had been undergoing a long and arduous process of unification, and that it was at this time still a relatively inchoate nation-state, having only officially emerged from an assemblage of largely autonomous provinces in 1871, after the Franco-Prussian War.

education, or *Bildung*.¹³ Nietzsche indicts the Germans for esteeming the inordinate consumption of knowledge, with little thought as to the utility of this knowledge – that is, for believing that “nur dadurch, dass wir uns mit fremden Zeiten, Sitten, Künsten, Philosophien, Religionen, Erkenntnissen anfüllen und überfüllen, werden wir zu etwas Beachtungswerthem, nämlich zu wandelnden Encyclopädien” (UB II 4 1.273-4).¹⁴ Such immoderate and indiscriminate accumulation of sundry knowledge is the essence of philistinism according to Nietzsche. However, amassing knowledge does not strike us as harmful or disintegrative *per se*. So why does he deem it a pathology? and how does it relate to fragmentation?

Nietzsche’s chief grievance in UB I is that philistinism obstructs authentic agency, especially aesthetic and ethical agency. Let us begin with the former. Nietzsche asserts that, due to the study of multitudinous languages, literary expression has become a “seelenlosen Wörtermosaik” as writers clumsily employ a strange combination of French and Latin grammatical and rhetorical styles (UB I 11 1.222). Potential artists lack a fixed set of rules and criteria of judgement according to which they could confidently create harmonious works of art: “Es fehlt hier an einem natürlichen Boden, an der künstlerischen Werthschätzung, Behandlung und Ausbildung der mündlichen Rede [um ein guter Schiftsteller zu werden]” (UB I 11 1.220). In lieu of this, they merely imitate other cultures, though in an incoherent manner.¹⁵ Thus, he reprises Schopenhauer’s admiration of the ancients for having

¹³ See GT 13. Here Nietzsche traces this malady back to the Socratic or Alexandrian tendency that overwhelmed the Greeks and disrupted the dynamic and vital interrelation of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Indeed, Nietzsche portrays Socrates as having instigated an “unerhörte Hochschätzung des Wissens”, and criticises him for being an individual “in dem die logische Natur durch eine Superfötation [...] so excessiv entwickelt ist” (1.89-90). This “Superfötation” of the drive to logical knowledge came at the expense of the instinctive (aesthetic) wisdom (“instinctive Weisheit”) that enabled the creation of Attic tragedy. For more on this theme, see also ST (esp. 1.542).

¹⁴ See also UB I 1 1.163: “Die Formen, Farben, Producte und Curiositäten aller Zeiten und aller Zonen häuft der Deutsche um sich auf und bringt dadurch jene moderne Jahrmarkts-Buntheit hervor, die seine Gelehrten nun wiederum als das ‘Moderne an sich’ zu betrachten und zu formuliren haben”. We also find this diagnosis presaged in GT 23, where Nietzsche talks of the modern condition as a “fieberhaften Suchen, das sich allmählich in ein Pandämonium überallher zusammengehäufter Mythen und Superstitionen verlor” (1.148).

¹⁵ On the problem of *Nachahmung* in UB, see Siemens (2008, pp.86ff).

“eine regelrecht fixirte Sprache mit durchweg festgestellter und treulich beobachteter Grammatik und Orthographie” (UB I 11 1.227).¹⁶ The problem is therefore the absence of a clear set of values and criteria able to guide artistic praxis.

Nietzsche likewise avers that the inordinate accumulation of knowledge has thwarted *ethical* agency – one simply cannot implement all of the ethical models that one has ingested from past cultures due to their being at variance with one another. In UB III, Nietzsche characterises this as the “Hin und Her” generated in the individual on account of the conflict that arises between their antique and Christian ideals:

In diesem Hin und Her zwischen Christlich und Antik, zwischen verschüchterter oder lügnerischer Christlichkeit der Sitte und ebenfalls muthlosem und befangenem Antikisiren lebt der moderne Mensch und befindet sich schlecht dabei; [...] alles dies erzeugt eine Friedlosigkeit, eine Verworrenheit in der modernen Seele, welche sie verurtheilt unfruchtbar und freudelos zu sein. (UB III 2 1.345)

This division paralyses the individual by presenting them with conflicting maxims and models for action.¹⁷ As he states in a preparatory *Nachlass* note for UB II: “Geschichte — schwächt das Handeln und macht blind gegen das Vorbildliche, durch Masse verwirrend” (NL 27[81] 7.611).¹⁸ The individual is caught in a state of vacillation, in which behavioural inclinations mutually frustrate one another, rendering the individual incapable of agency in a manner reminiscent of Buridan’s ass. As he stresses in UB II, the individual has, through this excess of reason, “seinen Instinct vernichtet und verloren”. As a consequence of this alienation from instinct, “das Individuum [wird] zaghaft und unsicher und darf sich nicht mehr glauben” (UB

¹⁶ See also NL 29[47] 7.645-6. Indeed, prior to Socrates’ arrival, Nietzsche describes the Greeks as having forged “das strenge ältere Gesetz der einheitlichen sprachlichen Form” (SGT 1 1.93).

¹⁷ Nietzsche repeatedly refers to the paralyzing effects of the unrestrained pursuit of (historical) knowledge. See e.g. UB II 3 1.268, where antiquarian history is described as paralyzing the man of action (“[sie] lähmt [...] den Handelnden”).

¹⁸ Quoted in Jörg Salaquarda, “Studien zur zweiten unzeitgemässen Betrachtung”, *Nietzsche-Studien*, 13 (1984), 1-45 (p.16).

II 5 1.280). Insofar as this discordance of ends, ideals and values incapacitates the individual, we can comprehend why Nietzsche would warn of the necessity “sie alle zu bezwingen und zu bewältigen, um nicht selbst an ihrem Kampfe zu Grunde zu gehen” (UB II 4 1.272).

The second form of harmful disintegration indexed by Nietzsche concerns the disjunction he believes has arisen between the inner (i.e. private and intellectual) and outer (i.e. public and practical) aspects of modern German life. In UB II 4, he recounts how, as a consequence of the aforementioned inner havoc, modern man has simply abandoned the tiresome struggle of practically implementing his learning, and has instead turned inwards, disregarding the task of making an authentic choice as to how to intercourse with others and present themselves to the outside world.¹⁹ Modern man thus “versinkt in sich selbst, ins Innerliche, das heisst hier nur: in den zusammengehäuften Wust des Erlernten, *das nicht nach aussen wirkt*, der Belehrung, die nicht Leben wird” (UB II 5 1.280; my italics).

Nietzsche accuses the Germans of simply deferring to convention in an effort to circumvent the problem of practically applying this internal bedlam of models:

Sieht man einmal auf's Aeusserliche, so bemerkt man, wie die Austreibung der Instincte durch Historie die Menschen fast zu lauter abstractis und Schatten umgeschaffen hat: keiner wagt mehr seine Person daran, sondern maskirt sich als gebildeter Mann, als Gelehrter, als Dichter, als Politiker. (Ibid.)

In unquestioningly adopting one of these bourgeois mantles, everyone comes to don the same “bürgerliche Universal-Rock” (ibid.) and, likewise, everyone equally comes to suffer from a “Schwäche der Persönlichkeit” insofar as they fail to

¹⁹ UB II 4 1.274: “Daraus entsteht eine Gewöhnung, die wirklichen Dinge nicht mehr ernst zu nehmen, daraus entsteht die ‘schwache Persönlichkeit,’ zufolge deren das Wirkliche, das Bestehende nur einen geringen Eindruck macht; man wird im Aeusserlichen zuletzt immer lässlicher und bequemer [...]”

exteriorise their personal inner life.²⁰ To the extent that everyone follows this policy, however, philistinism generates the *illusion* of cultural unity by generating *uniformity* (“Gleichförmigkeit”, “Uniformität”):

[D]ie Verwechslung in jenem Wahne des Bildungsphilisters daher rühren, dass er überall das gleichförmige Gepräge seiner selbst wiederfindet und nun aus diesem gleichförmigen Gepräge aller “Gebildeten” auf eine Stileinheit der deutschen Bildung, kurz auf eine Kultur schliesst. (UB I 2 1.165)

Modern Germans are therefore consistently philistine (even if they do play different philistine *rôles* within society). Indeed, in the uniformity of its fragmentariness, modern philistinism has a sufficient façade of holism to blind its sufferers to the very cultural sickness afflicting them. But, as Nietzsche emphasises, philistine uniformity and systematicity do not amount to *true* stylistic unity. This is because such pseudo-unity is only achieved through the *exclusion* and *negation* of the creative forces that necessarily underpin any authentic style (“wahre Stil”).²¹ Indeed, Nietzsche charges modern Germans with preferring to apathetically mimic others over proactively constructing authentic, individual modes of acting in the world.²² Moreover, according to his diagnosis, the pressure of conformism is inimical to the emergence of true individuals: as he says at the beginning of UB III, people are often forced to suppress their individuality “[a]us Furcht vor dem Nachbar, welcher die Convention fordert” (UB III 1 1.337).²³ This, then, is what Nietzsche is rebuking when he

²⁰ UB II 5 1.281: “Das Individuum hat sich ins Innerliche zurückgezogen: aussen merkt man nichts mehr davon”.

²¹ Nietzsche calls this the “Ausschliessen und Negiren aller künstlerisch produktiven Formen und Forderungen eines wahren Stils” (UB I 1 1.166). See also UB I 8 1.206, and his criticism of “[uniforme] Glauben”.

²² See UB II 4 1.273: “[W]as wirklich Motiv ist und was als That sichtbar nach aussen tritt, bedeutet dann oft nicht viel mehr als eine gleichgültige Convention, eine klägliche Nachahmung”.

²³ See also UB III 3 1.353: “Wo es mächtige Gesellschaften, Regierungen, Religionen, öffentliche Meinungen gegeben hat, kurz wo je eine Tyrannei war, da hat sie den einsamen Philosophen gehasst”. Furthermore, see his criticism of artistic critique in philistine culture in UB II 5 1.285.

laments the “[Gegensatz] von Form und Inhalt, von Innerlichkeit und Convention” (UB II 4 1.278).

The third and final way in which philistine culture has generated fragmentation according to Nietzsche, is that the sheer quantity of history ingested produces a disorienting sense that one exists in a state of pure flux or “becoming”, lacking any fixed points. This is the feeling “von der Flüssigkeit aller Begriffe, Typen und Arten, von dem Mangel aller cardinalen Verschiedenheit zwischen Mensch und Thier” (UB II 5 1.319). Such disorientation and the sense of a loss of higher purpose leads people to embrace a dangerous strain of cynical irony towards the world of action.²⁴ This in turn breeds a socially divisive form of egoistic immoralism as individuals fall back on the one thing of which they are certain: their own personal life-needs. The rapacious and hostile pursuit of personal gain eventuates in a loss of community and the fragmentation of the *Volk*: “das Volk [geht] am egoistischen Kleinen und Elenden, an Verknöcherung und Selbstsucht zu Grunde [...], zuerst nämlich auseinanderfällt und aufhört Volk zu sein” (ibid.).²⁵ In this condition of purely pursuing our baser needs, Nietzsche views humans as being no better than animals.²⁶ Consequently, at this point in his philosophical development, he is highly critical of the affirmation of becoming (in a manner recalling Schopenhauer’s critique of those who embrace the will to live); correspondingly, as will be illuminated, he sought some metaphysically fixed points as a remedy to this malaise.

²⁴ See UB II 5 1.279: “[D]urch dieses Uebermaass [vom historischen Wissen] geräth eine Zeit in die gefährliche Stimmung der Ironie über sich selbst und aus ihr in die noch gefährlichere des Cynismus: in dieser aber reift sie immer mehr einer klugen egoistischen Praxis entgegen, durch welche die Lebenskräfte gelähmt und zuletzt zerstört werden”. See also NL 27[80] 7.611.

²⁵ This is reminiscent of Nietzsche’s characterization, in GT, of the buddhistic anti-socialism and even practical pessimism of those overly exposed to the Dionysian reality of existence. See GT 17 and 23.

²⁶ See UB III 5 7.819-20: “Solange jemand nach dem Leben wie nach einem Glücke verlangt, hat er den Blick noch nicht über den Horizont des Thieres hinausgehoben, nur dass er mit mehr Bewusstsein will, was das Thier im blinden Drange sucht — das heisst, wir verbringen Alle den grössten Theil unsres Daseins in der Thierheit, wir selbst sind die Thiere, welche sinnlos zu leiden scheinen.”

Naturally, this is not an exhaustive reconstruction of Nietzsche's criticisms of modern society in UB. Nonetheless, it amply demonstrates that in UB Nietzsche is deeply preoccupied with the cultural pathology of disintegration on a number of fronts:

- a) The anarchic discordance of models guiding agency;
- b) The diremption of our interior, intellectual world from our external comportment, which has come to be governed by convention;
- c) The social division caused by egoism and the rapacious pursuit of base life-needs.

We should recall the ultimate evaluative standard that Nietzsche is employing at this time – namely, the extent to which a given phenomenon aids or obstructs a generative culture and the production of artistic genius: “eine werdende Cultur und die Erzeugung des Genius — das heisst das Ziel aller Cultur” (UB III 3 1.358).²⁷ Crucially, the various forms of disgregation mentioned above undercut the social and individual conditions of coordination and coherence *that are necessary for genius to arise*. Although there is some equivocation in Nietzsche's use of the term genius (this will be clarified below), it is nonetheless with this end in mind that he thinks concerted social and individual agency, and a coherent basis for aesthetic praxis is exigent. He is therefore staunchly opposed to the Hegelian idea that modern Germans have already achieved a “Vollendung der Weltgeschichte” (UB II 8 1.308) or Hartmann's Whiggish belief that progress is guaranteed by a rational and automatic “Weltprozess” (see e.g. UB II 9 1.311 ff.). In contrast to the idealistic, self-congratulatory and *laissez-faire* attitude that he believes such Hegelianism

²⁷ See also UB III 3 1.363, where he describes the *Genius* as “die höchste Frucht des Lebens”. For more on what Nietzsche means by “Genius” in UB, see James Conant (2000), p.193 and pp.209ff. See also Lemm (2007), p.14. For a wider overview of Nietzsche's concept genius (i.e. one that draws on all phases of his writing), see Herman Siemens (2002), pp.85-91. We will return to the question of genius below.

engenders, he wants to show us that the improvement of our situation is contingent on our actively *fighting* for it: “[N]icht erträumt werden kann jener ideale Zustand, *er muss erkämpft und errungen werden* [...]” (UB II 9 1.317; my italics). We should examine how Nietzsche conceives of this “ideale Zustand”, and the means by which he thinks we can fight to attain it.

3.3. THE PATHS TO *EINHEIT*

How does Nietzsche propose we resolve these three types of disunity? In fact, he offers a number of interconnected solutions. One of the key ways in which they are interconnected, as will become clear, is in their paradigmatic appropriation of Schopenhauer’s conception of healthy organisation *qua* instrumental hierarchy – one that is secured through a struggle for assimilation that is distinctly unagonistic. Thus, I begin by arguing that Nietzsche cannot be said to present the *Wettkampf* as a solution to the problem of disunity. I then delineate Schopenhauer’s unagonistic account of the origins of functional organisation (*Zweckmäßigkeit*) and how Nietzsche employs this in responding to each of the three crises enumerated above.

3.3.1. *WETTKAMPF*

Given both the emphasis on the unifying quality of the *Wettkampf* in the writings of Nietzsche’s contemporaries and predecessors (e.g. Curtius, Burckhardt and Schiller²⁸), as well as the fact that CV 5 was written in the same year that he was

²⁸ For Curtius (1864), the dramaturgical agon had a powerful gathering quality, bringing together artists, musicians, actors, poets, architects (who would design the amphitheatres), and audience for the staging of the production: “Das ganze Volk wurde überall in die Interessen der Kunst hereingezogen” (p.11). Moreover, artists would gather before the *Greek* people (not just that of a single *polis*), which would then judge their work (alongside official

preparing the first *Betrachtung* (1872), we might reasonably expect Nietzsche's positive portrayal of the *Wettkampf* to be proffered as a remedy to the crisis of disgregation. However, in reality, this only serves to make it all the more conspicuous that the unifying quality of the agon has been *suppressed* in CV 5.

Nonetheless, Enrico Müller and Christa Davis Acampora (and to some extent also David Owen) have attributed a strong unifying function to Nietzsche's early conception of the agon.²⁹ The note that is usually cited in support of this position is NL 16[22] 7.402 (one of the preparatory notes for CV 5), in which Nietzsche minimally states: "Die panhellenischen Feste: Einheit der Griechen in den Normen des Wettkampfes". In CV 5, the closest he then comes to attributing a unifying quality to the agon is in his stating that *without* the *Wettkampf*, the Greek *polis* "wird böse und grausam [...] — und dann bedarf es nur eines panischen Schreckens, *um ihn zum Fall zu bringen und zu zerschmettern.*" (CV 5 1.518; my italics). Yet this does not give us any substantive notion of the cohesive effect of agonistic conflict; it merely implies that the Greek state became weak and susceptible to Persian conquest once agonal practices began to decay. According to Nietzsche, the agon certainly had a *strengthening* function, one that gave Greek culture its peculiar

judges, of course) (pp.9-11). The agon (together with religion) thus generated a national identity amidst inter-poleis struggles (DW, p.19). Curtius hoped that cultivating a similar agon within German academia would likewise further the project of German unification.

Similarly, Burckhardt (2014) claims that the Panhellenic games (particularly at Olympia) played a key formative role in both foreclosing war and its divisive effects, and fostering a unitary Greek identity. Panhellenic contests facilitated this by offering a neutral locus for ordinarily hostile tribes to socially interact (vol.4, pp.92-3).

Finally, for Schiller, the Greek agon was an ideal example of what he calls the play drive (*Spieltrieb*). In the activity of non-violent play, Schiller thought that the Greeks managed to synthesise their physicality (associated with what he calls the *Stofftrieb*) and their love of law and form (the *Formtrieb*) (see Schiller [2010], Brief XV, pp.62-4). Without such a unifying practice, Schiller believed that one of these two tendencies – towards materiality/physicality/sensuality on the one hand, and towards abstraction/law/reason on the other – tend to tyrannise and make life either barbarically ordered or barbarically anarchic.

²⁹ See fn. 3. David Owen has also argued that the agon unifies communities insofar as it generates shared norms and standards of excellence. See David Owen, *Maturity and Modernity: Nietzsche, Weber, Foucault and the Ambivalence of Reason* (London: Routledge, 1994). Owen claims that "[t]he agon is constituted through the ongoing construction, destruction and reconstruction of 'communities of judgement'" (p.77).

greatness; but this strengthening quality was indissociable from its centrifugal force. Indeed, Nietzsche is often concerned with the potentially *disunifying* effects of agonal struggle. As the previous chapter demonstrated, the primary way Nietzsche thought the agon could underwrite social unity was by acting as a flue hole for disunifying energies – i.e. by channelling agonistic conflict *away* from the political sphere.³⁰ We also saw that his early conception of the agon relied on the superordinate forces of religion, law and education to counteract this centrifugal quality of the agon. Organisation can only be maintained, according to Nietzsche, so long as these overarching institutions retain control of the agon.

Perhaps the strongest evidence we have in favour of the idea that Nietzsche understood the agon as a unifying practice is in his lecture GMD, which is not (to the best of my knowledge) cited by any of those defending the idea of the Nietzschean agon as a socially binding force. In this lecture, Nietzsche endorses the “geistvolle” Anselm Feuerbach’s assertion that “Die olympischen Spiele führten die gesonderten Griechenstämme zur politisch religiösen Einheit zusammen” (GMD 1.518). However, in this lecture, Nietzsche’s focus is not on how the form of conflict definitive of the agon united people, so much as how *tragedy* had a socially and aesthetically unifying effect.³¹ Hence, even here, it is not so much measured *conflict* that Nietzsche views as the ground of Greek unity, but communally creating and spectating *tragedy*, which only incidentally took place in the context of the agonal games. For this reason, if we are to locate Nietzsche’s response to the crisis of modern disintegration, we need to look beyond the confines of his thoughts on the agon.

³⁰ See NL 11[186] 9.514-5; compare also NL 30[7] 7.732-3.

³¹ On tragedy’s socially unifying effect, Nietzsche (echoing Wagner) remarks that “Der Grieche flüchtete sich aus der ihm so gewohnten zerstreuten Öffentlichkeit, aus dem Leben in Markt Straße und Gerichtshalle, in die ruhig stimmende, zur Sammlung einladende Feierlichkeit der Theaterhandlung” (GMD 1.520).

3.3.2. SCHOPENHAUER ON CONFLICTUAL ORGANISATION

In trying to analyse Nietzsche's conception of healthy unity in UB, the most fitting point of entry is through Schopenhauer's metaphysics, and particularly his account of how *Zweckmäßigkeit* emerges through conflict as outlined in WWV. PHG clearly evinces that in 1873 Nietzsche was well acquainted with, and even assented to, the description of the world as struggle given in WWV I (esp. §27 and §28).³² Indeed, as I will demonstrate in the subsequent sections, this gives Nietzsche a basic conception of how functional unities emerge out of conflict – a notion he paradigmatically employs throughout UB, albeit with modifications.

According to Schopenhauer, we have experiential access to the *an-sich* of one object – that is, how that object exists beyond all appearance. This object is our own body. On the one hand, we experience our body as a mere object or phenomenon amongst others. Yet we also know it “from the inside”, so to speak, as an indivisible striving, or willing. Schopenhauer argues by analogy that this gives us an insight into the interior or noumenal aspect of all objects; thus, for Schopenhauer, all things in themselves are defined by this very same indivisible striving.³³ Space and time are then the conditions of plurality; and, in a typically Kantian fashion, as opposed to being properties of the world in itself, Schopenhauer conceives of them as a structural framework that *we* project onto the noumenal world as will, thereby transforming it into the world as representation. Hence, the world in itself, being outside of space and time “kennt demnach keine Vielheit, ist folglich einer” (WWV I, §25 p.185). He directly distinguishes this form of unity, which precedes all plurality, from the unity of a concept (which is constructed from a plurality of

³² See PHG §5 1.826, having given an exegesis of Heraclitus' view of reality as struggle, Nietzsche tells us that “Jenen Kampf, der allem Werden eigenthümlich ist, jenen ewigen Wechsel des Sieges schildert wiederum Schopenhauer (Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I S 175)”. Nietzsche then quotes a long section from WWV I §27 as evidence vindicating Heraclitus' worldview.

³³ See WWV I §§19-21.

instances, *post hoc*) or the unity of an individual (which exists in space and time). In distinction to these forms of unity, all things in themselves are *numerically* identical to one another and, furthermore, their unity is ontologically prior to their plurality.³⁴

A similar notion of unity can be ascribed to Schopenhauer's construal of Platonic Ideas. Within Schopenhauer's system, Ideas represent an intermediary between the absolute unity of the world as will and the plurality of the world as representation.³⁵ Like Plato, Schopenhauer reasons that for all the individuals of a given species of phenomena (that is, for every natural kind), there exists an Idea – an essence, model or timeless prototype from which all the individual instantiations of that species are derived.³⁶ Moreover, these Ideas are transcendent, existing outside of space and time, and, as such, are ontologically prior to all objectivity. Like the unity of the will, their unity is not the result of abstraction (from perceived objects) and they are therefore said to possess a "*unitas ante rem*" in contrast to the "*unitas post rem*" of concepts (WWV I §49, p.313).³⁷

As we saw in Chapter 1, these Ideas are described by Schopenhauer as engaged in a fierce and unrelenting struggle at the level of representation. First, they must vie with one another in a zero-sum game over matter, which they require in

³⁴ Schopenhauer employs the simile of the magic lantern to illuminate the relation of plurality and unity in his notion of the world as will and representation: "Wie eine Zauberlaterne viele und mannigfaltige Bilder zeigt, es aber nur eine und die selbe Flamme ist, welche ihnen allen die Sichtbarkeit erteilt; so ist in allen mannigfaltigen Erscheinungen, welche neben einander die Welt füllen, oder nach einander als Begebenheiten sich verdrängen, doch nur der eine Wille das Erscheinende, dessen Sichtbarkeit, Objektivität das Alles ist [...]" (WWV I §28, p.215).

³⁵ For a charitable reading of Schopenhauer's theory of the Idea (or *forms*), see John E. Atwell, *Schopenhauer on the Character of the World: The Metaphysics of Will* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995), pp.129-53.

³⁶ As Julian Young has argued, Schopenhauer's understanding of Ideas cannot be equated with that of Plato insofar as Schopenhauer does not reify Ideas as does Plato. See Julian Young, *Schopenhauer* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp.129-33 (esp. p.132). Indeed, we may want to look at Schopenhauer's forms as having more in common with Aristotelian essences, which inhere like formulae within objects, directing their development and activity.

³⁷ See WWV I §25, p.187: "Ich verstehe also unter Idee jede bestimmte und feste Stufe der Objektivation des Willens, sofern er Ding an sich und daher der Vielheit fremd ist, welche Stufen zu den einzelnen Dingen sich allerdings verhalten, wie ihre ewigen Formen, oder ihre Musterbilder."

order to become manifest phenomena. The result of this is what Schopenhauer calls “allgemeine[r] Kampf” (WWV I §27, p.208). Among animals, this battle of the Ideas is most noticeably played out in the struggle for survival, though Schopenhauer also claims that it takes place in the inorganic domain, arguing that even forces are engaged in this struggle when acting on matter. While in Chapter 1 we found that this conflict is indelibly marked by unmeasured, destructive opposition, if we examine what he, after Kant, calls inner and outer *Zweckmäßigkeit*, we find that measured conflict is also integral to Schopenhauer’s *Weltanschauung*.

Kant’s most lucid account of the philosophically problematic nature of *Zweckmäßigkeit* is in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, where he asks how we can explain the existence of functionally organised unities. How can we account for self-organising beings (i.e. organisms), in which the parts seem to fit together to serve the interests of the whole (what Kant calls inner *Zweckmäßigkeit*)? And how is it that nature seems to fit together into a harmonious whole, with all the plants and animals supporting one another, with rational human culture standing at the pinnacle of this system (what Kant calls outer *Zweckmäßigkeit*)?³⁸ Kant argues that we simply cannot conceive of how such harmonious wholes could arise in a purely mechanistic universe by sheer coincidence.³⁹ How could the parts, which serve very specific functions with respect to the whole, and also depend on the other parts for their existence, have been created without a pre-existing idea of the whole in the mind of a creator? Kant’s solution is to suggest that, alongside the notion of mechanistic causality, we need to retain the concept of teleological causality as a principle of reflective judgement – that is to say, we must think “*als ob*” they were the product of intelligent design in accordance with final ends.⁴⁰

³⁸ See e.g. KdU, §63 and §67. See also §83, where Kant’s posits culture (“Cultur”) as the final end of nature.

³⁹ As he categorically states with respect to organisms in KdU §66: “Ein organisiertes Produkt der Natur ist das, in welchem alles Zweck und wechselseitig auch Mittel ist. Nichts in ihm ist umsonst, zwecklos, oder einem blinden Naturmechanismus zuzuschreiben” (p.376).

⁴⁰ See KdU §70, where Kant maintains that the following maxim must be taken as a principle of reflective judgement: “Einige Produkte der materiellen Natur können nicht, als nach bloß mechanischen Gesetzen möglich, beurteilt werden (ihre Beurteilung erfordert ein ganz

Schopenhauer, however, arrives at a very different, arguably more dogmatic, conclusion – namely, that the unity of any entity has its ground in the metaphysical unity of its Platonic Idea. Universal struggle is, for Schopenhauer, the turbulent matrix out of which ever higher Ideas enter the world – a process culminating in man, which he calls the “deutlichste und vollkommenste Objektivation” of the will (WWV I §28, p.216). For the Idea of man to become manifest, however, it “mußte begleitet seyn von der Stufenfolge abwärts durch alle Gestaltungen der Thiere, durch das Pflanzenreich, bis zum Unorganischen” – the reason for this is that man needs a world into which he can be born, and the materials for his survival. As such, all the Ideas “ergänzen sich zur vollständigen Objektivation des Willens” (ibid.). Schopenhauer’s Ideas thus form a pyramidal hierarchy, with man standing at its apex. It is important to note that this outer *Zweckmäßigkeit* – understood as a form of unity arising from an antagonism internal to the system – emerges *because phenomena must reflect or embody the unity of the will*, which is itself defined by an inner antagonism.⁴¹

Just as outer *Zweckmäßigkeit*, emerges from the conflict *between* individuals, so, for Schopenhauer, the inner *Zweckmäßigkeit* of organisms is grounded in the conflict *within* individuals. Every organism is a hierarchy of Ideas; indeed, higher Ideas, he tells us, are only able prevail in the struggle by pressing lower Ideas into the service of their higher purpose:

[S]o geht aus diesem Streit die Erscheinung einer hohem Idee hervor, welche die vorhin dagewesenen unvollkommeneren alle überwältigt, jedoch so, daß sie das Wesen derselben auf eine untergeordnete Weise

anderes Gesetz der Kausalität, nämlich das der Endursachen)” (p.387). As he also states in §67, the conception of nature as a “System der Zwecke” “nicht ein Prinzip für die bestimmende, sondern nur für die reflektierende Urteilskraft sei, daß es regulativ und nicht konstitutiv sei, und wir dadurch nur einen Leitfaden bekommen, die Naturdinge in Beziehung auf einen Bestimmungsgrund, der schon gegeben ist, nach einer neuen gesetzlichen Ordnung zu betrachten, und die Naturkunde nach einem andern Prinzip, nämlich dem der Endursachen, doch unbeschadet dem des Mechanisms ihrer Kausalität, zu erweitern” (p.379).

⁴¹ See WWV I §28, p.217.

bestehn läßt, indem sie ein Analoges davon in sich aufnimmt (WWV I §27, p.205).

This exploitative, instrumentalising struggle to establish hierarchy is the constitutive ground of every phenomenon: “Kein Sieg ohne Kampf: indem die höhere Idee, oder Willensobjektivation, nur durch Ueberwältigung der niedrigeren hervortreten kann” (ibid., pp.206-7). In the case of an organism, Schopenhauer gives the example of the digestive organs competing against the rest of the body for energy, or the body digesting and exploiting organic matter. He defines the health of the organism as its ability to contain these various conflicts and keep lower Ideas subordinated to the higher purpose of the individual.⁴² The effectiveness with which these lower Ideas are subordinated – that is, the rigor with which the hierarchical organisation is upheld – directly correlates to the degree of health and perfection attained by the phenomenon in question (an idea that finds precedence in Goethe⁴³).

Like Kant, Schopenhauer rejects the idea that we are able to explain the unity of the organism with reference to mechanical laws; though, unlike Kant, he additionally makes the speculative metaphysical claim that this proves the existence of Ideas:

Man [wird] zwar im Organismus die Spuren chemischer und physischer Wirkungsarten nachweisen, aber nie ihn aus diesen erklären können; weil er keineswegs ein durch das vereinigte Wirken solcher Kräfte, also zufällig hervorgebrachtes Phänomen ist, sondern eine höhere Idee, welche sich jene niedrigeren durch überwältigende Assimilation unterworfen hat. (WWV I §27, p.206)

⁴² WWV I §27, p.207: “[D]aher ist das behagliche Gefühl der Gesundheit, welches den Sieg der Idee des sich seiner bewußten Organismus über die physischen und chemischen Gesetze, welche ursprünglich die Säfte des Leibes beherrschen, ausdrückt [...]”

⁴³ See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “Zur Morphologie” (1817), in *Goethes Werke. Hamburger Ausgabe*, 14 vols (vol.13) (Hamburg: Wegner, 1948), pp.53-520: “Je unvollkommener das Geschöpf ist, desto mehr sind diese Teile einander gleich oder ähnlich, und desto mehr gleichen sie dem Ganzen. Je vollkommener das Geschöpf wird, desto unähnlicher werden die Teile einander. In jenem Falle ist das Ganze den Teilen mehr oder weniger gleich, in diesem das Ganze den Teilen unähnlich. Je ähnlicher die Teile einander sind, desto weniger sind sie einander subordiniert. Die Subordination der Teile deutet auf ein vollkommneres Geschöpf” (p.55).

Organismic unity can only be explained, according to Schopenhauer's abductive reasoning, on the basis of an actively striving metaphysical entity – that is, an Idea. Moreover, this is a process of struggle aimed at subduing and exploiting other Ideas. Yet even when these subaltern Ideas have been pressed into a hierarchy, conflict is nonetheless pervasive within the organism. This is because Ideas are always struggling to break free of their fetters and reassert their independence. Despite the fact they have been forced into “Dienstbarkeit,” lower Ideas “immer noch streben, zur unabhängigen und vollständigen Aeußerung ihres Wesens zu gelangen.” (WWV I §27, p.207). Death therefore often results from the eventual victory of the lower Ideas in their rebellious struggle and the consequent disintegration of the hierarchy which constituted the organism; though it also arises (as mentioned above) as Ideas snatch matter from one another – for example, when organic entities consume one another in order to survive. Just as a victor in battle might sack and enslave a defeated city, the victorious Idea disbands the opposed organism and instrumentalises the Ideas previously organised therein.⁴⁴

It should now be obvious why Schopenhauer holds the view that “wir [sehen] in der Natur überall Streit, Kampf und Wechsel des Sieges” (ibid.). It is imperative to remark that this vision of reality as an unceasing struggle for assimilation forms the basis of Schopenhauer's pessimistic worldview, as well as motivating his advocacy of an ethics of life-denial. As Nietzsche himself observes, Schopenhauer considered such universal strife “ein durchweg entsetzliches, keineswegs beglückendes Phänomen” (PHG 1.826). With respect to its purely descriptive features, however, we can attribute the following characteristics to assimilative struggle:

⁴⁴ As Schopenhauer puts it: “Die deutlichste Sichtbarkeit erreicht dieser allgemeine Kampf in der Thierwelt, welche die Pflanzenwelt zu ihrer Nahrung hat, und in welcher selbst wieder jedes Thier die Beute und Nahrung eines andern wird, d.h. die Materie, in welcher seine Idee sich darstellte, zur Darstellung einer andern abtreten muß, indem jedes Thier sein Daseyn nur durch die beständige Aufhebung eines fremden erhalten kann” (WWV I §27 p.208).

1. Within it, opposed relata (*Ideen*) strive to subjugate their counterparts into a functional hierarchy;
2. Its telos, instrumental hierarchy, is associated with health;
3. It is inextricably associated with unmeasured conflict (*qua* the forced dissolution of existing unities as a means to commandeering their constituent Ideas);
4. It continues within the instrumental hierarchies even once these have been established;
5. It is driven by a species of metaphysically substantial entity (i.e. *Ideen*).

Measured conflict can therefore be described as an essential aspect of the world as representation for Schopenhauer, since Ideas are first and foremost striving to *preserve* the Ideas they overcome, albeit in a condition of servitude. Despite this measure, however, this struggle of higher versus lower Ideas cannot be labelled agonistic due to its being characterised by inequality, instrumentalisation and, despite its measured aim of subjugation, often being conditioned by the destructive process of disbanding existing unities (i.e. instantiations of Ideas). In the following sections, I will elucidate how the various struggles for organisation proposed by Nietzsche in UB paradigmatically fulfil these criteria.

3.3.3. *PLASTISCHE KRAFT*

In UB I, as in CV 5, Nietzsche explicitly rejects militarism as a path to true culture. Contrary to bellicose readings of his thought (such as those of Bäumler, Russel and Dombowsky), he unequivocally states that “[s]trenge Kriegszucht, natürliche Tapferkeit und Ausdauer, Ueberlegenheit der Führer, Einheit und Gehorsam unter den Geführten [sind] Elemente, die *nichts mit der Kultur zu thun haben*” (UB I 1

1.160; my italics). Yet despite this point of overlap, CV 5 and UB do not share a corresponding concern with the *Wettkampf* as a constructive social alternative. Indeed, Nietzsche does not even once mention either the *Wettkampf* or agon in UB, where he is overtly responding to the problem of disgregation. What makes it so surprising that CV 5 and the notion of the *Wettkampf* is the first port of call for commentators seeking to develop a Nietzschean theory of organisation is that we find him giving an explicit (and as we shall see, quite unagonistic) account of how we might unify ourselves socially and individually in UB. While it has been suggested only recently that Nietzsche abandoned Schopenhauer's notion of *Zweckmäßigkeit* as of 1868, we will see that his proposed resolution profoundly resonates with Schopenhauer's thoughts on organisation.⁴⁵ In order to bring this into relief, we should first examine how he suggests we tackle the problem of philistinism.

Despite Nietzsche's critique of over-education, and in particular, the excessive accumulation of historical knowledge of other cultures, it should be highlighted that he does not think that we can do *without* historical knowledge; rather, as he himself emphatically remarks: "das Unhistorische und das Historische ist gleichermaassen für die Gesundheit eines Einzelnen, eines Volkes und einer Cultur nöthig" (UB II 1 1.252). But how can historical learning concretely remedy the problem of disintegration to which its excess, or "hypertrophy", gave rise in the first place? We can begin to tackle this question by expounding the three types of history Nietzsche identifies in UB II, and the ways in which he thinks they can be either advantageous or deleterious to life.

⁴⁵ See Kevin Hill, *Nietzsche's Critiques: The Kantian Foundations of his Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Referring to Schopenhauer's conception of *Zweckmäßigkeit*, Hill claims that, "When Nietzsche read Schopenhauer in 1865, he quickly embraced both the metaphysics of the will and the speculative account of teleology that flowed from it. But Nietzsche's early enthusiasm for Schopenhauer's metaphysics soon dimmed, and with it, his ability to make sense of teleology. In 1868, Nietzsche turned to Kant's third Critique to make good this loss" (p.75).

First, Nietzsche describes *monumental* history, a mode of historical praxis that glorifies past individuals and thereby conscripts them as exemplars for future action. The great man of action, “der einen grossen Kampf kämpft, der Vorbilder, Lehrer, Tröster braucht und sie unter seinen Genossen und in der Gegenwart nicht zu finden vermag” (UB II 2 1.258). We might think of Schiller’s idealisation of the Greeks as epitomising this kind of history insofar as he mines the past to provide his present with exemplars for future action.⁴⁶ By looking into the past, one can see the potential, and set a standard, for greatness in the future. Rather than being informed by a desire for preservation, this form of historical practice is driven by the wish for happiness (“Glück”), greatness (“Grosse”) and “den Begriff ‘Mensch’ weiter auszuspannen und schöner zu erfüllen” (UB II 2 1.259). In order to render the past serviceable to the present, however, monumental historians must always elide the parts of it that make an exemplar particular to their historical context – that is, they must always *distort* the past:

Wie viel des Verschiedenen muss, wenn sie jene kräftigende Wirkung thun soll, dabei übersehen, wie gewaltsam muss die Individualität des Vergangenen in eine allgemeine Form hineingezwängt und an allen scharfen Ecken und Linien zu Gunsten der Uebereinstimmung zerbrochen werden! (UB II 2 1.261)

Taken to excess, though, Nietzsche warns that this can lead to the distortion of the past for violent, seditious ends, and even lead to a form of atavism that harmfully impedes progress (“die Werdenden und Wollenden”) (UB II 2 1.263).

Thankfully, antiquarian history, which is more concerned with the faithful documentation of the past, can act as an antidote for this distorting excess. The antiquarian serves life “[i]ndem er das von Alters her Bestehende mit behutsamer Hand pflegt, will er die Bedingungen, unter denen er entstanden ist, für solche bewahren, welche nach ihm entstehen sollen” (UB II 3 1.265). He describes this as a “Festschrauben” “an [...] Gesellen und Umgebungen, an [...] mühselige

⁴⁶ For evidence that Nietzsche himself thought of Schiller in precisely this way, see NL 29[117] 7.684: “Schiller gebrauchte die Historie im monumentalen Sinne”.

Gewohnheit” (UB II 3 1.266). However, the myopic and reverent study of one’s own past comes with its own attendant dangers:

Der antiquarische Sinn eines Menschen, einer Stadtgemeinde, eines ganzen Volkes hat immer ein höchst beschränktes Gesichtsfeld; das Allermeiste nimmt er gar nicht wahr, und das Wenige, was er sieht, sieht er viel zu nahe und isolirt; er kann es nicht messen und nimmt deshalb alles als gleich wichtig und deshalb jedes Einzelne als zu wichtig. Dann giebt es für die Dinge der Vergangenheit keine Werthverschiedenheiten und Proportionen, die den Dingen unter einander wahrhaft gerecht Würden [...]. (UB II 3 1.267)

In stressing that *everything* is good within this narrow range of focus, antiquarian history itself ends up distorting the past by robbing it of its variability in value (“Werthverschiedenheit”) and thereby flattening it. As Catherine Zuckert has observed, “antiquarian preservation changes the very past it would retain”.⁴⁷ Moreover, this fetishistic piety (“Pietät”) of a people towards its traditions and cultural roots eventually means that antiquarian history also constricts growth and progress: “sie versteht eben allein Leben zu bewahren, nicht zu zeugen; deshalb unterschätzt sie immer das werdende” (UB II 3 1.268). Finally, when this mode of historical praxis extends beyond one’s own national roots, it can descend into “das widrige Schauspiel einer blinden Sammelwuth, eines rastlosen Zusammenscharrens alles einmal dagewesenen” (ibid.) – at which point, it becomes the very quintessence of philistinism.

The final mode of history described by Nietzsche is that of *critical* history, which he presents as an explosive corrective to the conservatism of antiquarian history: “[man] muss die Kraft haben und von Zeit zu Zeit anwenden, eine Vergangenheit zu zerbrechen und aufzulösen, um leben zu können” (UB II 3 1.269).

⁴⁷ This is to say, antiquarian history “does not present historical truth” (despite its pretensions to the contrary). See Catherine Zuckert, “Nature, History and the Self: Friedrich Nietzsche’s Untimely Considerations”, *Nietzsche-Studien*, 5 (1976), 55-82 (pp.61-2). See also Salaquarda (1984), p.20. Indeed, according to Nietzsche, all history can be said to have a distorting effect insofar as “Alles Erinnern ist Vergleichen d.h. Gleichsetzen” (NL 29[29] 7.636).

By denuding the *unjust* origins (e.g., in violence or weakness) of a particular moribund and constrictive social phenomenon (e.g. “eines Privilegiums, einer Kaste, einer Dynastie zum Beispiel”), critical history works to destroy such phenomena and thereby enable the creation of new social orders and traditions – that is, it allows us to supplant an embedded part of our “erste Natur” with a new “zweite Natur”.⁴⁸ Notwithstanding these remarks, Nietzsche is highly doubtful regarding the extent to which this destruction of the disagreeable aspects of our heritage is possible, or even advisable:

[D]ie Thatsache [ist] nicht beseitigt, dass wir aus ihnen herstammen. Wir bringen es im besten Falle zu einem Widerstreite der ererbten, angestammten Natur und unserer Erkenntniss, auch wohl zu einem Kampfe einer neuen strengen Zucht gegen das von Alters her Angezogene und Angeborne, wir pflanzen eine neue Gewöhnung, einen neuen Instinct, eine zweite Natur an, so dass die erste Natur abdorrt. Es ist ein Versuch, sich gleichsam a posteriore eine Vergangenheit zu geben, aus der man stammen möchte, im Gegensatz zu der, aus der man stammt — immer ein gefährlicher Versuch, weil es so schwer ist eine Grenze im Verneinen des Vergangenen zu finden und weil die zweiten Naturen meistens schwächer als die ersten sind. (UB II 3 1.270)

The critical approach, when indulged to excess, harmfully strives for the severance of one’s roots. Moreover, Nietzsche warns that it is hard to place a limit on this destructive activity (“es so schwer ist eine Grenze im Verneinen des Vergangenen zu finden”).⁴⁹ For these reasons, “Menschen oder Zeiten, die auf diese Weise dem Leben dienen, dass sie eine Vergangenheit richten und vernichten, sind immer gefährliche und gefährdete Menschen und Zeiten” (ibid.). Yet, in spite of his

⁴⁸ Nietzsche first describes critical history as the means by which “[d]er Mensch” fulfils his desire “von Noth sich befreien” (NL 29[115] 7.683). See Salaquarda (1984), p.28. Jörg Salaquarda has shown how Nietzsche was influenced by Franz Grillparzer in this respect. See Georg Salaquarda, “‘Er ist fast immer einer der *Unserigen*’: Nietzsche und Grillparzer”, in T. Borsche, F. Gerratana, A. Venturelli (eds.), “*Centauren-Geburten*”: *Wissenschaft, Kunst und Philosophie beim jungen Nietzsche* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), p.239 and p.245.

⁴⁹ This emphasis on the fact that we often “abstammen” from the parts of our culture that we wish to destroy can be seen as a step away from the position he defends in GT 23, where he suggests that Roman influences should be removed as a failed graft should be amputated from a tree.

reservations, Nietzsche can certainly be said to sanction this destructive act of radical critique, that is, the unmeasured struggle to empty a tradition of its *cachet* by means of divulging its ignominious origins.

These are the potential uses of history for life, which is to say, for preservation (secured by antiquarian history) and flourishing (enabled by critical history and realised by monumental history). As we saw above, Nietzsche does not think man can survive without distorting and exploiting the past for his own purposes. He describes this process of pressing history into the service of one's life-needs as one of *incorporation* ("Einverleibung"):

Je stärkere Wurzeln die innerste Natur eines Menschen hat, um so mehr wird er auch von der Vergangenheit sich aneignen oder anzwängen; und dächte man sich die mächtigste und ungeheuerste Natur, so wäre sie daran zu erkennen, dass es für sie gar keine Grenze des historischen Sinnes geben würde, an der er überwuchernd und schädlich zu wirken vermöchte; alles Vergangene, eigenes und fremdestes, würde sie an sich heran, in sich hineinziehen und gleichsam zu Blut umschaffen. (UB II 1 1.251)

The ability to *exploit* history in order to repair and renew culture in the present – i.e., "Vergangenes und Fremdes umzubilden und einzuverleiben, Wunden auszuheilen, Verlorenes zu ersetzen, zerbrochene Formen aus sich nachzuformen" – is what Nietzsche refers to as "die plastische Kraft eines Menschen, eines Volkes, einer Cultur" (ibid.). What is striking about this early passage in UB is that it seems to be describing the ideal form of history as *monumental* history. The practice of drawing foreign influences into ourselves and then transforming them into our lifeblood ("hineinziehen und gleichsam zu Blut umschaffen"), of forcefully distorting them in the manner of the man of action forging models for himself out of the past, encapsulates his description of monumental history; conversely, it jars with his conception of the piety of antiquarian history, and the destructiveness of critical history. Nietzsche's ideal thus seems to be best represented by monumental history,

kept within bounds by antiquarian and enabled by critical history.⁵⁰ As Jörg Salaquarda has remarked, Nietzsche only added the critical mode of history at a relatively late stage of his preparations for UB II. To be sure, for the most part he planned the essay as an apology for monumental history over and against antiquarian history, which he largely equates with philistinism.⁵¹ In light of this prioritisation, we should now make a closer study of monumental history with two questions in mind: how does this process of instrumentalising the past resolve the problem of disgregation? And can this mode of engagement with history be considered agonal in kind?

Nietzsche takes the pre-Socratic Greeks to have exemplified this ability to incorporate knowledge of past and foreign cultures in their appropriation of Egyptian, Lydian, Indian, Jewish, Oriental, Zoroastrian and Chinese cultural influences. According to Nietzsche, the Greeks aggregated and implemented their knowledge of foreign cultures in accordance with their real needs (“ihre ächten Bedürfnisse”). Among these needs, he specifies the demand to be “glücklich”, “weis und ruhig”,⁵² and to excel one’s neighbours (“[zu schwingen] sich hoch und höher als der Nachbar”).⁵³ This attentiveness to their true needs gave them a standard according to which the fray of foreign influences could then be organised:

⁵⁰ Indeed, Nietzsche sometimes even states that only the monumental (or as he also calls it, the “Klassisch”) form of history truly attends to a culture’s life-needs. See e.g. NL 29[29] 7.636: “Das Lebensbedürfniss verlangt nach dem Klassischen, das Wahrheitsbedürfniss nach dem Antiquarischen. Das Erste behandelt das Vergangne mit Kunst und künstlerischer Verklärungskraft.”

⁵¹ See Salaquarda (1984), p.18. On the emergence and insertion of the critical mode of history into the plan of UB II, see p.28.

⁵² As he says in PHG I 1.807: “[D]as, was sie [die Griechen] lernten, sogleich leben wollten.” See also UB IV 6 1.463: “So benutzen die jetzigen Gelehrten und Philosophen die Weisheit der Inder und Griechen nicht, um in sich weise und ruhig zu werden: ihre Arbeit soll blos dazu dienen, der Gegenwart einen täuschenden Ruf der Weisheit zu verschaffen.” See also NL 8[15] 10.335, where Nietzsche highlights the “Empfindung, mit der jeder Philosoph seine Gegner niederkämpfen wollte — durch den praktischen Beweis, daß er der Glückliche sei.”

⁵³ PHG I 1.806: “[S]ie [die Griechen] haben [...] alle bei anderen Völkern lebende Bildung in sich eingesogen, sie kamen gerade deshalb so weit, weil sie es verstanden den Speer von dort weiter zu schleudern, wo ihn ein anderes Volk liegen ließ [...] und so, wie sie, sollen wir von unsern Nachbarn lernen, zum Leben, nicht zum gelehrtenhaften Erkennen, alles Erlernte als Stütze benutzend, auf der man sich hoch und höher als der Nachbar schwingt.”

Die Griechen lernten allmählich das Chaos zu organisieren, dadurch dass sie sich, nach der delphischen Lehre, auf sich selbst, das heisst auf ihre ächten Bedürfnisse zurück besannen und die Schein-Bedürfnisse absterben liessen. So ergriffen sie wieder von sich Besitz; sie blieben nicht lange die überhäuften Erben und Epigonen des ganzen Orients; sie wurden selbst, nach beschwerlichem Kampfe mit sich selbst, *durch die praktische Auslegung jenes Spruches*, die glücklichsten Bereicherer und Mehrer des ererbten Schatzes und die Erstlinge und Vorbilder aller kommenden Culturvölker. (UB II 10 1.333; my italics)

On the ancient Greek model, knowledge of the past is only retained if it can be *implemented*, if it can be given an instrumental value with respect to the present.⁵⁴ Exemplars from the past – i.e., models and standards for aesthetic and ethical action – are only preserved and taught to subsequent generations to the extent that they can be *implemented* as expedients in the face of current obstacles. For Nietzsche, this criterion of implementability applies not just to historical knowledge, but to knowledge more generally. Thus, he extolls “[jene] [einfache] Mannestreue, die einen Alten zwang, wo er auch war, was er auch trieb, sich als Stoiker zu gebärden, falls er der Stoa einmal Treue zugesagt hatte” (UB II 5 1.282).

According to this account of the struggle for incorporation – the “beschwerliche[.] Kampfe mit sich selbst” – what cannot be applied must be forgotten: “Das was eine solche Natur nicht bezwingt, weiss sie [die Griechen] zu vergessen” (UB II 1 1.251). By this, Nietzsche seems to be saying that we should not revise such knowledge, nor should it form part of the curriculum of education; it should rather be left to recede into oblivion. This is what Nietzsche refers to as the “unhistorische” mode of existence.

At a stroke, this solves problem (a), the disgregation of influences on agency, *and* (b), the disjunction of our inner and outer existence. First, by seeking ways by which to implement knowledge, and by forgetting any knowledge that does

⁵⁴ See his criticism of linguistics and the study of Indian philosophy in UB III 8 1.424: “Man treibt zum Beispiel die sprachlichen Studien eifriger als je, ohne dass man für sich selbst eine strenge Erziehung in Schrift und Rede für nöthig befände. Das indische Alterthum eröffnet seine Thore, und seine Kenner haben zu den unvergänglichen Werken der Inder, zu ihren Philosophien kaum ein andres Verhältniss als ein Thier zur Lyra [...]”

not have pragmatic value, a combination of influences is formed that is wholly suited to one's true aesthetic and ethical needs. Second, in concretely *applying* knowledge, one reunifies one's interior life (of knowledge and belief) with one's exterior existence (in praxis).

But can this “beschwerliche[.] Kampfe mit sich selbst”, which one must undertake in order to synthesise foreign influences, justifiably be called agonal? Despite Nietzsche cursorily mentioning that this struggle is informed by an agonal desire to excel one's neighbours, I would contend that the relation he encourages towards our historical influences is certainly *not* agonal in kind; rather, it is characterised by both *instrumentalisation*, and the unmeasured *exclusion* of certain data in a way that is incompatible with agonal struggle. If we invoke Nietzsche's exposition of the kind of cultural organisation he is proposing, it becomes immediately apparent that the mode of *Kampf* being advocated has little in common with his conception of the agon:

Soll nun das Leben über das Erkennen, über die Wissenschaft, soll das Erkennen über das Leben herrschen? Welche von beiden Gewalten ist die höhere und entscheidende? Niemand wird zweifeln: das Leben ist die höhere, die herrschende Gewalt, denn ein Erkennen, welches das Leben vernichtete, würde sich selbst mit vernichtet haben. (UB II 10 1.331)

The normative thesis that the needs of life ought to dominate (“herrschen”) the pursuit of knowledge is justified by the fact that any other arrangement would, according to Nietzsche, entail eventual death.⁵⁵ He does not advocate an agon between our life-needs and our knowledge of other cultures, but a *Kampf* for a stable, *functional* (i.e. instrumentalising) hierarchy, within which, learning, and what we learn, is wholly subordinated to our instrumental needs. The accent on exploitative

⁵⁵ See also UB II 1 1.257: “Denn bei einem gewissen Uebermaass derselben zerbröckelt und entartet das Leben und zuletzt auch wieder, durch diese Entartung, selbst die Historie”. In UB II 3 1.268, Nietzsche also censures the situation in which “die Historie [dient] dem vergangnen Leben so [...], dass sie das Weiterleben und gerade das höhere Leben untergräbt, wenn der historische Sinn das Leben nicht mehr conservirt, sondern mumisirt [...]”.

relations makes it difficult to read an agonistic impetus into UB II. The struggle to incorporate influences within oneself is a process in which, as Vanessa Lemm has aptly phrased it, “the human being appropriates, dominates and rules over the past”.⁵⁶

As Herman Siemens has observed, this bears a striking resemblance to the process of “Übertragung” that is depicted in CV 5. This denotes the process by virtue of which the agonal Greeks managed to “einordnen” their aggressive and destructive natural drives into culturally productive activity.⁵⁷ On the basis of this, Siemens maintains that “[t]he key to Nietzsche’s thought here is a notion of productive and inclusive conflict that he derives from the signature institution of pre-Socratic culture: the contest or agon (*Wettkampf*). It is through a transformative assimilation – or *Übertragung* – of natural, destructive drives that the agon was born.”⁵⁸ However, neither the fact that the agon emerges out of an analogous type of organisational struggle, nor the fact that the resultant organisation is productive, are sufficient conditions for considering such struggle agonistic. Indeed, the “Einordnung” of drives upon which the *agon* is grounded is one that aims at a functional hierarchy, within which destructive energies are enduringly subordinated to, and pressed into the service of, the social whole.⁵⁹ To be sure, the struggle for *Übertragung* (or “Einordnung”⁶⁰) is, like the agonal conflict to which it gives birth, a *non-destructive* (i.e. measured) and productive mode of relation. Notwithstanding, the agon, as I have construed it, is not motivated by the desire to instrumentally command (i.e. “einordnen”) one’s agonistic opponent, as is the case with this

⁵⁶Vanessa Lemm, “Nietzsche, *Einverleibung* and the Politics of Immunity”, *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 21 (2013), 3-19 (p.6).

⁵⁷ See NL 16[15] 7.398: “Der Dichter erzieht: die tigerartigen Zerfleischungstriebe der Griechen weiß er zu übertragen in die gute Eris.”

⁵⁸ See Herman Siemens (2001a), p.101.

⁵⁹ NL 21[14] 7.526: “Was ist es, was die mächtigen Triebe in die Bahn der Wohlfahrt bringt? Im Allgemeinen die Liebe. Die Liebe zur Heimatstadt [...]”; NL 16[18] 7.399: “Wie die griechische Natur alle furchtbaren Eigenschaften zu benutzen weiß: die tigerartige Vernichtungswuth (der Stämme usw.) im Wettkampf”.

⁶⁰ See also NL [146] 8.79: “Die Natur, wie sie sich zeigt, wird nicht weggeleugnet, sondern nur eingeorndet, auf bestimmte Culte und Tage beschränkt. [...] [M]an suchte für die Naturkräfte eine mässige Entladung, nicht eine Vernichtung und Verneinung. — Das ganze System von neuer Ordnung ist dann der Staat.”

incorporative mode of conflict. The observation that the agon is preconditioned by a type of organisational struggle, does not justify the equation of these two distinct forms of conflict.

Another way in which UB II resists agonistic readings is in its persistent valorisation of unmeasured conflict. It should now be plain that for Nietzsche there is the need to forget expendable knowledge and thus be rid of its harmful influence. Organisational struggle is therefore *both* the struggle to include useful knowledge within the horizon of one's needs *and* to fully exclude knowledge that one has been identified as redundant. The drawing of any boundary is always an at once inclusive *and* exclusive act. We should further note that this is not an act of exclusion that maintains a conflictual relation with that which has been excluded. It is an instance of complete obfuscation – any excluded value (i.e. guide for action) from another culture is simply “nicht mehr da, der Horizont ist geschlossen und ganz” (UB II 1 1.251).⁶¹ It is also worth adding that this process of exclusion is in no way analogous to ostracism, since the reasoning behind it is not the excessive predominance, or tyrannical effect of a given cultural influence, but simply because that influence fails to fit the needs of the social whole.

Organisational struggle denotes precisely this dual activity of incorporation (measured) and exclusion (unmeasured). Indeed, Nietzsche further emphasises the way in which unmeasured conflict is a prerequisite of the incorporative processes he so values insofar as he exhorts his readers to an unambiguously unmeasured mode of struggle at the end of UBII. Here he appeals to the “Jugend, jenes ersten Geschlechtes von Kämpfern”, the “Schlangentödtern”, who will undertake the urgent and burdensome task that he has set forth in UB II. In naming them “Schlangentödtern”, and in defending their right to “Roheit und Unmässigkeit”, he makes it quite transparent that he is campaigning for anything *but* a measured, agonal mode of conflict:

⁶¹ Drawing on JGB 188, Müller-Lauter (1999) has referred to this as “the healthy tendency to eliminate what could disturb the ‘healthy closedness’ of the horizon [...]” (p.31).

Ihre Mission aber ist es, die Begriffe, die jene Gegenwart von “Gesundheit” und “Bildung” hat, zu erschüttern und Hohn und Hass gegen so hybride Begriffs-Ungeheuer zu erzeugen; und das gewährleistende Anzeichen ihrer eignen kräftigeren Gesundheit soll gerade dies sein, dass sie diese Jugend nämlich, selbst keinen Begriff, kein Parteiwort aus den umlaufenden Wort- und Begriffsmünzen der Gegenwart zur Bezeichnung ihres Wesens gebrauchen kann, sondern nur von einer in ihr thätigen kämpfenden, ausscheidenden, zertheilenden Macht und von einem immer erhöhten Lebensgeföhle in jeder guten Stunde überzeugt wird. (UB II 10 1.331)

The language with which Nietzsche marshals the “Jugend” in this passage can hardly be read as a provocation to measured, agonal conflict. As he himself says earlier in the same section, one sets out on the path to realise true culture “Vor allem dadurch, dass er [der Jugend] einen Aberglauben zerstört, den Glauben an die Nothwendigkeit jener [philisterhaften] Erziehungs-Operation” (UB II 10 1.326). The false and counter-productive belief of antiquarian philistines that the indiscriminate accumulation of knowledge is the only means by which to cultivate the youth – and that such accumulation forms the basis of “Gesundheit” and “Bildung” – is an injurious superstition, which has arisen out of weakness (i.e. a temporary need for self-preservation rather than flourishing). Moreover, this prejudice only further exacerbates the problem of measurelessness (i.e. hypertrophy). On these grounds, then, this fallacious belief must be destroyed (“zerstört”). This is chiefly achieved by generating “Hohn und Hass” against the entrenched convictions that block the project of cultural *Erneuerung*. As such, destruction is figured as a process of *devaluation* or *radical critique*. This accords with DWB, which gives the primary definition of *vernichten* as “für nichts achten, unwerth halten” (the secondary definition, “zu grunde richten”, then only applies in the case of “sinnliche dinge”).⁶² As he indicates in his retrospective appraisal of UB I in 1888-9, the text represents an act of “*schonungsloser Verachtung*” (my italics): “Der erste Angriff [*Betrachtung*] (1873) galt der deutschen Bildung, auf die ich damals schon mit

⁶² See DWB, entry for “vernichten” (vol.25, col.922-5).

schonungsloser Verachtung hinabblickte. Ohne Sinn, ohne Substanz, ohne Ziel: eine bloße ‘öffentliche Meinung’” (EH UB 1 6.316).

But what distinguishes the forms of unmeasured conflict that Nietzsche *advocates* from those that he condemns; for example, the struggle that he associates with Socrates and the destructive drive for knowledge in GT, or the ruinous historical sense, or even the evil Eris of CV 5? ⁶³ In short, these degenerate forms of unmeasured conflict are criticised on account of their being *hostile* to life and culture.⁶⁴ Indeed, the principal effect of excess knowledge is that, as we saw, man “hat seinen Instinct vernichtet und verloren” (UB II 5 1.280), thereby losing his natural self-confidence in action, which leaves him stultified and severely hinders his ability to flourish.⁶⁵ Then in Chapter 1, we established that in CV 5 Nietzsche rebukes the physical *Vernichtungskampf* on account of its culturally detrimental effects.

Contrariwise, the destructive conflict promoted by Nietzsche consistently stimulates *creativity* and *growth*, thereby *-serving the end of promoting life and culture*.⁶⁶ This is a case akin to “justifiable homicide”, particularly murder on grounds of self-defence, where the killing (i.e. destruction) of one’s assailant is permitted on the grounds that he would likely have murdered one, had he not been killed. Thus, Schopenhauer is praised as the “Vernichter kulturfeindlicher Kräfte”

⁶³ See UB II 7 1.295: “Der historische Sinn, wenn er ungebändigt waltet und alle seine Konsequenzen zieht, entwurzelt die Zukunft, weil er die Illusionen zerstört und den bestehenden Dingen ihre Atmosphäre nimmt, in der sie allein leben können.”

⁶⁴ According to Nietzsche, Socrates (and Euripides), in their unlimited propagation of dialectics as a measure of value, strove for the destruction of myth, instinct and Greek tragedy, which were the grounds of Hellenic vitality. NL 1[43] 7.21: “Die griechische Tragödie fand in Sokrates ihre Vernichtung.” See also SGT 1.541-2.

⁶⁵ See UB II 5 1.279: “[D]urch dieses Uebermaass werden die Instincte des Volkes gestört und der Einzelne nicht minder als das Ganze am Reifwerden verhindert”. UB II 5 1.280: The rational man, says Nietzsche, “hat seinen Instinct vernichtet und verloren, er kann nun nicht mehr, dem ‘göttlichen Thiere’ vertrauend, die Zügel hängen lassen, wenn sein Verstand schwankt und sein Weg durch Wüsten führt.”

⁶⁶ See UB II 7 1.295-6. Nietzsche warns that, “[w]enn hinter dem historischen Triebe kein Batrieb wirkt, wenn nicht zerstört und aufgeräumt wird, damit eine bereits in der Hoffnung lebendige Zukunft auf dem befreiten Boden ihr Haus baue, wenn die Gerechtigkeit allein waltet, dann wird der schaffende Instinct entkräftet und entmuthigt.”

(NL 28[6] 7.619) and Nietzsche states that the great productive spirit only aims to condemn (“verurtheilen”) “was für ihn den Lebenden und Lebenzeugenden Vernichtung und Entwürdigung ist [...]” (UB II 4 1.278). On this account, the *Zweckmäßigkeit* of both culture and individuals must, as with Schopenhauer, be established through a combination of measured and unmeasured conflict.

What we may doubt is whether Nietzsche’s attempt to harness destructive force for creative purposes is open to the scepticisms that he himself expresses regarding critical history: will the “Schlangentödtern” Nietzsche calls forth be able to set a limit (*Grenze*) on their *own* destructive activity? But moreover, *can* we moderns supplant the antiquarian model of education? Or is this too deep a part of our first nature, the removal of which would do us irreparable damage?⁶⁷ Whether Nietzsche’s own project can circumvent these obstacles remains a moot point; nonetheless, these caveats should not leave us disaffected. The most dangerous course of action is that of *inaction*. Were we to let life remain dominated by knowledge, at least according to Nietzsche’s logic, we would be effectively condemning ourselves to death.

Nietzsche’s endorsement of organisational struggle can be construed as an attempt to promote a form of conflict that clearly shares three key structural features with Schopenhauer’s notion of assimilative conflict. Thus, the following can be said of Nietzsche’s model of organisational struggle in UB:

1. It is aimed at subjugation (*Überwältigung*) (i.e. that of the three forms of history to the needs of life, and that of the various data of historical knowledge to a person’s or culture’s life-needs);

⁶⁷ Nietzsche registers this problem in UB III 6 1.401-2: “[D]ie Schwierigkeit liegt für die Menschen darin, umzulernen und ein neues Ziel sich zu stecken; und es wird unsägliche Mühe kosten, die Grundgedanken unseres jetzigen Erziehungswesens, das seine Wurzeln im Mittelalter hat, und dem eigentlich der mittelalterliche Gelehrte als Ziel der vollendeten Bildung vorschwebt, mit einem neuen Grundgedanken zu vertauschen.”

2. It is directed towards establishing a top-down instrumental relation (e.g. to render knowledge ancillary to life), which is associated with cultural health (just as it is associated with organismic health for Schopenhauer and Goethe);
3. It necessarily involves unmeasured conflict (i.e. the exclusion of redundant knowledge and beliefs).

One important difference, of course, is that whereas Schopenhauer describes organisational conflict as a naturally occurring process, Nietzsche's depiction of such conflict has a strong normative dimension. Thus, Nietzsche suggests that, within the domain of culture at least, organisational struggle is contingent upon human agents *consciously* striving for synthesis.

We might also argue that Nietzsche's early account of organisational conflict fulfils the fourth distinguishing criterion of Schopenhauer's assimilative conflict – namely, insofar as struggle persists within the resultant hierarchies; thus, each mode of historical practice tends towards hypertrophy and constantly attempts to set itself up independently of the culture's life-needs. Within the healthy culture, there must therefore be a continuous process of reigning the various types of history back into the service of life by deploying the relevant antidote form of history. Like the lower ideas in Schopenhauer's model, historical learning is always pushing to gain independence from life, and must perpetually be brought back into a position of subservience.

On all of the above grounds, I would contest the suggestion that UB II should be primarily be understood as a text which “draws on and extends the agonistic model he earlier describes [in CV 5]”.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, in order to substantiate my

⁶⁸ Acampora (2013), p.39. Acampora argues that the struggle of the different types of history with one another is agonistic in a manner recalling the struggle of the Apollinian and Dionysian in GT: “Just as Nietzsche thinks the Dionysian and the Apollinian must be combined such that their mutual resistance achieves creative results, he argues that the various practices of history must be combined in the interest of creating and serving an affirmative form of life” (p.40). However, though she highlights the moment of mutual

claim that the notion of organisational conflict developed by Nietzsche in UB follows the general structure of Schopenhauer's conception of the struggle for *Zweckmäßigkeit*, it still remains to be seen how it is metaphysically grounded (5.). However, as we turn to the question of self-knowledge as it is worked out in the latter two *Betrachtungen*, these foundations will gradually be exposed to view.

3.3.4. KNOWING THYSELF

In my analysis of UB II, I bracketed out an important concept; namely, that of *self-knowledge*. We can already extrapolate from the above that knowing oneself must be a condition of the organisational conflict outlined in UB II: one must have a clear conception of one's true life-needs and one's *plastische Kraft* in order to know what belongs within (and what should be excluded from) this horizon. Nietzsche thought the Greeks were able to organise themselves only to the extent that they obeyed the Delphic dictum to "know thyself": "das heisst [sich] auf ihre ächten Bedürfnisse zurück besinnen und die Schein-Bedürfnisse absterben liessen" (UB II 10 1.333). In this subsection, I propose that we turn to the final two *Betrachtungen* to get a better picture of *why* this is necessary, and *how* Nietzsche thinks it can be achieved.

James Conant has claimed that "on the whole [Nietzsche] does not talk about [Schopenhauer] very much; and furthermore, the views put forward in [UB III] seem to contradict Schopenhauer's own philosophical views."⁶⁹ However, we should be very careful not to mistake a lack of explicit mention of Schopenhauer in UB III for a lack of presence. Indeed, proper scrutiny reveals that Schopenhauer's thought has a profound structuring influence on UB, in spite of there being some fundamental points of divergence. This goes for Nietzsche's notion of self-knowledge in UB III (and UB IV) just as much as it does for his understanding of how the self is forged

resistance and limitation, Acampora does not pay sufficient attention to the general subordination of historical study to life.

⁶⁹ Conant (2001), p.202, also quoted in Lemm (2007), p.10. See also Stanley Cavell (1990): "Schopenhauer, as everyone notes, is scarcely present in the text" (p.53).

into a purposive unity, which draws heavily on Schopenhauer's notion of *Zweckmäßigkeit*. Indeed, I will now defend the claim that Nietzsche's conception of self-organisation is one that he largely adopts from Schopenhauer, and which correspondingly shares in the metaphysical presuppositions of his predecessor's account of assimilative struggle. It is vital that we acknowledge this inheritance since it reveals just why the solutions Nietzsche presents to (a)-(d) become unsustainable in the later writings (i.e. because of their Schopenhauerian metaphysical presuppositions). To convincingly bring this legacy to light, we should begin by giving a summary of how Schopenhauer thinks that the self is formed into a purposive organisation.

Again following Kant, Schopenhauer distinguishes between intelligible and empirical character.⁷⁰ According to this distinction, the character of the individual has two sides: one that appears to us (our *empirical* character) and one that remains imperceptible (our *intelligible* character). In Kantian terms, we might refer to this as the difference between the phenomenal and noumenal aspects of the self:

[D]er intelligible Charakter jedes Menschen [sei] als ein außerzeitlicher, daher untheilbarer und unveränderlicher Willensakt zu betrachten [...], dessen in Zeit und Raum und allen Formen des Satzes vom Grunde entwickelte und auseinandergezogene Erscheinung der empirische Charakter ist, wie er sich in der ganzen Handlungsweise und im Lebenslaufe dieses Menschen erfahrungsmäßig darstellt. (WWV I §55, p.380)

We each possess a unique character, or will – what Schopenhauer refers to as our peculiar “vollständige Persönlichkeit”.⁷¹ Like all objects, this character – as purely *intelligible* character – is undetermined (i.e. free) since it exists outside of space and

⁷⁰ For an informative comparison of Kant's, Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's views on intelligible character, see Gerhardt (1996), pp.117-24.

⁷¹ See WWV I §26, p.188: “Auf den obern Stufen der Objektivität des Willens sehn wir die Individualität bedeutend hervortreten, besonders beim Menschen, als die große Verschiedenheit individueller Charaktere, d.h. als vollständige Persönlichkeit, schon äußerlich ausgedrückt durch stark gezeichnete individuelle Physiognomie, welche die gesammte Korporisation mitbegreift.”

time and is therefore not subject to the laws of causality. This is what Schopenhauer also calls our “individuellen Willen[.]” (WWV I §55, p.382). However, our character appears – i.e. as our empirical character – when we make decisions and act, which is to say when it has to realise itself in the realm of space and time. Nonetheless, for Schopenhauer, each individual’s character is, in its essence, unchanging – indeed, just as there are Platonic ideas (“Ideen”) for each distinct natural kind, Schopenhauer states that there is a separate Platonic Idea for each person’s individual character; hence, at the moment of birth, a person’s “Wandel [ist schon] fest bestimmt [...] und [bleibt] sich bis ans Ende im Wesentlichen gleich” (ibid., p.384).⁷² As such, when a person’s character is presented with a given conflict of motives, that person will only ever resolve upon one particular path and is completely determined according to the principle of sufficient reason which governs their empirical character. For example, one’s character determines how egoistic or altruistic one is. Schopenhauer explains that although people might appear to change, this is merely because they have new knowledge about how to better attain their goals. Thus, on this view, an egoistic man might appear to act more altruistically, but only because he has become convinced by the religious dogma that such behaviour will grant him an eternal afterlife of paradise. His altruistic behaviour is, according to Schopenhauer, therefore just as egoistically determined as before (ibid., p.295).

This brings us to the third type of character identified by Schopenhauer – *acquired* character (“erworbener Charakter”). Schopenhauer claims that through successive acts we are able to glean a progressively more comprehensive picture of our unique empirical character. As such, we can be in states of relative knowledge or ignorance regarding our empirical character – in particular, regarding our unique strengths and weaknesses. Man finds in himself, says Schopenhauer, “zu allen, noch so verschiedenen menschlichen Anstrengungen und Kräften die Anlagen” (ibid.,

⁷² See WWV I §45, p.300, where Schopenhauer states that “jeder Mensch gewissermaßen eine ganz eigenthümliche Idee darstellt.”

p.396). In order to know which of these to pursue, it is essential that we achieve conscious knowledge of our peculiar character:

Können wir uns dazu nicht entschließen, sondern greifen, wie Kinder auf dem Jahrmarkt, nach Allem was uns im Vorübergehn reizt; dann ist dies das verkehrte Bestreben, die Linie unsers Wegs in eine Fläche zu verwandeln: wir laufen sodann im Zickzack, irrlichterliren hin und her und gelangen zu nichts. [...] Darum ist das bloße Wollen und auch Können an sich noch nicht zureichend, sondern ein Mensch muß auch wissen, was er will, und wissen, was er kann: erst so wird er Charakter zeigen, und erst dann kann er etwas Rechtes vollbringen. (Ibid., pp.396-7)

To fruitfully follow a certain path in life – that is, for our life to trace a directed line rather than dissipating into a “Fläche” of caprice and haphazard dilettantism – some impulses must “ganz unterdrückt werden” (ibid.). Through knowledge of our empirical character (particularly our personal strengths and weaknesses) we learn which of these must be suppressed. This enables us to follow the path dictated by our character with determination and efficacy. Prefiguring Nietzsche’s criticism of bourgeois imitation, Schopenhauer also reserves particular disdain for those who, in lieu of proper self-understanding, merely attempt to ape others (usually out of envy of their successes): “Nachahmung fremder Eigenschaften und Eigenthümlichkeiten ist viel schimpflicher, als das Tragen fremder Kleider: denn es ist das Urtheil der eigenen Werthlosigkeit von sich selbst ausgesprochen” (ibid., p.400). Not only is this inherently reprehensible, but it also frequently results in disappointment insofar as it lures individuals to undertake projects for which, in terms of their personality, they are ill-equipped (ibid., p.401).

What I wish to highlight in this summary of Schopenhauer is the fact that the process of attaining self-knowledge depends on an essentialist conception of the self as a unique and unchanging metaphysical essence – that is, as an *Idea*. It is only epistemological access to this self that enables us to avert the pitfalls of imitation and caprice; this is how one might, according to Schopenhauer, follow Pindar’s

command to “become who one is”. But how is this account operative in Nietzsche’s vision of how one ought to approach the problem of synthesising one’s self?

On one level, Nietzsche is openly sceptical regarding the notion of acquired character, particularly since he opens UB III by casting doubt on the very possibility of self-knowledge:

Aber wie finden wir uns selbst wieder? Wie kann sich der Mensch kennen? Er ist eine dunkle und verhüllte Sache; und wenn der Hase sieben Häute hat, so kann der Mensch sich sieben mal siebzig abziehen und wird doch nicht sagen können “das bist du nun wirklich, das ist nicht mehr Schaale.” (UB III 1 1.340)

How can we ever be certain that we have obtained insight into our *true* needs and capacities and not merely those which *appear* so? Or that our own self-understanding has not itself been infiltrated by convention – are we not convention through and through?⁷³ What sense does it make to speak of a core, essential self if it can never be intuited? Do such doubts not throw the foundation of his entire organisational project into question?

To be sure, Nietzsche also shows a marked desire to move away from a substantial, essentialist conception of the self. Though he maintains that each of us is a “Unicum”, we are not so in the sense of an Idea – i.e. a *unitas ante rem*. Rather, we are “ein so wunderlich buntes Mancherlei zusammenschüttelt zum Einerlei” (UB III 1 1.337). Moreover, even in 1865, Nietzsche criticises Schopenhauer’s notion of empirical character insofar as he thinks conceiving of character as something fixed and determined negates the possibility of a normative philosophy aimed at *changing* the individual.⁷⁴

⁷³ In his concern with convention in UB III, the influence of Emerson is striking. See Ralph Waldo Emerson, “On Self-Reliance”, in Joel Myerson (ed.), *Transcendentalism: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 318–39. On the relation of Nietzsche and Emerson, see Conant (2000, pp.31ff) and Cavell (1990).

⁷⁴ See KGW I/5, p.276: “Man wirft der Schopenhauerischen Ethik vor, daß sie keine imperative Form habe: Das Ding was die Philosophen Charakter nennen, ist eine unheilbare Krankheit. Eine imperative Ethik ist eine solche, welche mit den Krankheitssymptomen zu thun hat und indem sie gegen diese kämpft, den Glauben hat den einheitlichen Grundstock, das Urübel zu Beseitigen.”

However, despite his misgivings, in UB IV, Nietzsche signals that he *at least in part* assents to Schopenhauer's notion of character; though he still makes significant additions to the theory:

Es wäre sonderbar, wenn Das, was Jemand am besten kann und am liebsten thut, nicht auch in der gesamten Gestaltung seines Lebens wieder sichtbar würde; vielmehr muss bei Menschen von hervorragender Befähigung das Leben nicht nur, wie bei Jedermann, zum Abbild des Charakters, sondern vor Allem auch zum Abbild des Intellectes und seines eigensten Vermögens werden. (UB IV 2 1.435)

Character *is* realised with absolute necessity and automaticity, for Nietzsche – there is no point in trying to change or shape it, our life is an ineluctable “Abbild” thereof. However, he appears to hold a notion of *acquired* character that depends on the discovery of something other than our character – that is, one's *intellect* and “eigensten Vermögens”, of which one's life can *also* be an “Abbild”, though it is not necessarily so. Whereas for Schopenhauer, acquired character is portrayed as something that certain people simply do attain while others do not, for Nietzsche, acquired character is a *task*, as will become more apparent as we continue.

So far, confusingly, we have seen Nietzsche reject and then partially adopt with significant modifications, Schopenhauer's essentialist notion of the self. However, this should not distract us from the strong vein of essentialist metaphysics running through UB. Let us recall his criticism, in UB I and II, of *Weltanschauungen* that affirm becoming on the grounds that they issue in a pernicious form of egoism. Indeed, Herman Siemens has remarked the “total repudiation of becoming in UB III 4 [...], and the advice ‘to destroy all that is becoming [...].’”⁷⁵ While we should certainly acknowledge the incipient reservations Nietzsche expresses towards the Schopenhauerian conception of subjectivity in UB, I now want to foreground the numerous moments in the text where he can be said to quite uncritically adopt just such an essentialist conception of the self.

⁷⁵ Siemens (2009), p.92 (quoting UB III 4 1.375).

Thus, in UB, we find that he valorises the struggle to gain insight into a metaphysically essential part of our character – one that lies beneath the “Mancherlei” of our self and that largely mirrors Schopenhauer’s notion of empirical character. Moreover, he retains a firm faith in the possibility of obtaining knowledge of this deeper self. Indeed, Nietzsche maintains that people such as Schopenhauer and Wagner have achieved just such self-knowledge. He further speaks praisingly of the way in which Schopenhauer was governed (“waltet”) by his “platonische Idee” (UB III 5 1.376), implying that this is a condition that we do not automatically enjoy. As the previous section (UB III 4) indicates, Schopenhauer’s character was defined by the tenacious pursuit of truth, and the willingness to consciously sacrifice happiness for this goal. Perhaps an even more Schopenhauerian moment in UB is to be found in Nietzsche’s description of Wagner in UB IV:

[V]on dem Augenblicke an, wo die in ihm herrschende Leidenschaft ihrer selber bewusst wird und seine ganze Natur zusammenfasst: damit ist dann das Tastende, Schweifende, das Wuchern der Nebenschösslinge abgethan, und in den verschlungensten Wegen und Wandelungen, in dem oft abenteuerlichen Bogenwurfe seiner Pläne waltet eine einzige innere Gesetzlichkeit, ein Wille, aus dem sie erklärbar sind [...]. (UB IV 2 1.435)

Nietzsche adduces Schopenhauer and Wagner as evidence that the discovery of some deeper self (our Platonic *Idee*, inner *Gesetzlichkeit* or *Wille*) is a real possibility. It is precisely in their having grasped this core self that they educate us – they personally evince the possibility of accomplishing this task and, in setting a precedent, thereby inspire us to undertake the challenge ourselves: “Deine wahren Erzieher und Bildner verrathen dir, was *der wahre Ursinn und Grundstoff deines Wesens ist, etwas durchaus Unerziehbares und Unbildbares*, aber jedenfalls schwer Zugängliches, Gebundenes, Gelähmtes” (UB III 1 1.341; my italics).

Not only does Nietzsche disclose that he holds self-knowledge to be possible in these texts, but he also reveals that the self accessed through such knowledge is comparable to Schopenhauer’s metaphysical notion of the empirical character: it is an unchanging essence. Throughout UB III and IV, he employs a panoply of terms

to refer to this inner essence: “innere Gesetzlichkeit”, “der Kern seines Wesens”, the “Wahres Wesen”, “persönlichen Willens”, “eigentliches Selbst”, and so on.⁷⁶ But how can we concretely go about gaining epistemological access to this self? To be sure, Nietzsche gives his readers a very practicable account of just how they can set about achieving this:

Die junge Seele sehe auf das Leben zurück mit der Frage: was hast du bis jetzt wahrhaft geliebt, was hat deine Seele hinangezogen, was hat sie beherrscht und zugleich beglückt? Stelle dir die Reihe dieser verehrten Gegenstände vor dir auf, und vielleicht ergeben sie dir, durch ihr Wesen und ihre Folge, ein Gesetz, das Grundgesetz deines eigentlichen Selbst. Vergleiche diese Gegenstände, sieh, wie einer den andern ergänzt, erweitert, überbietet, verklärt, wie sie eine Stufenleiter bilden, auf welcher du bis jetzt zu dir selbst hingeklettert bist; denn dein wahres Wesen liegt nicht tief verborgen in dir, sondern unermesslich hoch über dir oder wenigstens über dem, was du gewöhnlich als dein Ich nimmst. (UB III 1 1.340)

Introspection enables us to identify our highest joys. By comparing these past delights, Nietzsche believes that we will come to see that they form a ladder, or what we might call a *Rangordnung* (again in contrast to the hypertrophied antiquarian who fails to differentiate in apportioning value to the past). Nietzsche’s thesis is that this reveals an inner law expressing the trajectory of our ideal self-development, which thus provides us with a conception of a higher self towards which we can consciously aim. Note that this inner law is a law directing our *development* or progress – it never describes ourselves *as we are*. We can think of this law as

⁷⁶ Other commentators have also noted the fact that Nietzsche holds an essentialist conception of the self in UB. See e.g. Nuno Nabias, “The Individual and Individuality in Nietzsche”, in K. A. Pearson (ed.), *A Companion to Nietzsche* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp.76-94 (pp.78-80). Nabias underscores the analogy between the Schopenhauerian notion of character and Nietzsche’s conception of the self in UB; however, he does not bring out how this underpins Nietzsche’s early organizational project. See also Robert Miner, “Nietzsche’s Fourfold Conception of the Self”, *Inquiry*, 54(4) (2011), 337-360 (pp.339ff.). Although Miner does not draw the Schopenhauerian comparison, he tries to argue that this essentialist notion of the self persists throughout Nietzsche’s writings. See also Frank Chouraqui, *Ambiguity and the Absolute: Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty on the Question of Truth* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), who likewise notes the parallelism between Nietzsche’s notion of will and Schopenhauer’s notion of character (p.86).

analogous to an algebraic formula, which shows the pattern in an existing series, and thereby allows us to deduce how the series should continue for higher values, without actually having any content of its own. Certainly, in dynamising the notion of the essential self, Nietzsche has once again adapted the Schopenhauerian model; nonetheless – and this is what is imperative for my argument – he retains the idea of a metaphysically fixed kernel lying at the heart of the self, as well as the idea that we can gain epistemological access to this kernel.

But *why* is this discovery of an inner trajectory of value to Nietzsche? Echoing the structure of UB II, this self-knowledge forms the basis for organising the wider self into a “harmonische Ganzheit” and “vielstimmigen Zusammenklang” (UB III 2 1.342). The end result should be someone

[...] in denen alles, Erkennen, Begehren, Lieben, Hassen, nach einem Mittelpunkte, einer Wurzelkraft hinstrebt und wo gerade durch die zwingende und herrschende Uebergewalt dieses lebendigen Centrums ein harmonisches System von Bewegungen hin und her, auf und nieder gebildet wird [...]. (UB III 2 1.342)

Once the ideal trajectory of our self has been deduced, it functions as a “Cardinalkraft” “Wurzelkraft”, or “Mittelpunkte” under which all our other capacities can be organised.⁷⁷ As such, the discovery of our inner law gives us the fundament needed to synthesise our “Erkennen, Begehren, Lieben, Hassen” into a stable and coherent structure. Nietzsche depicts this central point or force, not merely as the cornerstone of self-organisation, but also as the organising force itself “die zwingende und herrschende Uebergewalt”. As an example of the antithesis (“Gegenbild”) of Wagner, Nietzsche describes Goethe (the poet, novelist, painter and courtier) as someone who “wie ein viel verzweigtes Stromnetz erscheint, welches aber seine ganze Kraft nicht zu Meere trägt, sondern mindestens ebensoviel

⁷⁷ See also NL 30[9] 7.734: “[...] Harmonie [ist] da, wenn alles auf einen Mittelpunkt, auf eine Cardinalkraft bezogen ist, nicht wenn zahlreiche schwache Kräfte zugleich spielen.”

auf seinen Wegen und Krümmungen verliert und verstreut, als es am Ausgange mit sich führt” (UB IV 3 1.442).

This overpowering of one’s impulses, which is unequivocally advocated by Nietzsche in UB, cannot defensibly be called agonistic since it is characterised by the rather unagonistic process of exploitatively subordinating those impulses under a single force. The concept of such a “lebendige[s] Centrum” is profoundly at odds with the decentred pluralism of Nietzsche’s agonism, according to which the strongest exist in constellations defined by mutual limitation (das “Wettspiel der Kräfte”), and any single superordinate force is forcibly removed by means of ostracism.⁷⁸

Schopenhauer saw *truth* (“Wahrheit”) as his goal, and Nietzsche reveres the way in which his predecessor tenaciously devoted himself to the pursuit of this goal, especially given the fact that Schopenhauer did so in a fashion that was completely opposed to the scholars of his day, who only sought truth to the extent that it brought them academic honours.⁷⁹ But, according to Nietzsche, in his irreverent pursuit of truth he was forced to deny and destroy conventional beliefs, prejudices and falsehoods. Once again resonating with the model of assimilation expounded in UB II, this process of overpowering is not merely a measured, inclusive process of coordinating our inclinations into an effective hierarchical structure; rather, in addition to this, it is a process of *exclusion*, a “Wegräumung alles Unkrauts, Schuttwerks, Gewürms, das die zarten Keime der Pflanzen antasten will” (UB III 1 1.341). The target of this attack is the dross of prejudice, convention and the vulgar pressures of society. For this reason, “[darf] der Genius sich nicht fürchten, in den feindseligsten Widerspruch mit den bestehenden Formen und Ordnungen zu treten, wenn er die höhere Ordnung und Wahrheit, die in ihm lebt, an’s Licht herausheben will” (UB III 3 1.351). This is a hostile act of rejecting convention in favour of

⁷⁸ Vanessa Lemm (against Cavell) has also argued that the relation of one’s exemplar or ideal self to the rest of one’s self is not one of equality. See Lemm (2007), p.21.

⁷⁹ UB III 7 1.411: “Es gehörte zu den herrlichen Bedingungen seiner Existenz, dass er wirklich einer solchen Aufgabe, gemäss seinem Wahlspruche *vitam impendere vero*, leben konnte und dass keine eigentliche Gemeinheit der Lebensnoth ihn niederzwang [...]”.

“Wahrheit und Ehrlichkeit” (UB III 3 1.354). As we already witnessed above, convention prevents the potential genius from attaining fruition; thus, in struggling against this, “bekämpft er das, was ihn hindert, gross zu sein”:

Daraus folgt, dass seine Feindschaft im Grunde gerade gegen das gerichtet ist, was zwar an ihm selbst, was aber nicht eigentlich er selbst ist, nämlich gegen das unreine Durch- und Nebeneinander von Unmischbarem und ewig Unvereinbarem [...]. So strebte Schopenhauer, schon von früher Jugend an, jener falschen, eiteln und unwürdigen Mutter, der Zeit, entgegen, und indem er sie gleichsam aus sich auswies, reinigte und heilte er sein Wesen und fand sich selbst in seiner ihm zugehörigen Gesundheit und Reinheit wieder. (UB III 3 1.362)

The primary means by which Schopenhauer “zerstört” was, according to Nietzsche, radical critique – i.e. *denial* (“Verneinung”). To be sure, Nietzsche explicitly describes the “Vernichtung” performed by Schopenhauer in terms of an act of “Verneinung” of the doxa of his day (UB III 3 1.364 and 4 1.372). The false belief Nietzsche thinks Schopenhauer most effectively dispelled was the idea that happiness represents the goal for which we should strive. Schopenhauer revealed the pursuit of happiness to be a futile endeavour – one driven by ignorance of the fact that all such striving ever brings us is a cycle of painful desire, momentary satisfaction, and boredom followed by the re-emergence of painful yearning.⁸⁰ He therefore devalued such beliefs by denuding their foundations in myopia and naïveté. Indeed, we might view Nietzsche’s Schopenhauer as launching a distinctly unmeasured struggle against the belief in, and impulse for, enduring happiness.⁸¹

⁸⁰ See NL 35[12] 7.812, where Nietzsche speaks of “[d]er Philosoph als der wahre Widersacher der Verweltlichung, als der Zerstörer jedes scheinbaren und verführerischen Glücks und alles dessen, was ein solches Glück verspricht, der Staaten, Revolutionen, Reichthümer, Ehren, Wissenschaften, Kirchen unter den Menschen [...]”. As he quotes Schopenhauer as saying in UB III 4 1.373: “Ein glückliches Leben ist unmöglich: das Höchste, was der Mensch erlangen kann, ist ein heroischer Lebenslauf.”

⁸¹ Indeed, Nietzsche talks of Schopenhauer as having destroyed his own “Erdenglück”. See UB III 4 1.372: “Gewiss, [Schopenhauer] vernichtet sein Erdenglück durch seine Tapferkeit, er muss selbst den Menschen, die er liebt, den Institutionen, aus deren Schoosse er hervorgegangen ist, feindlich sein [...]”.

Again, this exclusive or destructive activity is to be distinguished from the forms of destructiveness disparaged by Nietzsche; namely, insofar as, in overcoming “das unreine Durch- und Nebeneinander von Unmischbarem”, it facilitates *health* (“Gesundheit”) and healing: “es giebt eine Art zu verneinen und zu zerstören, welche gerade der Ausfluss jener mächtigen Sehnsucht nach Heiligung und Errettung ist, als deren erster philosophischer Lehrer Schopenhauer unter uns entheiligte” (UB III 4 1.372).⁸²

Nietzsche presents Schopenhauer as his educator because he is manifest evidence of someone who has been able to achieve the aforementioned integration of the various parts of his self. As such, he writes for himself and not for others, and cannot be said to imitate the French style: “Niemand an ihm das nachgemachte gleichsam übersilberte Scheinfranzosenthum [...] entdecken wird” (UB III 2 1.347). There is an honesty (“Ehrlichkeit”) to his writing, a “Natürlichkeit, wie sie Menschen haben, die in sich zu Hause [...] sind”. He is also a *whole* individual: “einmal ein ganzes, einstimmiges, in eignen Angeln hängendes und bewegtes, unbefangenes und ungehemmtes Naturwesen” (UB III 2 1.350).

Like Schopenhauer, then, Nietzsche views the discovery of our inner self as a source of purposiveness (*Zweckmäßigkeit*) and increased efficacy; however, whereas Schopenhauer merely emphasises the way in which this revelation gives us a basis for the *Unterdrückung* of distracting impulses, Nietzsche accents the way in which it can act as a fulcrum around which our forces can be *synthesised and further cultivated* (in the service of this higher goal). The ideal educator, says Nietzsche, should not merely create harmonious order under the dominant “Wurzelkraft”, but they should also “alle vorhandenen Kräfte heranziehe[n] [und] pflege[n]” (UB III 2 1.342).

⁸² Hence, Nietzsche refers to Schopenhauer as the “befreiender Zerstörer” in a number of notes. See NL 34[36] 7.803; NL 34[43] 7.807. Indeed, Nietzsche approximates Schopenhauer to the critical form of history (whereas Rousseau stands for monumental history, and Goethe for antiquarian history) (see UB III 4 1.369ff.). See also Zuckert (1976), pp.71-6.

In this way, the ordering Nietzsche seeks to establish is not one that simply forces our inclinations into passive submission to our higher selves; rather, this order is the very means by which those forces can be stimulated and held in ever greater and more fecund degrees of tension. We only have to look to his characterisation of Wagner and Wagner's music in UB IV to see how intrinsic continued tension is to the hierarchical order advocated by Nietzsche:

Sturm und Feuer nehmen bei ihm [Wagner] die zwingende Gewalt eines persönlichen Willens an. Ueber allen den tönenden Individuen und dem Kampfe ihrer Leidenschaften, über dem ganzen Strudel von Gegensätzen, schwebt, mit höchster Besonnenheit, ein übermächtiger symphonischer Verstand, welcher aus dem Kriege fortwährend die Eintracht gebiert: Wagner's Musik als Ganzes ist ein Abbild der Welt, sowie diese von dem grossen ephesischen Philosophen verstanden wurde, als eine Harmonie, welche der Streit aus sich zeugt [...]. (UB IV 9 1.494)

Thus, this dominating centre should not be construed as suppressing conflict between the forces that it harmonises, but as actually enabling, sustaining and maximising this conflict, while reasserting itself in a continuous manner, insofar as it prevents this struggle from becoming internecine.

We can now see that all of the criteria defining Schopenhauer's notion of assimilative conflict have been fulfilled by Nietzsche's account of the organisational struggle for self-cultivation:

1. The aim of the struggle is the subjugation (of diverting impulses) and the establishment of functional hierarchy;
2. Instrumental hierarchy is associated with (psychological) health;
3. The struggle is inseparable from an unmeasured mode of conflict (i.e. the radical critique of misguided beliefs);
4. The struggle persists within the resultant hierarchies;

5. The process is driven by (or at least founded upon) a metaphysical entity (i.e. the self *qua* essence).

Nonetheless, in relation to (5), it should be underscored that Nietzsche *dynamises* this subjective essence, reconceiving of it as a *developmental law* in opposition to Schopenhauer's more static portrayal of empirical character (though it should also be added that this dynamism renders it no less metaphysical and unchanging at its core).

With this, we have now unpacked how Nietzsche proposes we resolve disintegration at an individual level, and how this is rooted in a quasi-Schopenhauerian *Weltanschauung*. What remains to be seen, however, is how Nietzsche suggests we resolve this problem at the level of the collective.

3.3.5. COMMON PURPOSE

In UB II, Nietzsche suggests that the solution to the problem of disgregative egoism, which was seen to be caused by an excess of historical learning, is what he calls “das Überhistorische”. Drawing on Schopenhauer, he argues that art and religion grant us metaphysical insight into the truth of reality, thereby giving us the existential foothold we require in order to avoid slipping into the stream of becoming and, with this, disillusioned egoism. Myth and art (which, of course, acts as a vehicle for myth) are therefore framed as the antidotes to the excesses of historical learning by virtue of the fact that they give “dem Dasein den Charakter des Ewigen und Gleichbedeutenden” (UB II 10 1.330).⁸³ Nietzsche was certainly probing the

⁸³ In this thought, Nietzsche is undoubtedly reprising Schopenhauer's conception of “die metaphysische Bedürfniß”, a notion with which he was certainly familiar (see e.g. letter to Carl von Gersdorff, 07.04.1866 [KGB I/2, p.120]). Schopenhauer argues that, as consolation for their knowledge of death, “und neben diesem die Betrachtung des Leidens und der Noth des Lebens” (WWV II §17, p.186), humans require some form of metaphysical explanation and justification of the world. As a means to this, humans turn to metaphysics which, as either philosophy or religion, “über die Natur, oder die gegebene Erscheinung der Dinge, hinausgeht, um Aufschluß zu ertheilen über Das, wodurch jene, in einem oder dem andern

unifying qualities of religion and art during this period of his thought – stating at one point that “[z]um Organisiren des Chaotischen eignet sich Kunst und Religion” (NL 29[192] 7.708).⁸⁴ However, while they appear to counteract disenchantment with the world, and the socially divisive effects of such disenchantment, it is unclear in UB what *active* role they play in binding the community together.⁸⁵

Indeed, by UB III, Nietzsche seeks to found cultural coherence on quite different, though nonetheless metaphysical, bases. In this subsection, I will therefore focus on UB III in order to elucidate how the “Kampf für die Kultur” (UB III 6 1.386) – i.e. the struggle to synthesise society into a cultural unity – to which Nietzsche rallies his readers, can be considered analogous to Schopenhauer’s notion of assimilative conflict. As will become evident, Nietzsche’s cultural *Kampf* is aimed at the hierarchical organisation of society around a higher, metaphysically

Sinne, bedingt wäre; oder, populär zu reden, über Das, was hinter der Natur steckt und sie möglich macht” (ibid., p.189). Like philosophical metaphysics, religions, says Schopenhauer, deal with an “Ordnung der Dinge an sich” (ibid., p.192). He states that religion is able to communicate the metaphysical truth of reality by means of *allegory* (*sensu allegorico*), where philosophy does so through deductive argumentation (*sensus proprio*). Different religions accomplish this to differing extents, according to Schopenhauer, and indeed, “Der Werth einer Religion wird demnach abhängen von dem größern oder geringern Gehalt an Wahrheit, den sie, unter dem Schleier der Allegorie” (WWV II §17, p.195). Ordinary people simply do not have time for philosophy, and so religious dogma leads them to the ethical and metaphysical conclusions to which philosophical reflection leads in a more thorough sense. Religion thereby functions as a consolation for life’s pain by granting ordinary people an insight into a higher world that transcends that of appearance. Thus, in this section of WWV II, he praises the verisimilitude of pessimistic religions such as Buddhism and Christianity, as well as the fact that they show their followers the need for redemption.

⁸⁴ Interestingly, in “Über Staat und Religion”, Wagner appropriates Schopenhauer’s notion of the metaphysical need and tries to show how religious belief can help the state achieve its *Zweck*, which Wagner describes as the generation of *stability*: “[S]o stellt das religiöse Dogma die andere, bisher unerkannte Welt dar, und zwar mit solch’ unfehlbarer Sicherheit und Bestimmtheit, daß der Religiöse, dem sie aufgegangen ist, hierüber in die unerschütterlichste, tiefbeseligendste Ruhe geräth.” See Richard Wagner (1911), p.22.

⁸⁵ My reading therefore opposes Julian Young’s communitarian interpretation of Nietzsche. Young emphasizes the overlap between Nietzsche’s and Wagner’s theories regarding how mythology (and the art that conveys that mythology) contribute to social unity. See Julian Young, *Friedrich Nietzsche: A philosophical Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.113-9; “Nietzsche: The Long View”, in Julian Young (ed.), *Individual and Community in Nietzsche’s Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) pp.7-30 (esp. pp.10-15).

grounded goal (*Zweckmäßigkeit*): the “Erzeugung der Genius”. Whereas commentators are in the habit of referring to the struggle against modern pseudo-culture promoted in UB III as an agon, my contention is that it should first and foremost be categorised as an instance of organisational conflict.⁸⁶

Nietzsche is at pains to convince us that acknowledging our need to strive for our higher (integrated) self does not just impose *solitary* duties upon us, but also those of a distinctly *social* kind. Furthermore, as we can see from the following quote, he envisages the collective acknowledgement of these duties as having a socially binding effect:

[J]ene neuen Pflichten sind nicht die Pflichten eines Vereinsamten, man gehört vielmehr mit ihnen in eine mächtige Gemeinsamkeit hinein, welche [...] *durch einen Grundgedanken zusammengehalten wird*. Es ist dies der Grundgedanke der Kultur, in sofern diese jedem Einzelnen von uns nur Eine Aufgabe zu stellen weiss: die Erzeugung des Philosophen, des Künstlers und des Heiligen in uns und ausser uns zu fördern und dadurch an der Vollendung der Natur zu arbeiten.” (UB III 5 1.381-2; my italics)

It is our assenting to this *Grundgedanken* of generating genius that motivates our joining the “Kampf für die Kultur”. Nietzsche’s solution is no doubt based on Wagner’s belief that a “Volk” is defined by “der Inbegriff aller Derjenigen, welche eine gemeinschaftliche Noth empfinden.”⁸⁷ For Wagner, the egoistic pursuit of luxury in modernity has resulted in an unhealthy strain of social incoherence, and it is only by reconnecting with our shared need for a culturally renewing form of art (“das Kunstwerk der Zukunft”) that we will be able to replace this mere “Zusammenhang” of individuals with true community. Recognition of this common need will, Wagner informs us, convert this aggregate of egoists into a “selige[.] Harmonie der Natur” – i.e. it is the path to our “Erlösung aus [unserer] egoistischen

⁸⁶ See fn.7.

⁸⁷ Wagner (1850), p.8. See also *ibid.*, pp.214-5, where Wagner refers to the “künstlerischen Genossenschaft, die zu keinem anderen Zwecke, als zu dem der Befriedigung gemeinschaftlichen Kunstdranges sich vereinigt”.

Verzauberung”.⁸⁸ For Wagner, the panacea is the artwork of the future, the making of which demands bringing both artists and the community into free association with one another, and which hence represents the “Bruderkuß” simultaneously produced by, and uniting, the *Volk*.⁸⁹

Nietzsche, however, is not so easily equated with the socialist aspirations of the early Wagner (as we saw in our treatment of CV 3 in Chapter 1). Indeed, there is a deep equivocation in Nietzsche’s conception of this socially binding need – an equivocation that can be traced back to his slippage between two conflicting definitions of genius. On the one hand, he employs the Kantian idea of genius as a “Naturgabe” or “angeborene Gemütsanlage (ingenium), durch welche die Natur der Kunst die Regel gibt” – one which only a minority of gifted individuals possess (KdU §46, p.307) (a conception of genius that reaches fever pitch in the later Wagner). This definition roughly accords with contemporary usage in English. I will call this *elite* genius (since it is the inborn privilege of an elite minority). On the other hand, following Romantics such as Byron and Emerson, Nietzsche develops a more global, and evenly distributed conception of genius. According to this understanding of genius, the term denotes the capacity for originality, authenticity and receptivity to nature, which inheres in everyone, without exception. Thus, Emerson proclaims to all of his readers that “[g]enius is the power to labor better [...]. Deserve thy genius; exalt it.”⁹⁰ This is what I will refer to as the *global* conception of genius. However, and this is what is most problematic, Nietzsche presents the propagation of these two different types of genius as a single, coherent task – that is, he talks of generating genius “in uns”, and of generating genius “ausser uns” as “Eine Aufgabe”. But can these really be equated as simply as Nietzsche

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp.20-2. Likewise, we find the image of the genius as the individual who unites society in Emerson’s writings. See Perry Miller, “Emersonian Genius and the American Democracy”, *The New England Quarterly*, 26 (1) (1953), 27-44.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.14.

⁹⁰ Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The Transcendentalist”, in *The Prose Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 2 vols (Boston: Fields, Osgood & co., 1870), vol.1, pp.177-94 (p.188).

implies? Is culture truly being united around a single need according to Nietzsche's proposed solution to social disunity?

In favour of reading these as *two separate* tasks, we might look at the two dominant (though cursory) political interpretations of UB III – those of Rawls and Cavell. Rawls reads UB III as evidence that Nietzsche endorsed a perfectionist political arrangement according to which “it is the sole principle of a teleological theory directing society to arrange institutions and to define the duties and obligations of individuals so as to maximise the achievement of human excellence in art, science, and culture.”⁹¹ According to this picture of Nietzsche's perfectionism, individuals sacrifice their personal self-development for the sake of expediting the elite genius of others. And certainly, there are texts that support this reading quite categorically, such as where Nietzsche states that

[...] die Menschheit soll fortwährend daran arbeiten, einzelne grosse Menschen zu erzeugen — und dies und nichts Anderes sonst ist ihre Aufgabe [...]. Denn die Frage lautet doch so: wie erhält dein, des Einzelnen Leben den höchsten Werth, die tiefste Bedeutung? [...] Gewiss nur dadurch, dass du zum Vortheile der seltensten und werthvollsten Exemplare lebst, nicht aber zum Vortheile der Meisten, das heisst, der, einzeln genommen, werthlosesten Exemplare. (UB III 6 1.383-4)

Yet Cavell, and following in his wake, Conant, argue that Nietzsche is *not* proposing that we dedicate ourselves to serving a minority of individuals capable of achieving elite genius: “the ‘something higher and more human’ in question is not – not necessarily and in a sense not ever – that of someone *else*, but a further or eventual position of the self now dissatisfied with itself.”⁹² And to be sure, we can adduce passages to support this reading, such as where Nietzsche states that culture is “das

⁹¹ Rawls (1971), p.325.

⁹² Cavell (1990), p.52. See also Conant (2001), p.203; see also p.225: “‘Genius’ figures in Nietzsche's vocabulary as the term for a ‘productive uniqueness’ each of us harbors [...]. Nietzsche does not seek to ‘maximize’ genius (in the way that Rawls [...]) [imagines]) *because the only species of genius that concerns him is one that is already perfectly distributed*” (p.225; my italics).

Kind der Selbsterkenntniss jedes Einzelnen und des Ungenügens an sich” (UB III 6 1.385). This quite unambiguously implies that culture is not the product of an elite who are only able to strive for perfection by virtue of the servitude of others who themselves must sacrifice their own personal projects of self-cultivation to serve this goal; rather, it is the child of the concurrent self-perfecting activity of *all* the members of society. According to both Cavell and Conant, this vision is associated with a healthy, egalitarian, democracy as opposed to the aristocratic elitism that Rawls reads into UB III.⁹³

If the readings of Cavell and Conant are correct, this would vitiate my claim that Nietzsche is operating with an ideal of social organisation based on Schopenhauer’s vision of *zweckmäßig* organisation, within which hierarchy (i.e. inequality) and instrumentalisation were found to be integral. So how can we explain the strong emphasis in UB III on *self*-development and *global* genius if, as I will argue, he is above all concerned with our serving the end of generating elite genius? And *what* is the goal for which we are supposed to be striving and that is supposed to be binding us together – the cultivation of *my* global genius? Or the cultivation of *others’* elite genius? Or are these mutually complementary? Finally, in what manner is this goal supposed to bind us together – in a hierarchical or an egalitarian fashion? If we are to understand how Nietzsche proposes to resolve the problem of social disunity, it is essential that we answer these questions.

Let us begin by examining the justifications Nietzsche gives for why we ought to serve the end of generating elite genius. This will reveal that the task of generating elite genius “ausser uns” *is* in fact the priority for Nietzsche; yet we will

⁹³ See Cavell (1990), p.50. As Cavell argues, only a democratic society embraces the kind of value experimentation necessary for self-perfectionism; thus, “Only within the possibility of democracy is one committed to living with, or against, such culture. This may well produce personal tastes and private choices that are, let us say, exclusive, even esoteric. Then my question is whether this exclusiveness might be not just tolerated but treasured by the friends of democracy.” See also Conant (2001), pp.226ff. For a comparison of Cavell’s and Rawls’ distinct strains of perfectionism, see Paul Patton, “Cavell and Rawls on the Conversation of Justice: Moral versus Political Perfectionism”, *Conversations: The Journal of Cavellian Studies*, 2 (2014), 54-74.

also witness how this task is complemented by, though not coextensive with, the pursuit of global genius. In the final sections of UB III, Nietzsche proffers two arguments for why we ought to endeavour to cultivate elite genius beyond ourselves. The first argument is what I will call the *interdependency* argument, and requires little more than the realisation that we must each strive to become elite geniuses ourselves. According to this argument, Nietzsche suggests that it is in our own personal interest – insofar as we strive to become elite geniuses – to create a social environment that fosters the cultivation of this type of genius in others. This is because our personal struggle to attain elite genius requires the aid of other elite geniuses. Pulling ourselves out of the stream of our ordinary, animal state of egoistic striving and identifying higher goals is absolutely necessary for the cultivation of elite genius according to Nietzsche. But this is an arduous task and we can usually only achieve it temporarily. In order to emerge from this state, we ourselves must call on the aid of others: “wir müssen gehoben werden – und wer sind die, welche uns heben?” (UB III 5 1.380). The answer to Nietzsche’s question is: *our exemplars*, those who offer us a concrete vision of the elite genius that we seek to attain. As such, we are always in need of exemplars (i.e. educators), and it serves our own interests to cultivate them.

Furthermore, in creating an environment in which elite geniuses are able to achieve *their* highest potential, Nietzsche states that we simultaneously create an environment in which *we* can independently strive to attain *our* highest potential:

[Kultur] will, um die Nutzenanwendung auf den Schopenhauerischen Menschen zu machen, dass wir seine immer neue Erzeugung vorbereiten und fördern, indem wir das ihr Feindselige kennen lernen und aus dem Wege räumen — kurz dass wir gegen Alles unermüdlich ankämpfen, was uns um die höchste Erfüllung unserer Existenz brachte, indem es uns hinderte, solche Schopenhauerische Menschen selber zu werden. — (UB III 5 1.383)

In order to progress towards our *own* genius (whether global or elite), we must necessarily foster the social conditions that facilitate the creation of the elite genius (i.e. the Schopenhauerian man). This implies a fairly simple synchronicity of egoistic

and collective goals. This argument works as a motivation for prospective elite geniuses to further the ends of other (prospective) elite geniuses. But what about those individuals that know themselves to be wholly incapable of realising the heights of elite genius? Surely the social arrangement that is most suited to their needs is quite distinct from that which suits the generation of elite genius? Would these individuals not favour a society constructed to support the cultivation of global genius *up to the point that the majority can achieve it*? How can Nietzsche persuade such individuals, who are well aware that their interests do not perfectly align with those of the elite genius, to sacrifice their comforts for the attainment of this higher, cultural goal, which seems to be quite obviously at odds with their own interests?

This brings us to the second argument for the cultivation of elite genius “ausser uns”, which I will call the *natural purposes* argument. This is intended to motivate those falling outside of the group of individuals who consider themselves prospective elite geniuses. To convince this remaining majority, then, Nietzsche holds that the elite genius – be they the philosopher, artist or saint – *is the highest end of nature*, and thus it is only in collectively pursuing this end that less capable individuals can realise their highest calling. Otherwise put, it is only in contributing to the fruition of elite genius that the majority realise their own global genius. Nietzsche argues that the elite genius is the highest goal of nature on account of the fact that “die Natur überhaupt der Erkenntniss bedarf” (UB III 5 1.379) and it is only through the elite genius that this kind of knowledge of nature is attained. It is through the self-knowledge endowed by the artist, saint and philosopher, that nature achieves its own redemption (“Erlösung”); indeed, it is by these very means that “die gesammte Natur [hinderängt] sich zu ihrer Erlösung” (UB III 5 1.380).

As it stands, this argument will strike modern ears as at best esoteric, and at worst, simply uncogent; however, it rests upon an admixture of Hegel, Kant and Schopenhauer that, in Nietzsche’s day, would have seemed within the bounds of philosophical propriety. In Hegel we find the idea that the telos of *Geist* – i.e. the rationality or logos of the universe – is the attainment of self-understanding through

the reflection of rational beings.⁹⁴ Similarly, in KdU, Kant suggests that human culture (and the rational thought that it facilitates) represents the ultimate end (*Zweck*) of nature.⁹⁵ The notion of redemption from animal striving as the highest end of human existence is then unmistakably Schopenhauerian, emerging from his view of the world as fundamentally defined by painful yearning – that is, as the egoistic pursuit of the will to live. We, as willing agents, partake in the suffering of the world as will, yet Schopenhauer thinks we can also escape from this state of anguish (i.e. attain redemption) in a number of different ways. Thus, the artist grants us a disinterested view of the ideal forms of nature and thereby releases us (temporarily) from time and the painful cycle of willing; the philosopher, who gives us abstract knowledge that striving is futile, can similarly free us from this cycle of desire⁹⁶; and likewise, through religious insight, individuals can gain intuitive knowledge of this futility and adopt a saintly ethic of life-denial.⁹⁷

Obviously, one reason we might immediately object to this amalgam of Hegel and Schopenhauer is on account of the vehemence with which Schopenhauer rejects the idea that any natural purposes can be ascribed to the world “in itself” – i.e. as will, which is just a “blinder Drang”.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, at the level of representation he does think that nature exhibits teleological order; indeed, we have already seen this in his conception of the hierarchy of Platonic Ideas, at the summit of which stood

⁹⁴ For a succinct summary of this, see Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp.89ff. (esp. p.92).

⁹⁵ See KdU §83, p.431.

⁹⁶ See WWV I §54, p.374: “die Verneinung des Willens zum Leben, zeigt sich, wenn auf jene Erkenntniß das Wollen endet, indem sodann nicht mehr die erkannten einzelnen Erscheinungen als Motive des Wollens wirken, sondern die ganze, durch Auffassung der Ideen erwachsene Erkenntniß des Wesens der Welt, die den Willen spiegelt, zum Quietiv des Willens wird und so der Wille frei sich selbst aufhebt.”

⁹⁷ See WWV I §68, p.493: “Vielleicht ist also hier zum ersten Male, abstrakt und rein von allem Mythischen, das innere Wesen der Heiligkeit, Selbstverleugnung, Ertödtung des Eigenwillens, Askesis, ausgesprochen als Verneinung des Willens zum Leben, eintretend, nachdem ihm die vollendete Erkenntniß seines eigenen Wesens zum Quietiv alles Wollens geworden.”

⁹⁸ See WWV II §26.

man. Likewise, in his discussion of the purpose of the artist, we find Schopenhauer using distinctly teleological language to describe nature:

[D]ie wirklichen Objekte [sind] fast immer nur sehr mangelhafte Exemplare der in ihnen sich darstellenden Idee: daher der Genius der Phantasie bedarf, um in den Dingen nicht Das zu sehn, was die Natur wirklich gebildet hat, sondern was sie zu bilden sich bemühte, aber, wegen des im vorigen Buche erwähnten Kampfes ihrer Formen unter einander, nicht zu Stande brachte. (WWV I §36, p.254)⁹⁹

In an analogous fashion, Nietzsche does not believe that nature can achieve its end (of producing elite geniuses) unaided, despite its struggling toward this goal; thus, he holds it to be necessary “dass an Stelle jenes ‘dunklen Drangs’ endlich einmal ein bewusstes Wollen gesetzt werde” (UB III 6 1.387). This is what he calls the “metaphysische Bedeutung der Kultur” (UB III 6 1.401). Culture’s true *raison d’être* is to expedite nature’s otherwise ineffective efforts at realising genius. Nietzsche therefore commends those who

[...] fast überall [begegnen] der Natur in ihrer Noth [...], wie sie sich zum Menschen hindrängt, wie sie schmerzlich das Werk wieder missrathen fühlt, wie ihr dennoch überall die wundervollsten Ansätze, Züge und Formen gelingen: so dass die Menschen, mit denen wir leben, einem Trümmerfelde der kostbarsten bildnerischen Entwürfe gleichen, wo alles uns entgegenruft: kommt, hilft, vollendet, bringt zusammen, was zusammengehört, wir sehnen uns unermesslich, ganz zu werden. (UB III 6 1.386)¹⁰⁰

There is evidently a strong parallel between Schopenhauer’s Platonic Ideas, and Nietzsche’s conception of the elite genius. Just as Schopenhauer’s artistic genius

⁹⁹ For another instance of Schopenhauer speaking of the world as will as striving for a very particular end, see also WWV I §27, p.205: “[Dieser] Vorgang eben nur aus der Identität des erscheinenden Willens in allen Ideen und aus seinem Streben zu immer höherer Objektivation begreiflich ist.” Compare also Wagner (1850): “Das Volk also wird die Erlösung vollbringen, indem es sich genügt und zugleich seine eigenen Feinde erlöst. Sein Verfahren wird das Unwillkürliche der Natur sein: mit der Nothwendigkeit elementarischen Waltens wird es den Zusammenhang zerreißen, der einzig die Bedingungen der Herrschaft der Unnatur ausmacht” (p.21).

¹⁰⁰ For the reappearance of this idea in the later writings, see NL 10[111] 12.519-20.

reveals the ideal Platonic forms that nature itself is unable to manifest, Nietzsche views the role of culture as that of facilitating the realisation of ideal human types (i.e. elite geniuses), towards which nature itself can only haphazardly strain.

The natural purposes argument can therefore be phrased as follows: given that nature's highest goal is the production of elite genius, it is *our* goal to assist nature in achieving this, *even if we are without hope of becoming elite geniuses ourselves*. Although Nietzsche maintains that this requires the sacrifice of our egoistic goals for the sake of the elite genius – “ein *Einzelner* dies Opfer forderte” (UB III 6 1.384; my italics) – on the whole, he contends that we stand to gain by acceding to this metaphysical duty. He assures us that knowing ourselves to be facilitating this goal, even if we cannot ourselves achieve it, will endow our lives with a deep and invaluable significance:

Nicht Wenige, auch aus der Reihe der zweiten und dritten Begabungen, sind zu diesem Mithelfen bestimmt und kommen nur in der Unterwerfung unter eine solche Bestimmung zu dem Gefühl, einer Pflicht zu leben und mit Ziel und Bedeutung zu leben. Jetzt aber werden gerade diese Begabungen von den verführerischen Stimmen jener modischen “Kultur” aus ihrer Bahn abgelenkt und ihrem Instinkte entfremdet; an ihre eigensüchtigen Regungen, an ihre Schwächen und Eitelkeiten richtet sich diese Versuchung [...]. (UB III 6 1.403)

Though “[e]s [...] eine Ungereimtheit [scheint], dass der Mensch eines andern Menschen wegen da sein sollte” (ibid.), Nietzsche maintains that it is only by serving elite genius that we realise nature's highest purposes and, thereby, our own highest capacities. In striving to fulfil this external purpose in ever more effective ways, then, we concurrently work towards maximising our inner, global genius.

Pace Rawls, therefore, Nietzsche does not view serving elite genius as a sacrifice or injustice for those incapable of attaining it themselves; namely, because it is by these very means that less gifted individuals maximise what we might call their self-contentedness. He further implies that ordinary people may develop a sense of kinship, “einer innerlichen Verwandtschaft und Verwachsenheit”, with the elite genius. “Denn es gibt Menschen,” says Nietzsche, “welche es als ihre Noth

empfinden, wenn sie diesen [den Genius] mühselig ringen und in Gefahr, sich selbst zu zerstören, sehen” (UB III 6 1.403). Ordinary people may therefore stave off distress, and even secure happiness and a sense of existential purpose, through the realisation of elite genius. On the other hand, Cavell’s reading is arguably more fallacious than that of Rawls since the only way Nietzsche thinks that most people strive to attain their highest self is in their subjection to the goal of propagating elite genius.¹⁰¹ To be sure, *neither* the reading of Rawls *nor* that of Cavell is adequate – the entire either/or approach is misguided. The error in both cases hinges on their assumption that in setting the generation of genius as the task of society, Nietzsche is working with one or the other of the aforementioned definitions of genius, whereas Nietzsche draws on *both* conceptions and understands their pursuit to be not just compatible, but mutually complimentary.

In formulating these common goals, Nietzsche proves himself to be fulfilling what he maintains is the ideal function of the philosopher; namely, “ein Bündniss der bindenden Kraft sein, als Arzt der Kultur” (NL 30[8] 7.734).¹⁰² The identification of a common purpose acts as the foundation for establishing social organisation, and presents people with an alternative to their quotidian life of divisive, egoistic struggle, in which “der persönliche Sieg ist das Ziel” (UB III 6 1.395). As has been demonstrated, it is the attainment of *elite* genius that constitutes the ultimate goal of humanity and which is intended to have the strongest socially

¹⁰¹ Though Cavell (1990) remarks that Nietzsche leaves himself “unguarded” with respect to elitist or aristocratic readings, he fails to satisfactorily account for these passages (though he does do so with respect to similar passages in Emerson) (see pp.53-4). To further buttress my refutation of Cavell, we might also turn to the early *Nachlass*, where Nietzsche very unambiguously states that “[d]as Glück des Einzelnen im Staate wird untergeordnet dem Gesamtwohl: was heisst das? Nicht dass die Minoritäten benutzt werden zum Wohle der Majoritäten. Sondern dass die Einzelnen dem Wohle der höchsten Einzelnen untergeordnet werden, dem Wohle der höchsten Exemplare. Die höchsten Einzelnen sind die schöpferischen Menschen, sei es die besten moralischen oder sonst im grossen Sinne nützlichen, also die reinsten Typen und Verbesserer der Menschheit. Nicht die Existenz eines Staates um jeden Preis, sondern dass die höchsten Exemplare in ihm leben können und schaffen können, ist das Ziel des Gemeinwesens” (NL 30[8] 7.733).

¹⁰² As he says in an adjacent note, the state “muss alle binden durch ein gemeinsames Ziel”, and it is the task of the philosopher to provide this *Ziel* (NL 30[7] 7.732).

binding effect. Whether we are capable of achieving elite genius or not, Nietzsche provides us with a prudential reason for joining the concerted struggle to help generate such genius.

At this point, we can see that the struggle for culture that Nietzsche is advocating embodies three of the criteria of the assimilative conflict we found in Schopenhauer. First, this conflict aims at the establishment of a functional hierarchy in which one group of individuals (“aus der Reihe der zweiten und dritten Begabungen”) labour to serve the superordinate ends of another group (i.e. that of elite geniuses and *prospective* elite geniuses). Indeed, insofar as this is the case, this cannot be said to be an agonistic relation, which as we saw, presupposes non-instrumentalisation and approximate equality.¹⁰³ (This said, we should note that Nietzsche is often ambivalent regarding the status of elite geniuses as ends in themselves insofar as he often describes them as a means either to furthering humanity in a general sense, or giving purpose to the ancillary individuals serving them.¹⁰⁴) Second, since Nietzsche conceives of this end as being promoted by the “Artzt der Kultur”, we can soundly infer that he associates it with health. Third, we have also discerned that this struggle for social organisation is metaphysically grounded: first, both the interdependency and natural purposes arguments are dependent on the same form of metaphysical self-knowledge that was outlined in the previous subsection (it is only this that opens up a new circle of social *Pflichte*). But moreover, we have also seen that the natural purposes argument is premised on a teleological picture of nature. But what about the perpetuation of conflict within the resultant hierarchies? And the necessity of unmeasured conflict? If we take a broader look at the kind of social struggle to which Nietzsche is exhorting us in UB III, it will become evident that this has more in common with Schopenhauer’s model of assimilative conflict than has hitherto been demonstrated.

¹⁰³ Vanessa Lemm (2007) has, *pace* Cavell, also observed the lack of equality between educator and pupil – i.e. between the individual and the exemplar – in UB III (see p.21).

¹⁰⁴ See NL 30[8] 7.733, where Nietzsche describes the elite genius as the “Verbesserer der Menschheit”.

Up until now, Nietzsche's suggestions have remained on a highly abstract plane. Accordingly, it is difficult to ascertain what he is concretely urging us to do. And indeed, more generally, what is bound to leave any reader of UB III nonplussed having surveyed the Rawls-Cavell debate is the absence of any coherent, positive political blueprint in the text. He refrains from associating his cultural vision with either an elitist, aristocratic society (as he did in CV 3) or some mode of democratic organisation. So what kind of social praxis is Nietzsche proposing?

Certainly, he does make a number of positive proposals. First, he quite minimally calls for the creation of a space for cultivating elite genius, one that is shielded from demands extraneous to this goal. The prospective elite genius should neither have to serve the ends of others – be these the fiscal needs of the wealthy, or the needs of the state in its struggle with other nation-states – nor have to be concerned with having to provide for himself (“kein Zwang zum Brod-Erwerben” [UB III 8 1.411]). Regarding the former, Nietzsche is critical of the social condition in which everyone “[kämpft] in Reih’ und Glied” for the utilitarian ends of the state, and where cultural institutions are merely conscripted to serve these ends.¹⁰⁵ In opposition to this conception of the purpose of cultural institutions, however, Nietzsche speaks of a “kleinere Schaar” (UB III 6 1.402) who view such institutions as serving a quite different purpose:

[S]ie selber will, an der Schutzwehr einer festen Organisation, verhüten, dass sie durch jenen Schwarm weggeschwemmt und auseinander getrieben werde, dass ihre Einzelnen in allzufrüher Erschöpfung hinschwinden oder gar von ihrer grossen Aufgabe abspänstig gemacht werden. (Ibid.)

Nietzsche views the ordered crowd and the republic of geniuses as perfectly compatible, but only where culture acts as a harbour sheltering the free activity of genius from the utilitarian demands of the crowd. Nietzsche's vision is one in which

¹⁰⁵ Nietzsche warns of the damaging effects of subordinating culture to “die Selbstsucht der Erwerbenden” or “die Selbstsucht des Staates” (UB III 6 1.388).

culture is *embedded within*, though nonetheless insulated from, the *Gemeinschaft* and its vulgar demands.¹⁰⁶

With respect to philosophical genius, one way Nietzsche envisions this being concretely achieved is through the complete purging of philosophy from the university system, where Nietzsche thinks it has been both subordinated to the needs of the state and rendered ridiculous.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, Nietzsche calls it a “Forderung der Kultur”

[D]er Philosophie jede staatliche und akademische Anerkennung zu entziehn und überhaupt Staat und Akademie der für sie unlösbaren Aufgaben zu entheben, zwischen wahrer und scheinbarer Philosophie zu unterscheiden. Lasst die Philosophen immerhin wild wachsen [...] — ihr sollt Wunderdinge erleben! (UB III 8 1.422)¹⁰⁸

The programme outlined in this text is one of ring-fencing a space for philosophical practice to proceed undisturbed by society’s utilitarian demands. In his desire to purify philosophy, we further uncover the quite unmeasured aspiration to negate academic philosophy. Indeed, the “Kampf für die Kultur und die Feindseligkeit gegen Einflüsse, Gewohnheiten, Gesetze, Einrichtungen, in welchen er nicht sein Ziel wiedererkennt: die Erzeugung des Genius” is often characterised by the impetus towards an unmeasured negation of cultural traditions and institutions.¹⁰⁹ Wagner is accordingly celebrated for having entered into the “*feindseligsten* Widerspruch mit

¹⁰⁶ Indeed, Nietzsche refers to this as the “Refugium der Kultur” (NL 30[7] 7.733).

¹⁰⁷ UB III 6 1.421: “Aber zugegeben dass diese Schaar von schlechten Philosophen lächerlich ist — und wer wird es nicht zugeben? — in wiefern sind sie denn auch schädlich? Kurz geantwortet: dadurch dass sie die Philosophie zu einer lächerlichen Sache machen. [...]”

¹⁰⁸ See also UB III 8 1.411: “Damit sind einige Bedingungen genannt, unter denen der philosophische Genius in unserer Zeit trotz der schädlichen Gegenwirkungen wenigstens entstehen kann: freie Männlichkeit des Charakters, frühzeitige Menschenkenntniss, keine gelehrte Erziehung, keine patriotische Einklemmung, kein Zwang zum Brod-Erwerben, keine Beziehung zum Staate — kurz Freiheit und immer wieder Freiheit: dasselbe wunderbare und gefährliche Element, in welchem die griechischen Philosophen aufwachsen durften.”

¹⁰⁹ See also BA Vorrede, where Nietzsche states that “Vielleicht liegt zwischen ihr und der Gegenwart die Vernichtung des Gymnasiums, vielleicht selbst die Vernichtung der Universität oder mindestens eine so totale Umgestaltung der eben genannten Bildungsanstalten” (1.648).

den bestehenden Formen und Ordnungen” (UB III 6 1.351; my italics). This struggle is *superlatively hostile* towards those forms and cultural orders that frustrate the generation of genius. On account of this endorsement of immoderate hostility, it is therefore misrepresentative to refer to Nietzsche’s proposed “Kampf für die Kultur” as an agon of individuals against society.¹¹⁰ As has been illuminated, Nietzsche undertakes a radical critique of academic philosophy, one that he hopes will be practically implemented in such a way as to bring about the abolishment of philosophy departments in universities *tout court*. This must then be followed, he instructs us, by a perpetual process of “Läuterung”, whereby any encroachment of political and economic demands into the cultural refuge of the genius is promptly thwarted. Even once the necessary hierarchy has been erected, then, the struggle is not over, indeed, it is *never* over. Nietzsche’s “Kampf für die Kultur” is a *constant* process of struggling against social structures that are inimical to the development of elite genius. Contrary to Rawls and Cavell, both aristocracy and democracy are therefore compatible with this vision so long as they serve the maintenance of the cultural sanctuary in which prospective elite geniuses can freely experiment and cultivate themselves.

We can therefore conclude that Nietzsche’s struggle for the ideal social organisation (i.e. that which is maximally able to generate genius) in UB is, in its essentials, analogous to Schopenhauer’s vision of the struggle for *zweckmäßig* organisation:

1. It is a struggle aimed at functional hierarchy;
2. This hierarchy is associated with health;
3. It is inextricable from unmeasured conflict;

¹¹⁰ Vanessa Lemm (2007) has argued that, in opposition to the overly individualistic political philosophies of Rawls and Cavell, Nietzsche’s vision of freedom is inherently public; indeed, she conceives of this freedom as constituted by means of “a public struggle (*agon*) between the individual and society” (p.14).

4. The struggle persists within the resultant hierarchies (namely, as a struggle to maintain this hierarchy through perpetual “Läuterung”);
5. It is driven, or at least conditioned, by *two* metaphysically substantial entities (i.e. the self *qua* unchanging *Kern*, and nature *qua* quasi-Schopenhauerian teleological will).

The kind of conflictual praxis he suggests we engage in if we wish to solve these problems, however, is paradigmatically both unagonistic and non-violent. Indeed, we now have a comprehensive overview of how Nietzsche proposed to solve the three problems of disintegration analysed in Section 1. With respect to the disorganisation of the self (a), Nietzsche proposes an unagonistic struggle to *subordinate* and *instrumentalise* the knowledge, values, traditions and habits that we have acquired from other cultures through learning, thereby forming them into an integrated whole that facilitates agency. He proposes that we do this by testing each such culturally acquired phenomenon to determine whether or not it serves our true life-needs. By imposing order on these dissonant social and psychological phenomena, and forcing them into a harmony able to serve the life-needs of the individual and culture, they become *practically applicable*, and thus the paralysis of our agency is overcome, convention is subverted, and the diremption of our inner (intellectual) life and our outer (practical) life is overcome (b). Though in UB I and II he has already set the essential need as that of generating a truly productive culture – that is, one able to bring elite genius into existence – in UB III, he comprehensively expands upon this and further attempts to justify this higher goal, explicitly invoking it as a means to persuading individuals to abandon egoism and cooperatively apply themselves to the project of generating elite genius (c).

While this integrative struggle can be considered measured insofar as it aims to preserve that which is overcome, Nietzsche also persistently emphasises the need for *unmeasured* struggle, which is to say the ferociously hostile assault on habits, opinions, traditions and institutions that are deemed incompatible with the unification of culture around the task of producing elite genius. Indeed, in EH,

Nietzsche describes the *Betrachtungen* as “durchaus Kriegerisch”, and as a series of “Attentaten”, and even as a “duel”.¹¹¹ This unrestrained hostility is not at any point aimed at individuals, however, in the sense of a violent physical *Vernichtungskampf*, but at *geistige* phenomena and social institutions. It is therefore best conceived as an aggressive variety of social reform and radical critique.

If Nietzsche genuinely deems both instrumentalisation and destructive critique to be indispensable aspects of the “Kampf für die Kultur”, labelling this struggle agonistic is not only misleading but potentially detrimental with respect to the project of cultural *Erneuerung*. This is because it risks softening the task that he believes is demanded of us – one of radical critique and social reorganisation, in which certain institutions, cultural traditions and beliefs are either forcefully subordinated to higher purposes or eradicated altogether. In place of agonistic interpretations of his socially unificatory project, I have suggested that we therefore think of the form of conflict Nietzsche is paradigmatically encouraging throughout UB as *organisational* conflict. That is, a mode of struggle aimed at establishing and maintaining functional hierarchies – one that comprises of both measured and unmeasured conflict: measured insofar as it preserves that which is subordinated within a new unity, and unmeasured insofar as it involves the destruction of outdated modes of organisation and the *doxa* that shore up such moribund conventions.

On these grounds, I have proposed that we view Nietzsche’s recommended remedies through the lens of Schopenhauer’s philosophy – in particular the latter’s notion of universal conflict as a struggle for *assimilation*. Needless to say, there are many points of divergence between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The most striking perhaps, is that for Nietzsche, the struggle for organisation is not determined in the same way as for Schopenhauer. For Nietzsche, our attaining higher degrees of organisation, either as individuals or as a society, is *contingent*, and depends upon our concerted *conscious* effort; in contrast, for Schopenhauer, such organisation is

¹¹¹ See EH UB 1 6.316-9. “Mein Paradies ist ‘unter dem Schatten meines Schwertes’... Im Grunde hatte ich eine Maxime Stendhals practicirt: er rãth an, seinen Eintritt in die Gesellschaft mit einem Duell zu machen” (6.319).

in a sense an automatic process guaranteed by the metaphysical structure of reality. In addition to this though, the unmeasured conflict that conditions Nietzsche's model of organisational struggle is more *excretory* in kind, as compared with that which informs Schopenhauer's model, which is more digestive in kind. Nietzsche figures this as a process of jettisoning that which has become redundant or harmful, even if this does sometimes take the form of outright eradication; conversely, for Schopenhauer, it is depicted as a process of breaking down existing unities in order to exploit their constituent parts. This can be interpreted as an attempt on Nietzsche's part to give Schopenhauer's apathetic account of organisation a socially galvanising dimension.

I have now brought to light the two irrefutably metaphysical foundations of Nietzsche's unificatory project. The more important of these is undoubtedly the unchanging, essentialist conception of character that he deploys in UB – indeed, knowledge of this aspect of the self is imperative to Nietzsche's early organisational project. Second, we have also witnessed Nietzsche relying on a teleological vision of nature as striving (and largely failing) to spawn geniuses, an idea that is couched in a melange of Schopenhauerian, Hegelian, Wagnerian and Kantian *Weltanschauungen*. Yet, as I have already partly outlined in Chapter 1, even in the late 1860s, Nietzsche was becoming disaffected with metaphysics, and in MA this descended into an outright rejection. Indeed, we should briefly survey precisely why the particular metaphysical foundations he deploys in UB become untenable for him as he develops his critique of metaphysics. This will bring into sharp relief why he is consequently forced to formulate a quite novel approach to the problem of disunity in his later writings.

3.4. NIETZSCHE *CONTRA* METAPHYSICS

There are of course many aspects of UB that Nietzsche had come to reject by MA (and indeed, in his unpublished writings, even before MA), though his rejection of the elite genius as an exemplar at the pinnacle of society is perhaps most vociferous.¹¹² Yet as we will see in the final chapter, Nietzsche arguably reprises this ideal in the later works in his conception of the higher individual. In this section, however, I will examine Nietzsche's rejection of metaphysics, which is far more enduring than his rejection of genius. In particular, I will contend that he launches a veritable "Krieg ohne Pulver" against the metaphysical premises of UB's synthetic project. Indeed, already in 1868, in his planned dissertation entitled "Begriff des Organischen seit Kant", Nietzsche had begun to directly attack the idea that the apparent *Zweckmäßigkeit* of organisms and nature had any metaphysical basis. Moreover, in the very same year, as I demonstrated in Chapter 1, he embarked upon a searching critique of Schopenhauerian metaphysics. Then again in 1872, in WL, he rejects the idea that ideal "forms" (such as Plato's Ideas) have any reality beyond the confines of the human intellect. We might accordingly view UB as Nietzsche's last effort to salvage some form of quasi-Schopenhauerian metaphysics. But from MA onwards, the various criticisms of metaphysics that he had been incubating in repressed form within the *Nachlass* are given full vent. We should now examine how this aspect of his philosophical development bears upon his synthesising project.

¹¹² See e.g. VM 99 and 173. See also MA 164. This notion is also clearly rejected in CV 5.

3.4.1. NIETZSCHE'S GENERAL REPUDIATION OF METAPHYSICS

The essentials of Nietzsche's philosophical apostasy from Schopenhauer have already been delineated in Chapter 1, where we saw that, in "Zu Schopenhauer" and MA, Nietzsche criticises the idea that one could ascribe any properties to the world in itself: to describe the world in itself as an eternal, unified and free (i.e. undetermined) "Wille" is to transgress the Kantian critical ban. His criticism is that unity is a category of *human* experience, and so cannot be soundly predicated to the world in itself, which is supposed to signify the world beyond all human experience:

[S]ie [Einheit, Ewigkeit und Freiheit] alle sind sammt und sonders unzertrennlich mit unsrer Organisation verknüpft, so daß es völlig zweifelhaft ist, ob sie außerhalb der menschlichen Erkenntnißsphaere überhaupt eine Bedeutung haben. (KGW I/4, pp.424-5)

Even though Schopenhauer is at pains to point out that the unity of the will is incomparable to worldly unities insofar as it is beyond all plurality, Nietzsche's argument is that beyond the world of appearance, the concept of unity has no sense and is moreover misleadingly anthropomorphic. His argument is that Schopenhauer simply makes too many inductively inferred, positive claims about the world in itself, which Nietzsche maintains is just "ein durchaus dunkles unfafßbares X" (ibid., p.423). In MA 16, Nietzsche then asserts that "in der Erscheinung eben durchaus nicht das Ding an sich erscheine, und von jener auf dieses jeder Schluss abzulehnen sei." This is a position that Nietzsche later radicalises – urging us to completely abandon the idealist notion of an unconditioned, "wahre" world lying behind the merely "scheinbare" world in which we live – namely, on account of its being completely inaccessible and so devoid of use ("zu Nichts mehr nützlich" [GD Fabel 6.81]¹¹³) or on account of its being self-contradictory ("Dass [...] 'unmittelbare

¹¹³ See e.g. GD Fabel 6.81: "Die wahre Welt haben wir abgeschafft: welche Welt blieb übrig? die scheinbare vielleicht?... Aber nein! mit der wahren Welt haben wir auch die scheinbare

Gewissheit', ebenso wie 'absolute Erkenntniss' und 'Ding an sich', eine *contradictio in adjecto* in sich schliesst, werde ich hundertmal wiederholen" [JGB 16]). This immediately rules out the possibility of religion, myth or art granting us a suprahistorical refuge by putting us in touch with the metaphysical truth of reality, since, not only is it a logical impossibility, but even if it were possible, it could not be known by *any* means.¹¹⁴ But let us now inquire how, in his renunciation of metaphysical speculation, he specifically rejects the essentialist conceptions of the self and nature that were found to be fundamental to his synthetic project in UB.

3.4.2. REFUTING THE EXISTENCE OF THE ESSENTIAL SELF

Nietzsche pejoratively labels Platonic Ideas a "Volksbewußtsein" (NL 7[97] 7.160), and already in WL, composed in the same year as UB I (1873), he contests the belief that natural kinds have any existence beyond the specifically human world. Closer inspection of nature, he argues, reveals it to be a conglomeration of irreducibly

abgeschafft!" As he also says in FW 354, "wir 'erkennen' bei weitem nicht genug, um auch nur so scheiden [zwischen das 'Ding an sich' und die Erscheinung] zu dürfen."

¹¹⁴ Nietzsche emphatically exclaims in MA 110 that "noch nie hat eine Religion, weder mittelbar, noch unmittelbar, weder als Dogma, noch als Gleichniss, eine Wahrheit enthalten. Denn aus der Angst und dem Bedürfniss ist eine jede geboren, auf Irrgängen der Vernunft hat sie sich in's Dasein geschlichen" (MA 110; see also MA 10). Religion may once have fulfilled the human need for consolation, and even contributed to social organisation (MA 472), but Nietzsche tells us that these needs can be eradicated: "diese selbst kann man schwächen und ausrotten" (MA 27); he thus advises that we destroy this need rather than continue to be burdened by the regressive metaphysical and moral errors of religion. He also abandons the idea of art as facilitating organisation by granting individuals a consoling insight into the fixed truth of reality. Clearly attacking both Schopenhauer and Wagner, Nietzsche states in MA 146 that "[d]er Künstler hat in Hinsicht auf das Erkennen der Wahrheiten eine schwächere Moralität, als der Denker: er will sich die glänzenden, tief sinnigen Deutungen des Lebens durchaus nicht nehmen lassen und wehrt sich gegen nüchterne, schlichte Methoden und Resultate". In this aphorism, Nietzsche criticises the artist precisely on account of his preference for "das [...] Mythische" (in lieu of more effective means of discerning "Wahrheiten") indicating just how far he has moved away from his earlier position where together, art and myth offered the only point of access for most people to the *unhistorische* timeless truths of reality. See also MA 145 and 150.

unique cases. Humans then abstract from the differences between roughly comparable cases to create “natural” kinds. Eliding the differences between the members of these approximate man-made groups

[...] erweckt nun die Vorstellung, als ob es in der Natur ausser den Blättern etwas gäbe, das “Blatt” wäre, etwa eine Urform [...]. Das Uebersehen des Individuellen und Wirklichen giebt uns den Begriff, wie es uns auch die Form giebt, wohingegen die Natur keine Formen und Begriffe, also auch keine Gattungen kennt, sondern nur ein für uns unzugängliches und undefinirbares X. Denn auch unser Gegensatz von Individuum und Gattung ist anthropomorphisch und entstammt nicht dem Wesen der Dinge [...]. (WL 1.880)¹¹⁵

For Nietzsche, in contrast to Schopenhauer, there is *only unitas post rem*. The belief that there exist “Urformen” in nature is a fallacious inductive inference. Individual objects are not copies (“Abbilde”) but unique instances, even if they do often exhibit points of resemblance with other objects.

Still later, Nietzsche censures Schopenhauer’s conception of “Ideas” for being just as “dunkel, ungewiss [und] ahnungsvoll” as that of Hegel or Schelling (WA 6.36).¹¹⁶ But later in FW 372, “Warum wir keine Idealisten sind”, Nietzsche rejects the “[kalte] Reiche der ‘Ideen’”, less because of its epistemological status, so much as by reason of the harm it does to our senses, insofar as all idealism devalues the senses. His rejection is no longer premised on the falsity of Ideas (i.e. their lack of correspondence to a “real” world) *per se*, but more on the fact that they are *more* misleading than the senses: “die Ideen schlimmere Verführerinnen seien als die

¹¹⁵ See also MA 14, where Nietzsche states that “[...] so oft, verbürgt die Einheit des Wortes Nichts für die Einheit der Sache.”

¹¹⁶ See also NL 41[59] 7.592, where Nietzsche critiques the Platonic notion of Ideas: “Ein Ding, dem ein Begriff genau entspricht, wäre ohne Herkunft. Plato’s Irrthum von den ewigen Ideen.” Another relevant note in this context is NL 3[124] 9.87, in which Nietzsche not only criticises Plato’s theory of the forms (“Plato mußte es noch erleben, daß die Lehre von den Ideen von einem helleren und umfänglicheren Geiste, als er war, widerlegt wurde”), but also refers to Schopenhauer’s philosophy as fantastical: “Einem so ingrimmigen und herrschsüchtigen Menschen, wie Schopenhauer war, kann man Glück wünschen, daß er es nicht errathen hat, wie kurz der Triumph seiner Philosophie sein solle und wie bald alle Prachtstücke seiner Erfindung als Trugbilder erkannt würden.”

Sinne". As we read on, we see that Ideas do not tempt us away from objective reality, for Nietzsche, but rather life – they promote a “beständige Blässer-werden —, die immer idealischer ausgelegte Entsinnlichung”. Nietzsche maintains that Plato developed his realm of the forms as a means of controlling his overly powerful senses (“übermächtigen Sinnen”, which Nietzsche associates with *health*). In the case of us moderns, however, Nietzsche implies that our senses are starved (“[v]ielleicht sind wir Modernen nur nicht gesund genug, um Plato’s Idealismus nöthig zu haben”). Whereas they were a salubrious remedy for Plato’s healthy superabundance, for us, they merely exacerbate our state of impoverishment.

Given these criticisms, it should be plain that Nietzsche could not sustain the idea that it was by means of discovering his “platonische Idee” – the metaphysical *Kern* of his self – that Schopenhauer was able to synthesise himself (UB III 5 1.376). Nor could he coherently maintain the subtextual belief that the elite genius is an embodiment of the ideal form of the human, which nature is always clumsily failing to realise. Nonetheless, though these criticisms of idealism entail the rejection of Schopenhauer’s Platonism, they only indirectly critique the idea of the core self upon which Nietzsche relies in UB, and on which he in fact launches a more explicit attack. In MA, for example, he unequivocally rejects the Schopenhauerian idea of “unveränderliche[r] Charakter” as a false inference from the relative stability of an individual’s character across a single lifetime (MA 41), and he further discourages each of us from treating ourselves “als starres, beständiges, Eines Individuum” (MA 618).¹¹⁷

Likewise, Nietzsche comes to view humans as subjecting the irreducibly unique experiences that they have of their own will to the same process of simplification and elision that produced the illusion of the forms.¹¹⁸ Indeed, he refutes Schopenhauer’s notion of empirical character. For Nietzsche, closer scrutiny

¹¹⁷ On the fluidity of character in Nietzsche, see also Alexander Nehamas, *Life as Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p.159.

¹¹⁸ See VM 5, where Nietzsche speaks of “das Wort ‘Wille’, welches Schopenhauer zur gemeinsamen Bezeichnung vieler menschlicher Zustände umbildete [...]” See also MA 14, 18, and M 115.

always reveals acts of willing to be comprised of a *complex* constellation of physiological processes and affects, which we then misconstrue as a simple unity (see e.g. FW 127). Likewise, later in JGB 19, he rebuts Schopenhauer's conception of the will as a simple phenomenon, arguing instead that all willing is the result of the combined activity of multitudinous affects (hence, "Wollen scheint [ihm] vor Allem etwas Complicirtes").

In M, as part of his attack on the notion of moral responsibility, Nietzsche also completely rejects the idea of a subject to which moral deserts could be attributed (see e.g. M 115). Rather, what we call the "Subjekt", "Selbst", "Ego", or "Ich" is just a multiplicity of interrelated drives. In M, at any rate, a drive designates an appetite or behavioural inclination. In this period alone, he names a panoply of drives – for example, a drive "nach Ruhe" (M 109), "nach Auszeichnung" (M 113), "der Anhänglichkeit und Fürsorge für Andere" (M 143), "zur Erkenntniß" (M 429); but there is then also the "Geschlechtstrieb" (see e.g. NL 11[16] 9.447), an "Eigenthumstrieb", a "Nahrungstrieb" (NL 11[47] 9.459), and a "Rachetrieb" (FW 49). It is a combination of just such drives "die [constituiren] sein Wesen" (M 119). We will return to Nietzsche's conception of drives later; for now, suffice it to say that, on Nietzsche account, the self is nothing more than a constellation of such drives – a position that he maintains throughout the later period, referring to the soul ("Seele") in JGB 12 as a "Gesellschaftsbau der Triebe und Affekte".¹¹⁹ Though Nietzsche's deflationary attacks on the notion of a unified, atomistic self are often simply asserted, his argument for the composite nature of both the will and the self is based on what he calls "[v]orsichtiger" self-observation (recalling Hume).¹²⁰ Thus,

¹¹⁹ See also JGB 6, 9, 19. For an excellent analysis of the texts concerning Nietzsche's fictionalism *vis-à-vis* the self, see Sebastian Gardner, "Nietzsche, the Self, and the Disunity of Philosophical Reason", in K. Gemes and S. May (eds.), *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.1-32 (pp.2-5).

¹²⁰ In this sense, Nietzsche's critique of subjectivity bears many parallels with that of Hume. See NL 10[19] 12.465: "'Subjekt' ist die Fiktion, als ob viele gleiche Zustände an uns die Wirkung Eines Substrats wären: aber wir haben erst die 'Gleichheit' dieser Zustände geschaffen; das Gleichsetzen und Zurechtmachen derselben ist der Thatbestand, nicht die Gleichheit (— diese ist vielmehr zu leugnen —)". See also NL 6[70] 9.213: "[W]ie die Triebe im Kampfe sind, ist das Gefühl des Ich immer am stärksten dort, wo gerade das Übergewicht

in JGB 17, Nietzsche takes issue with the Cartesian “proof” of the self *qua res cogitans*, contending that we are only aware of the process (“Vorgang”) or activity (“Thätigkeit”) of thinking and that the existence of a self or “Ich” *doing* this thinking is a most dubious inductive inference – thus, he labels the “Ich” “eine Annahme, eine Behauptung” and “eine Fälschung des Thatbestandes” (JGB 17).¹²¹ This negates the possibility of our being able to look back over our past joys in order to access “das Grundgesetz [unseres] eigentlichen Selbst”, which is fundamental to the synthetic project outlined in UB III.

There is no self over and above our impulses and appetites that we could call our “eigentliches Selbst”. Most importantly, when we think we are combatting the vehemence of a drive, it is *never* from the position of an “authentic” self that we do so:

Während “wir” uns also über die Heftigkeit eines Triebes zu beklagen meinen, ist es im Grunde ein Trieb, welcher über einen anderen klagt; das heisst: die Wahrnehmung des Leidens an einer solchen Heftigkeit setzt voraus, dass es einen ebenso heftigen oder noch heftigeren anderen Trieb giebt, und dass ein Kampf bevorsteht, in welchem unser Intellect Partei nehmen muss. (M 119)

This means that there is no way one could possibly organise oneself from the standpoint of some impulse that could be considered authentic to one’s self –

ist”. Compare David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (London: John Noon, 1739), T 1.4.6.15: “The identity, which we ascribe to the mind of man, is only a fictitious one, and of a like kind with that which we ascribe to vegetables and animal bodies. It cannot, therefore, have a different origin, but must proceed from a like operation of the imagination upon like objects.” Though Hume, unlike Nietzsche, believes in atomistic perceptions as the basis of experience.

¹²¹ JGB 17: “Es denkt: aber dass dies ‘es’ gerade jenes alte berühmte ‘Ich’ sei, ist, milde geredet, nur eine Annahme, eine Behauptung, vor Allem keine ‘unmittelbare Gewissheit’. Zuletzt ist schon mit diesem ‘es denkt’ zu viel gethan: schon dies ‘es’ enthält eine Auslegung des Vorgangs und gehört nicht zum Vorgange selbst. Man schliesst hier nach der grammatischen Gewohnheit ‘Denken ist eine Thätigkeit, zu jeder Thätigkeit gehört Einer, der thätig ist, folglich —.’” See also NL 7[60]12.315, where Nietzsche states that the idea of the substantial self “ist nichts

Gegebenes, sondern etwas Hinzu-Erdichtetes, Dahinter-Gestecktes.” As Gardner (2009) argues (quite convincingly), Nietzsche does not seriously consider Kant’s rejoinder to Hume in the first *Kritik*.

namely, because there is no self over and above the drives. Nietzsche thus debunks his earlier conviction that our struggle to order the various influences on our agency should be founded upon the disclosure of our “*eigentliches Selbst*”.

Why have we constructed the fiction of a unified self? Why does Nietzsche think “I” have fictionalised myself so that “I” believe myself to be a unified entity? In short, he believes some notion of the self to be necessary for survival. Nietzsche refers to this simplification of the self as both “*nützlich*” and as a “*Lebensbedingung*” insofar as it enables our survival by rendering the chaotic multiplicity of (interior) reality manageable.¹²² However, Nietzsche thinks this self has been hypostatised from a useful fiction into a metaphysical entity, which in turn has become “*die Grundvoraussetzung*” of life-denying religious doctrine (especially, “*der christlichen Lehre*”) (JGB 54) – particularly insofar as it posits a stable self that can be held morally accountable for its actions. In Chapter 4, we will expound why Nietzsche disparages such doctrines, and accordingly, it will become clearer why he would negatively value any “*Grundvoraussetzung[en]*” thereof.

Alongside this, he radicalises his scepticism regarding the kind of self-knowledge that is presupposed by UB III, where although he doubted whether we could find our authentic self, he nonetheless asserted that we could discern an ideal direction in which the self wills and develops (its “*innere Gesetzlichkeit*”). Thus, in M 115, “Das sogenannte ‘Ich’”, Nietzsche argues that the self of which one is conscious is only the self in its extreme states – the finer nuances always escape observation. Thus, “[w]ir sind Alle nicht Das, als was wir nach den Zuständen

¹²² See e.g. NL 40[21] 11.639: “Das direkte Befragen des Subjekts über das Subjekt, und alle Selbst-Bespiegelung des Geistes hat darin seine Gefahren, daß es für seine Thätigkeit nützlich und wichtig sein könnte, sich falsch zu interpretiren.” See also NL 38[3] 11.597, where Nietzsche describes the self as an “*unentbehrlich[e]*” fiction. See also NL 9[144] 12.148, where he suggests that such processes of simplification are a precondition of human existence: “Man soll diese Nöthigung, Begriffe, Gattungen, Formen, Zwecke, Gesetze — ‘eine Welt der identischen Fälle’ — zu bilden, nicht so verstehn, als ob wir damit die wahre Welt zu fixiren im Stande wären; sondern als Nöthigung, uns eine Welt zurechtzumachen, bei der unsre Existenz ermöglicht wird — wir schaffen damit eine Welt, die berechenbar, vereinfacht, verständlich usw. für uns ist.” See also NL 11[270] 9.545.

erscheinen, für die wir allein Bewusstsein und Worte — und folglich Lob und Tadel — haben”. In M 119, the practical consequences of this are brought to the fore:

Wie weit Einer seine Selbstkenntniss auch treiben mag, Nichts kann doch unvollständiger sein, als das Bild der gesammten Triebe, die sein Wesen constituiren. Kaum dass er die gröberer beim Namen nennen kann: ihre Zahl und Stärke, ihre Ebbe und Fluth, ihr Spiel und Widerspiel unter einander, *und vor Allem die Gesetze ihrer Ernährung bleiben ihm ganz unbekannt.* (M 119; my italics)

And later, in FW 354, Nietzsche theorises that (self-)consciousness only evolved to the extent that it helped humans identify and *communicate* their needs; likewise, we only developed language to the degree that it served the same end. Everything of which we can become conscious is, according to Nietzsche, “in Bezug auf Gemeinschafts- und Heerden-Nützlichkeit fein entwickelt”, and therefore, he continues,

Jeder von uns, beim besten Willen, [wird] sich selbst so individuell wie möglich zu verstehen, “sich selbst zu kennen”, doch immer nur gerade das Nicht-Individuelle an sich zum Bewusstsein bringen [...], sein “Durchschnittliches” [...]. (FW 354).

Nietzsche concludes from this that we *only* have access to “der oberflächlichste, der schlechteste Theil” of ourselves. The kind of self-knowledge demanded by Nietzsche’s synthesising project in UB is therefore rendered impossible on two fronts: first, there is no “Kern”, “Platonische Idee”, “persönlicher Wille”, “individuellen Willen[.]”, “innere Gesetzlichkeit” or “eigentliches Selbst” to be known according to Nietzsche. Second, even if there was a unique and “wahre Ursinn und Grundstoff [unseres] Wesens” (UB III 1 1.341), no prospective educator could lead us to consciousness of this due to the evolutionary origins of our faculties of self-knowledge. Indeed, it is *only* possible for one to know the shallowest, most commonplace aspects of oneself.

3.4.3. REFUTING TELEOLOGY IN NATURE

The quietus to Nietzsche's early synthesising project is his rejection of teleological conceptions of nature. Already in 1868, in a plan for a dissertation he intended to write on Kant's conception of teleology, he argues that "äußere Zweckmäßigkeit ist eine Täuschung" (KGW I/4 62[12], p.553). Here he asserts that "[d]ie Zweckmäßigkeit des Organischen, die Gesetzmäßigkeit des Unorganischen ist von unserm Verstande in die Natur heineingebracht" (KGW I/4 62[7], p.551).¹²³ He further states that "Ordnung u. Unordnu<n>g giebt es nicht in der Natur" (KGW I/4 62[19], p.555) and "Zweckmäßigkeit ist unsere Idee" (KGW I/4 62[34], p.562). He also makes the Empedoclean point that "der Zufall kann die schönste Melodie finden" (KGW I/4 62[12], p.553). Thus, at this stage, he holds that pure mechanism and coincidence *can* explain the emergence of organisms in all their complexity.¹²⁴ Contrary to Kant, this *is* conceivable and there is therefore no real need to posit teleological causality as a principle of reflective judgement. Nietzsche contends that Kant was only forced to posit the *Zweckmäßigkeit* of nature owing to a lack of imagination.¹²⁵ Purposiveness is merely a false induction from the given fact that, in nature, we identify "eine Methode zur Erreichung des Zweckes oder richtiger: wir sehen die Existenz und ihre Mittel und schließen, das diese Mittel zweckmäßig sind" (KGW I/4 62[15], p.554). Finally, Nietzsche identifies a great practical value ("einen praktischen Werth") in "[d]ie Beseitigung der Teleologie": "Es kommt nur darauf an den Begriff einer höheren Vernunft abzulehnen: so sind wir schon zufrieden" (KGW I/4 62[16], p.554).

¹²³ In making this argument, he draws on Schopenhauer's criticisms of outer *Zweckmäßigkeit* in §26 of WWV II. See also Claudia Crawford, *The Beginnings of Nietzsche's Theory of Language* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), pp.105-27. On Nietzsche's critique of teleology, see Lawrence Hatab (2005), pp.61-3; Günter Abel, *Nietzsche: die Dynamik der Willen zur Macht und die ewige Wiederkehr* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), pp.133-40 and pp.439-41.

¹²⁴ See KGW I/4 62[27], p.559: "der Mechanismus verbunden mit dem Casualismus giebt diese Möglichkeit."

¹²⁵ Thus, Nietzsche states in KGW I/4 62[27], p.559, that "[e]s ist nur nötig eine coordinirte Möglichkeit aufzuweisen, um das Zwingende der Vorstellung Kants zu beseitigen."

In MA, however, the sentiment lying behind these disjointed preparatory notes is developed into a more coherent series of attacks on the notion of teleological causality. In MA 2, for example, he criticises philosophers for characterising the human as an unchanging *aeterna veritas*, and for believing that by understanding man as he currently is we can deduce the purpose of every other thing in existence (in the manner of those defending the idea of outer *Zweckmäßigkeit*). However, according to Nietzsche, man is not a *fait accompli* but is himself in a state of becoming; thus, “die ganze Teleologie ist darauf gebaut, dass man vom Menschen der letzten vier Jahrtausende als von einem ewigen redet.” In opposition to this, he states that “es giebt keine ewigen Thatsachen: sowie es keine absoluten Wahrheiten giebt.” In light of this, one cannot state that nature’s final purpose is to eternally engender geniuses according to a single ideal mould, since (Nietzsche implies), humans as we know them will transform into some quite different form of life in the future.¹²⁶ Thus, the Schopenhauerian man cannot be conceived as its highest goal.

Likewise, in FW 109, Nietzsche adopts a similar line of argumentation, claiming that the order we identify in the world immediately surrounding us is most probably a local coincidence, and that we cannot extrapolate from this that the universe and nature is an ordered, end orientated whole. Indeed, Nietzsche contradicts this ordered vision by claiming that “Der Gesamt-Charakter der Welt ist dagegen in alle Ewigkeit Chaos” insofar as it lacks all “Ordnung, Gliederung, Form, Schönheit, Weisheit, und wie alle unsere ästhetischen Menschlichkeiten heissen”. The ordered world in which we happen to live is merely an exception (“Ausnahme”) and, he explicitly adds (in what seems like a subtle allusion to UB III) that “die Ausnahmen sind nicht das geheime Ziel”. To suggest that nature (i.e. “das All”) “strebt” for a goal is a “Vermenschlichung” to which we are not

¹²⁶ See also MA 38, in which Nietzsche states that both *Wissenschaft* and nature “kennt keine Rücksichten auf letzte Zwecke”. Accordingly, as Günter Abel (1998) has pointed out, Nietzsche begins to stress that humans must posit their goals for themselves – that is “die Menschen [müssen] selber sich ökumenische, die ganze Erde umspannende Ziele stellen” (p.137, quoting MA 25).

permitted.¹²⁷ There are no *Zwecke* in nature (“es [gibt] keine Zwecke”), only pure necessity (“Notwendigkeit”).¹²⁸ The vision of the world as being in a lapsarian condition of suffering from which it needs to be messianically redeemed is a vestige of Christian-idealist thought (such ideas are “Schatten Gottes”) – a charge that very directly bears upon Nietzsche’s interpretation of the “metaphysische Bedeutung der Cultur”.

Though Nietzsche does sometimes fall back into a way of talking about nature in terms of *teloi*, generally speaking he persistently rejects the idea of nature as striving towards an end after UB.¹²⁹ The underlying critique of FW 109 persists in Nietzsche’s later thought and is even quite clearly recapitulated in GD, where he very clearly states that man is “nicht die Folge einer eignen Absicht, eines Willens, eines Zwecks, mit ihm wird nicht der Versuch gemacht, ein ‘Ideal von Mensch’ [...] zu erreichen. Wir haben den Begriff ‘Zweck’ erfunden: in der Realität fehlt der Zweck...” (GD Irrthümer 8 6.96). The paradigmatic strategy used by Nietzsche to debunk this worldview is that it commits an anthropomorphic fallacy in projecting onto nature the kinds of ends, moral values and modes of activity that are peculiar to humans. The consequence of this rejection of final natural ends is that Nietzsche can no longer cogently invoke the natural purposes argument as a means of justifying the cooperation of society in the name of the higher goal of generating elite genius.

3.5. CONCLUSION

We have seen that Nietzsche presents a broadly Schopenhauerian model of organisational conflict as a remedy to the problem of disintegration. Though this has

¹²⁷ With respect to this point, as well as Nietzsche’s general rejection of Schopenhauer’s veiled teleology, NL 4[310] 9.177 represents an important note.

¹²⁸ See also M 122.

¹²⁹ For an instance of Nietzsche slipping back into teleological language, see GM II 1 5.291: “Ein Thier heranzüchten, das versprechen darf— ist das nicht gerade jene paradoxe Aufgabe selbst, welche sich die Natur in Hinsicht auf den Menschen gestellt hat?”

already been recapitulated above, it is worth emphasising the fact that we found this model to be founded on two key metaphysical presuppositions: (A) there is an essential component to the self (to which we have epistemological access); and (B) nature acts according to ends (albeit inefficiently). However, we have witnessed that he rejects both the possibility of self-knowledge and the idea of natural teleology to such an extent that the essential metaphysical fundamentals of his early synthetic programme are left irreparably undermined. Indeed, he had already begun to undercut these premises in the *Nachlass* well before the publication of UB. I have thus suggested that we read UB as his last attempt to remain within a Schopenhauerian philosophical framework, until in MA he publicly pulls the temple down upon his earlier synthetic project. As such, the questions with which we should now enter the final chapter are as follows: does the crisis of disintegrative conflict disappear from Nietzsche's later writings? If not (as I will argue), what new fundamentals does he construct in order to ground his new synthetic project?

CHAPTER 4

THE LATER NIETZSCHE ON THE STRUGGLE FOR ORGANISATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

One of the main obstacles with respect to determining what kind of conflict the later Nietzsche principally endorses is the abundance of apparently conflicting statements. In support of reading his later thought as favouring measured conflict, he calls for a “Vergeistigung der Feindschaft” and censures those who seek the “Vernichtung ihrer Feinde” (GD Moral 3 6.84); likewise, he criticises Christians for endeavouring to “castrate” troublesome impulses rather than seeking means by which to exploit them (GD Moral 1 6.83). On the other hand, however, he seems to promote unrestrained struggle across a range of ontological levels. Thus, at the level of the individual’s impulses, he calls for “[d]ie Ausrottung der ‘Triebe’” (NL 25[349] 11.104) as well as implying that we have to “vernichten” certain drives (“gewisse Triebe”) (NL 1[81]12.31). And at the axiological level of our values, he again asserts the necessity of destruction: “Damit ein Heiligthum aufgerichtet werden kann, muss ein Heiligthum zerbrochen werden” (GM II 24 5.335); furthermore, he persistently advocates the destruction of slave-morality throughout the late *Nachlass*, provocatively asserting that “[m]an muß die Moral vernichten, um

das Leben zu befreien” (NL 7[6] 12.274).¹ Finally, he also endorses some kind of destructive activity at the level of society insofar as he calls for the “Vernichtung von Millionen Mißrathener” (NL 25[335] 11.98), where by “Mißrathener” he undoubtedly means a certain group of individuals. And to be sure, as was mentioned in Chapter 1, this has been read by some as a promotion of eugenics.²

How can we square these calls for unmeasured struggle with his criticisms of destructive conflict? Have we come to an irresolvable and impracticable contradiction in Nietzsche’s prescriptions? It is my contention that this need not be our conclusion; indeed, in this final chapter, I will defend the thesis that, just as was the case with the early Nietzsche, the later Nietzsche’s normative philosophy is also best described as promoting what I have called *organisational* struggle, a form of conflict that combines measured and unmeasured *Kampf*. Once again, I will focus on how Nietzsche conceives of, and tries to foster, this type of conflict in response to the problem of disgregation at both the level of the individual and that of the collective.

Though I intend to illuminate an analogy between the early and the late works, I am by no means suggesting that there is a relation of identity between the principal forms of conflict espoused within these respective periods. First, we find that the problem to which Nietzsche offers his later picture of organisational conflict as a solution has undergone some fundamental shifts – that is, Nietzsche conceives of the problem of individual and collective disgregation in quite novel terms. As such, I will begin in Section 1 by expounding how the later Nietzsche reformulates the crisis of disgregation, now attributing the problem less to philistine education so much as to the “Kreuzung von zu fremdartigen Rassen” (GM III 17 5.378).

¹ Thus, he also speaks of his “Interesse an der Vernichtung der Moral” (NL 7[37] 10.254); see also NL 7[29] 10.548: “[D]er Böse als Zerstörer ehrwürdig — das Zerstören ist nothwendig”; NL 25[211] 11.69, where he also calls for “[d]ie Vernichtung der Slavenhaften Werthschätzungen”; NL 14[16] 13.220: “Hier darf es keinen Vertrag geben: hier muß man ausmerzen, vernichten, Krieg führen — man muß das christlich-nihilistische Werthmaß überall noch hinausziehen und es unter jeder Maske bekämpfen”.

² See §1.5.

In Section 2, I respond to the difficulty raised by the previous chapter, where we saw that Nietzsche's earlier Schopenhauerian model of organisational struggle was rendered untenable by his rejection of metaphysics. He thus cannot coherently propose the earlier notion of organisational conflict as a remedy to the problem of individual and collective disintegration. According to Nietzsche, then, how can we think about the sources of healthy organisation in a way that does not rely on any such metaphysical presuppositions? Someone who strove to formulate a scientific solution to this problem, and who had a great influence on Nietzsche, was Wilhelm Roux.³ I therefore begin by outlining Roux's account of how biological organisation emerges from a struggle of the parts of a body to both selectively incorporate nutritive materials, as well as to excrete waste products. Subsequently, I illuminate how, although Nietzsche abandons much of Roux's position as he develops his conception of the world as will to power, he retains Roux's explanation of organised unity in terms of a combination of measured, exploitative struggle and unmeasured, exclusionary struggle.

In Sections 3 and 4, I consider how Nietzsche *applies* this abstract theoretical model of organisation to the concrete practical problem of disgregation. Within the extant literature on both the psychological and socio-political aspects of his thought, however, we find interpretations that clash with the idea that healthy organisation emerges from a balance of measured and unmeasured conflict. With respect to Nietzsche's thoughts on the self, there is what I call the *sublimation* reading. The foremost proponents of this reading are Walter Kaufmann and Ken Gemes.⁴ Both maintain that Nietzsche recommends the *instrumentalisation*, but not the repression or eradication of bothersome impulses. Kaufmann also attempts to

³ As Müller-Lauter has shown at length. See Müller-Lauter (1999), ch.9. See also Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, "Der Organismus als innerer Kampf: Der Einfluß von Wilhelm Roux auf Friedrich Nietzsche", *Nietzsche-Studien*, 7 (1978), 189–235. I am heavily indebted to Müller-Lauter's interpretation of Roux; however, whereas Müller-Lauter's study provides a general overview of the influence of Roux upon Nietzsche, I will be particularly focussed on how Roux's conception of the organisational function of conflict found its way into Nietzsche's thought.

⁴ See Kaufmann (1974), ch.7 and ch.8; Ken Gemes (2009).

ground this in an interpretation of Nietzsche's notion of the will to power, which he construes as a process of sublimation whereby nature strives to realise its power-seeking impulses through ever higher means, culminating in the development of human reason.⁵ I argue in Section 3 that this suppresses the unmeasured aspect of Nietzsche's description of the world as will to power. Through an analysis of Nietzsche's account of psychological impulses (particularly drives) and values, I contend that consonant with my interpretation of the will to power, Nietzsche calls for the repression, exclusion and even eradication of certain behavioural tendencies (i.e. drives) and their associated values.

I then turn to Nietzsche's suggestions regarding the unification of society in Section 4. Here we again come to an impasse in the critical literature. This time it is between the agonistic democrat reading of his later social philosophy and the radical aristocratic reading. The agonistic democrat readers (Hatab and Connolly, for example) argue that Nietzsche's conception of the will to power describes the world as constituted through a wholly measured form of opposition (already partly outlined in Chapter 2). They maintain that this translates into a politics that promotes an egalitarian society founded on agonistic democratic contest.⁶ On the other hand, radical aristocratic readings of Nietzsche's thought take his conception of the will to power to describe thriving life as fundamentally characterised by a wholly unmeasured form of struggle, according to which, power is secured by whatever means necessary, irrespective of how destructive or cruelly exploitative such struggle might be. They maintain that the radical aristocratism of his later political thought is therefore continuous with his vision of life as will to power.⁷ Again, I adduce my reading of the will to power as a means to illustrating that both of these readings misrepresent Nietzsche in their own distinct ways. I largely side with the radical aristocrats in this debate insofar as Nietzsche's later political thought broadly

⁵ See Kaufmann (1974), p.235: "Nature is nothing but the phenomenology of the will to power, and its craving for power cannot be fulfilled short of the development of reason."

⁶ See Connolly (1988), ch.6, and (1991); Hatab (1995) and (2002).

⁷ See e.g. Detwiler (1990), pp.43-4.

promotes both exploitative and exclusionary struggle in a way that is consonant with his notion of the world as will to power. However, I also suggest that the radical aristocrats nonetheless misconceive of Nietzsche's will to power thesis as translating into a wholly unmeasured form of struggle – namely, an immoral, inconsiderate and often fatal form of instrumentalisation (i.e. slavery). On the basis of my reading of both the will to power and texts from AC, I refute this thesis, contending that for Nietzsche, within any healthy social organisation, those in command must always show some form of moral consideration for their subordinates; in other words, their exploitative struggle must be *measured*.

I will therefore conclude that each of these problematic readings of the normative dimension of Nietzsche's later philosophy commits one of two errors. The agonistic democrat and sublimational readers overgeneralise the *measured* aspect of Nietzsche's thought and thereby suppress its unmeasured (i.e. destructive or exclusionary) aspect. Conversely, the radical aristocratic readers suppress the moment of measure or restraint in Nietzsche's normative philosophy. Each thereby give us a lopsided view of the way in which the later Nietzsche thinks we should resolve the problem of disgregation. But let us begin by surveying just how Nietzsche articulates this problem from the mid-1880s onwards.

4.2. THE CRISIS OF DISINTEGRATION IN THE LATER NIETZSCHE

Though Nietzsche's thought undergoes many permutations between his early and later writings, the problem of social and individual disintegration remains an enduring concern. In *Z*, for example, which is usually taken to be the inaugurating work of the later period, Nietzsche pejoratively names the town into which Zarathustra descends "die bunte Kuh", evoking the "Jahrmarkts-Buntheit" for which

he indicted the Germans in UB.⁸ He is highly critical of the fragmented nature of modern man, declaring himself dedicated to the task of remedying this chronic lack of harmony: “das ist all mein Dichten und Trachten, dass ich in Eins dichte und zusammentrage, was Bruchstück ist und Räthsel und grauser Zufall” (Z II Erlösung 4.179). Nietzsche maintains that on account of their being a mishmash of sundry beliefs, modern individuals are incapable of holding any *particular* belief: “Ja, wie solltet ihr glauben können, ihr Buntgesprenkelten! — die ihr Gemälde seid von Allem, was je geglaubt wurde!” Recalling UB, this discordance is said to leave moderns pessimistic and “unfruchtbar[.]” (ibid.).⁹

In Z, however, the problem of disintegration has not yet undergone a notable transformation since, as in UB, he still tends to trace this cultural ill back to philistine education (*Bildung*).¹⁰ In 1884, however, a decisive shift occurs in the primary sources to which Nietzsche attributes the problem of disgregation. The first of these is racial mixing, which we find thematised for the first time in M, where Nietzsche expresses a concern with racial purification (“Reinigung der Rasse”) (M 272).¹¹

⁸ Julian Young (2010) has suggested that, in calling the town the “die Bunte Kuh”, Nietzsche is also alluding to Plato’s critique of democracy in the *Republic* (p.368). See *Republic*, 558b, where Plato describes the democratic state as “anarchic” and “colourful”. See also, entry for “bunt”, in Paul van Tongeren, Gerd Schank and Herman Siemens (eds.), *Nietzsche-Wörterbuch* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004).

⁹ In Z, Nietzsche considers moderns to be two different sorts of cripples (“Krüppel”) – one group, the regular cripples, have simply failed to cultivate certain parts of themselves (“Diesem fehlt ein Auge und Jenem ein Ohr und einem Dritten das Bein”); by contrast, the other group, the *inverse* cripples, have over-cultivated certain capacities at the expense of others, leading to a ludicrous form of disproportion. Indeed, implicitly reversing his earlier praise of the Wagnerian genius, Nietzsche describes the inverse cripple as merely a giant ear: “Und wahrhaftig, das ungeheure Ohr sass auf einem kleinen dünnen Stiele,— der Stiel aber war ein Mensch! [...] Das Volk sagte mir aber, das grosse Ohr sei nicht nur ein Mensch, sondern ein grosser Mensch, ein Genie” (Z II Erlösung 4.178).

¹⁰ See e.g. Z II Bildung. Here he again criticises the condition in which modern education has left us – one in which “[a]lle Zeiten und Völker blicken bunt aus euren Schleiern; alle Sitten und Glauben reden bunt aus euren Gebärden” (4.154).

¹¹ Thus, in M 272, Nietzsche disparagingly refers to “die gekreuzten Rassen, bei denen sich immer, neben der Disharmonie von Körperformen [...], auch Disharmonien der Gewohnheiten und Werthbegriffe finden müssen”. According to this aphorism, such disharmony and internal contradiction among a culture’s forces has a profoundly weakening effect. Nietzsche’s counter-ideal is the society within which each force is “auf einzelne ausgewählte Functionen beschränkt” in such a way that “alle jene Kraft [...] [steht] dem

However, this celebration of racial purity (and denigration of racial mixing) is then put on ice until 1884-5, when its presence in the *Nachlass* suddenly becomes persistent and pronounced.¹² Thus, in JGB he states that “Skepsis [...] entsteht jedes Mal, wenn sich in entscheidender und plötzlicher Weise lang von einander abgetrennte Rassen oder Stände kreuzen” (JGB 208). Scepticism is in this way now primarily understood as being caused by racial mixing rather than philistine education, as was the case in UB (or Z).

It should be underscored that one of the crucial differences between M 272 and Nietzsche’s later conception of *Rasse* is that the focus on “Körperformen”, which is central to M 272, has slipped into the background by JGB. In contrast to thinkers such as Gobineau, Nietzsche’s conception of a “Rasse” cannot be equated with the dominant modern conception of a “Rasse” as a set of humans grouped according to physical resemblance.¹³ Rather, we should think of a Nietzschean race as a group of people defined by a unicity of ways of living (*Lebensweise*) – that is, their distinct behavioural compulsions (*Triebe, Instinkte*) and the values (*Werthe*) that support those modes of living (thus, Nietzsche often equates social classes or castes with races).¹⁴ It is the concoction of *these* that is the problem for Nietzsche:

gesamten Organismus zu Gebote”. Nietzsche concludes that, as a consequence, “reingewordene Rassen [sind] immer auch stärker und schöner geworden”. See also NL 12[10] 9.577, where in 1881 he also shows his concern with the breeding of a higher race, though here his focus is on the problem of slavery: “Das neue Problem: ob nicht ein Theil der Menschen auf Kosten des anderen zu einer höheren Rasse zu erziehen ist. Züchtung — — —”; however, see also NL 11[273] 9.546, where Nietzsche avers that “‘Nationen’ sind viel feinere Begriffe als Rassen”.

¹² See NL 25[211] 11.69: “Die Vernichtung der verfallenden Rassen. Verfall Europa’s”; NL 26[376] 11.250. For Nietzsche’s celebration of racial purity, see also e.g. NL 25[234] 11.74; NL 25[382] 11.112; NL 25[407] 11.118; NL 25[413] 11.120.

¹³ The first entry for “Rasse” n. in *Duden* for example, reads “(Biologie) Gesamtheit der auf eine Züchtung zurückgehenden Tiere, seltener auch Pflanzen einer Art, die sich durch bestimmte gemeinsame Merkmale von den übrigen derselben Art unterscheiden; Zuchtrasse”.

¹⁴ As Gerd Schank has endeavoured to show at length, “Rasse” more frequently signifies something akin to “people” (“Volk”) or “social class” (“sozialer Stand”). See Gerd Schank, „Rasse“ und „Züchtung“ bei Nietzsche (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000): “Vielmehr hat das Wort ‘Rasse’ bei Nietzsche, in Entsprechung zu der von ihm selbst gegebenen Definition des Wortes ‘Rasse’ (worauf schon verwiesen wurde, und die leider oft übersehen wird), in den weitaus meisten Fällen die Bedeutung ‘Volk’ als einer Gemeinschaft, die durch ihre

Die Vergangenheit von jeder *Form und Lebensweise, von Culturen*, die früher hart neben einander, über einander lagen, strömt Dank jener Mischung in uns “moderne Seelen” aus, unsre Instinkte laufen nunmehr überallhin zurück, wir selbst sind eine Art Chaos [...]. (JGB 224; my italics)¹⁵

In JGB 208, Nietzsche further articulates the problem as that of “die Erbschaft einer vielfältigen Herkunft im Leibe [...], das heisst gegensätzliche und oft nicht einmal nur gegensätzliche Triebe und Werthmaasse, welche mit einander kämpfen und sich selten Ruhe geben” (JGB 200).¹⁶ These may be biologically or culturally inherited for Nietzsche; indeed, he often fails to draw a sharp distinction between the two, implying in a Lamarckian fashion that culturally acquired traits (i.e. compulsions) can be biologically inherited (a point to which we will return below).¹⁷

Of course, racial mixing cannot be taken as the sole cause of modernity’s pathological condition. As we read on in JGB, we discover that Nietzsche at times also holds democracy responsible for the mixing of races, which he accordingly calls the “*demokratische Vermengung der Stände und Rassen*” (JGB 224, my italics). Then at other times, he blames herd-morality, in a more general sense, for our

‘Umgebung’ und ihre ‘Existenzbedingungen’ bis in ihre ‘Zeichensprachen’ (Moral, Religion) hinein geprägt ist [...]. Daneben hat es oft auch die Bedeutungen ‘sozialer Stand’, ‘soziale Schicht’, ‘Kaste’. In einigen Fällen meint ‘Rasse’ auch den ‘Menschen allgemein’, ‘die Menschheit’, im Unterschied etwa zur Tierwelt” (pp.29-30). See also NL 25[462] 11.136: “Die Verschiedenheit der thierischen Charaktere: durchschnittlich ist ein Charakter die Folge eines Milieu — eine fest eingeprägte Rolle, vermöge deren gewisse Facta immer wieder unterstrichen und gestärkt werden. Auf die Länge hin entsteht so Rasse: d.h. gesetzt daß die Umgebung sich nicht ändert.” For an overview of Nietzsche’s relation to Gobineau, see Schank (2000), pp.426-41. See also Ottmann (1987), pp.246-9.

¹⁵ In MA 475, Nietzsche also talks about the mixing of *geographically* distinct cultures, attributing this to the mobility facilitated by trade and industry and other factors that have rendered modern life nomadic.

¹⁶ See also NL 34[63] 11.441.

¹⁷ For evidence of this, see e.g. NL 26[409] 11.260: “Alle Tugend und Tüchtigkeit am Leibe und an der Seele ist mühsam und im Kleinen erworben worden [...]: aber es giebt Menschen, welche die Erben und Herren dieses langsam erworbenen vielfachen Reichthums an Tugenden und Tüchtigkeiten sind — weil, auf Grund glücklicher und vernünftiger Ehen und auch glücklicher Zufälle, die erworbenen und gehäuften Kräfte vieler Geschlechter nicht verschleudert und versplittert, sondern durch einen festen Ring und Willen zusammengebunden sind.” See also John Richardson, *Nietzsche’s New Darwinism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.17.

descent into this pathological state of racial discordance: “[D]ie Moral des gemeinen Mannes hat gesiegt. Man mag diesen Sieg zugleich als eine Blutvergiftung nehmen (er hat die Rassen durch einander gemengt)” (GM I 9 5.269). From 1884 onwards, then, we find that the problematic disintegration of our impulses is in a causal nexus with racial mixing, the enlightenment democratic movement and a certain species of morality. But for what specific reasons does Nietzsche think of this condition as being synonymous with sickness?

4.2.1. INDIVIDUAL DISINTEGRATION AND THE POISONED CHALICE OF ASCETIC MORALITY

In order to get an idea of just why the later Nietzsche characterises the disintegrated will as pathological, it is worth beginning by adumbrating how he thinks the *healthy* individual is ordered, since this will grant us a point of comparison. In JGB 19 Nietzsche associates the healthy will with hierarchical order:

Der Wollende nimmt dergestalt die Lustgefühle der ausführenden, erfolgreichen Werkzeuge, der dienstbaren “Unterwillen” oder Unter-Seelen — unser Leib ist ja nur ein Gesellschaftsbau vieler Seelen — zu seinem Lustgefühle als Befehlender hinzu. L’effet c’est moi: es begiebt sich hier, was sich in jedem gut gebauten und glücklichen Gemeinwesen begiebt, dass die regierende Klasse sich mit den Erfolgen des Gemeinwesens identificirt. (JGB 19)

For Nietzsche, the healthy or strong will is analogous to the well (i.e. hierarchically) ordered society. There is “einen commandirenden Gedanken”, which is able to command the plurality of our drives and body parts in a stable enough manner for it to realise itself in action.¹⁸ Proper hierarchical organisation allows for the successful performance of actions, which in turn elicits a pleasurable feeling of power. This

¹⁸ As Gemes (2009) has argued, it is this species of stable ordering that characterises Nietzsche’s ideal of the sovereign individual in GM II 1-2, who “versprechen darf”. Without this stability, “you can give no guarantee that the ascendant drive at the time of your making a promise will be effective when the time comes to honour that promise” (p.37).

coordination “unter der Vorherrschaft eines einzelnen [*sic*]”, which results in a “Präcision und Klarheit der Richtung”, is what Nietzsche refers to as a “starker Wille” (NL 14[219] 13.394). By contrast, Nietzsche criticises the state of *akrasia* under the heading of the “schwacher Wille”: “Die Vielheit und Disgregation der Antriebe, der Mangel an System unter ihnen”, which results in “das Oscilliren und der Mangel an Schwergewicht” (ibid.). This depressive impotence or incapacity for directed action is unsurprisingly of inherently negative value for Nietzsche.

However, upon closer inspection, we begin to remark that this weakness takes two distinct forms in Nietzsche’s thought. First, in JGB 208 he describes “Willenslähmung” as manifesting itself as a form of scepticism:

Skepsis nämlich ist der geistigste Ausdruck einer gewissen vielfachen physiologischen Beschaffenheit, welche man in gemeiner Sprache Nervenschwäche und Kränklichkeit nennt; sie entsteht jedes Mal, wenn sich in entscheidender und plötzlicher Weise lang von einander abgetrennte Rassen oder Stände kreuzen. In dem neuen Geschlechte, das gleichsam verschiedene Maasse und Werthe in’s Blut vererbt bekommt, ist Alles Unruhe, Störung, Zweifel, Versuch; die besten Kräfte wirken hemmend, die Tugenden selbst lassen einander nicht wachsen und stark werden, in Leib und Seele fehlt Gleichgewicht, Schwergewicht, perpendikuläre Sicherheit. Was aber in solchen Mischlingen am tiefsten krank wird und entartet, das ist der Wille: sie kennen das Unabhängige im Entschlusse, das tapfere Lustgefühl im Wollen gar nicht mehr [...]. (JGB 208)

No single impulse (“Kraft”) is strong enough to enable the individual to take a position in a given debate; as a result, they fall back on the sceptical position as a default and abstain. Since individuals are *unable* to make a choice, they try to give their inability to will the appearance of a *virtue*, asserting things like “[g]ar keine Hypothesen machen könnte leicht zum guten Geschmack gehören. Müsst ihr denn durchaus etwas Krummes gleich gerade biegen?” (ibid.; see also JGB 209). Aside from the fact that this state of vacillation is implicitly disparaged *per se*, it is also censured on account of its being an inherently *unpleasurable* experience – one opposed to what he views as the pleasant feeling of having successfully commanded

the various component parts of oneself and carried an action through to the point of completion (“sie kennen [...] das tapfere Lustgefühl im Wollen gar nicht mehr”).

On the other hand, Nietzsche thinks this disgregation of the instincts expresses itself as *caprice*, according to which *all* of the instincts are able to express themselves to some extent. Wagner’s works of art are, Nietzsche tells us, a perfect aesthetic representation of this inner state: “Vielheit, Fülle, *Willkür*, Ungewißheit im Geistigen” (NL 15[6] 13.407; my italics). One of the ways in which Nietzsche thinks Wagner’s capriciousness (“Willkürlichkeit”) expresses itself is in his pastiche use of historical references. This is what, in JGB 224, Nietzsche rebukes under the rubric of the “historische Sinne”, which he views as a consequence of both the aforementioned “demokratische Vermengung der Stände und Rassen”, and more specifically, the “Mischung” of our instincts. Nonetheless, he also praises how the diverse chaos of our instincts gives us moderns the capacity to relate to, and imitate, sundry past cultures (“zeitweilig eine fremde Seele anzunehmen”); that being said, he is less enthusiastic about the fact that this gives us an indiscriminate (and therefore *ignoble*) taste for anything and everything (“den Geschmack und die Zunge für Alles” [NL 29[393] 11.254]).¹⁹ (N.B. this unscrupulousness was a defining feature of antiquarian history.) The undesirable upshot of this is that

[...] wir vermögen gerade die kleinen kurzen und höchsten Glücksfälle und Verklärungen des menschlichen Lebens, wie sie hier und da einmal aufglänzen, nur schlecht, nur zögernd, nur mit Zwang in uns nachzubilden: jene Augenblicke und Wunder, wo eine grosse Kraft freiwillig vor dem Maasslosen und Unbegrenzten stehen blieb —, wo ein Überfluss von feiner Lust in der plötzlichen Bändigung und Versteinerung, im Feststehen und Sich-Fest-Stellen auf einem noch zitternden Boden genossen wurde. (JGB 224)

¹⁹ For an account of Nietzsche’s view of Wagner and Wagner’s art as a symptom of modern disgregation, see Michael Cowan, “Nietzsche and the Psychology of the Will”, *Nietzsche-Studien*, 34 (2008), 48-74 (pp.67ff.). See also Werner Hamacher, “Disgregation des Willens”, Nietzsche über Individuum und Individualität”, *Nietzsche-Studien*, 15 (1986), 306-336 (pp.322-4).

The problem is once again one of creative capacity and fertility – our lack of standards makes it difficult to select and imitate (*nachbilden*) exemplary forms of human life, which are defined by their ability to *harness* (*bändigen*) plurality and “Sich-Fest-Stellen”.

But Nietzsche’s principal grievance is that the suffering caused by inner disgregation leads people towards ultimately harmful palliatives – particularly Judeo-Christian morality and its secular derivatives (i.e. Kant, Schopenhauer, Socialists and the Utilitarians).²⁰ Rather than proactively organising themselves, people have a tendency to seek means of simply suppressing the painful inner turmoil of their drives. For an individual following this course of self-treatment,

[...] sein gründlichstes Verlangen geht darnach, dass der Krieg, der er ist, einmal ein Ende habe; das Glück erscheint ihm, in Übereinstimmung mit einer beruhigenden (zum Beispiel epikurischen oder christlichen) Medizin und Denkweise, vornehmlich als das Glück des Ausruhens, der Ungestörtheit, der Satttheit, der endlichen Einheit, als “Sabbat der Sabbate” (JGB 200).²¹

In terms of moral practice, this expresses itself as a striving for heavenly peace and a society based on the principle of altruism. But it is also often figured by Nietzsche, in philosophy, as a tendency toward idealism – i.e. an attempt to escape from the world of “appearance”, into an ideal “real” world of pure objective knowledge; and

²⁰ Nietzsche refers to his struggle against these acolytes as his “Kampf gegen das latente Christenthum” (NL 10[2] 12.453). See also NL 25[407] 11.118: “Alle unsere Religionen und Philosophien sind Symptome unseres leiblichen Befindens: — daß das Christenthum zum Sieg kam, war die Folge eines allgemeinen Unlust-Gefühls und einer Rassen-Vermischung (d.h. eines Durch- und Gegeneinanders im Organismus)”. NL 2[165] 12.149: “Vorurtheile, denen Instinkte souffliren (von Rassen, Gemeinden, von verschiedenen Stufen wie Jugend oder Verwelken usw.) / Angewendet auf die speziell christlich-europäische Moral: unsere moralischen Urtheile sind Anzeichen vom Verfall, vom Unglauben an das Leben, eine Vorbereitung des Pessimismus.” See also NL 25[160] 11.55: “Die Konsequenzen absterbender Rassen verschieden z.B. pessimistische Philosophie, Willens-Schwäche”.

²¹ See also NL 9[35] 12.351, where he states that such individuals seek “Alles, was erquickt, heilt, beruhigt, betäubt, in den Vordergrund tritt, unter verschiedenen Verkleidungen, religiös, oder moralisch oder politisch oder ästhetisch usw.”

in art, as a tendency towards disinterestedness.²² Nonetheless, he maintains that these pseudo-remedies, particularly the adoption of Judeo-Christian morality, only serve to aggravate the malady they were intended to cure:

Allgemeinste Typen der *décadence*:

1) : man wählt, im Glauben, Heilmittel zu wählen, das, was die Erschöpfung beschleunigt
— dahin gehört das Christenthum —: [...]

2) : man verliert die Widerstands-Kraft gegen die Reize, — man wird bedingt durch die Zufälle: man vergrößert und vergrößert die Erlebnisse ins Ungeheure... eine “Entpersönlichung”, eine Disgregation des Willens —
— dahin gehört eine ganze Art Moral, die altruistische die, welche das Mitleiden im Munde führt: an der das Wesentliche die Schwäche der Persönlichkeit ist, so daß sie mitklingt und wie eine überreizte Saite beständig zittert... eine extreme Irritabilität...
(NL 17[6] 13.527-8)²³

This is of course highly reminiscent of Aristotle’s distinction between the two types of *akrasia* (literally meaning “lack of command”): weakness (*astheneia*) and

²² See e.g. JGB 208: “[W]as sich heute als ‘Objektivität’, ‘Wissenschaftlichkeit’, ‘l’art pour l’art’, ‘reines willensfreies Erkennen’ in die Schauläden stellt, nur aufgeputzte Skepsis und Willenslähmung ist”. See also NL 14[83] 13.262: “Wesentlicher: ob nicht ein Décadence-Symptom schon in der Richtung auf solche Allgemeinheit gegeben ist: Objektivität als Willens-Disgregation (so fern bleiben können...”

²³ In associating health with hierarchy, as well as describing pathology in terms of disgregation, Nietzsche was undoubtedly influenced by a range of sources. While I have shown in ch.3 that in the early writings this idea can be traced back to Schopenhauer and Goethe, in the later works, Nietzsche’s readings in the natural sciences are possibly of greater influence. Michael Cowan (2008), for example, has convincingly argued that Nietzsche is heavily indebted to the French psychologist Théodule Ribot (*Les Maladies de la Volonté* [Paris: Alcan 1888]). Recall from ch.1 that Nietzsche appropriated Mayer’s association of a badly ordered “Auslösungsapparat” with sickness. Likewise, as we will see in greater detail, Nietzsche was influenced by the evolutionary biologist Wilhelm Roux, who saw the loss of order within the organism as having fatal consequences. Nietzsche, transcribes the following lines from Roux’s KTO: “Kampf der Gewebe muß zum Gleichgewicht zwischen den Theilen führen, oder das Ganze geht zu Grunde” (NL 7[190] 10.302). The influence of Paul Bourget on Nietzsche’s conception of disintegration and the sickness of the will has also been underscored by Giuliano Campioni in his *Der französische Nietzsche* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), see pp.313ff.

impetuosity (*propeteia*). Christian morality can either render one exhausted (“erschöpft”), or it can leave one hysterically capricious.²⁴ This caprice manifests itself as an inability to inhibit one’s actions (“man verliert die Widerstands-Kraft gegen die Reize”).²⁵ Regarding the latter, the implication is that, in constantly searching out opportunities to sympathise with others and reacting to their feelings, one becomes overly receptive and sensitive to one’s milieu, resulting in an “extreme Irritabilität”. Nietzsche thinks the capriciously altruistic individual suffers from a weakness of personality (“Schwäche der Persönlichkeit”) insofar as their actions are merely *reactions*, defined by their surroundings.²⁶ Moreover, he holds altruism to be a sign of *décadence* – it is merely that to which we resort when we are *unable* to determine what kind of actions are good for us *personally*. Moreover, he suggests that the “Entpersönlichung” associated with altruism tends to lead to a more embracing rejection of life:

Disgregation der Instinkte! — Es ist zu Ende mit ihm, wenn der Mensch altruistisch wird. — Statt naiv zu sagen, “ich bin nichts mehr werth”, sagt die Moral-Lüge im Munde des *décadent*: “Nichts ist etwas werth, — das Leben ist nichts werth”... Ein solches Urtheil bleibt zuletzt eine grosse Gefahr, es wirkt ansteckend — auf dem ganzen morbiden Boden der Gesellschaft wuchert es bald zu tropischer Begriffs-Vegetation empor, bald als Religion (Christenthum), bald als Philosophie (Schopenhauerei). (GD Streifzüge 35 6.134)

So, altruism leads not only to a hysterical irascibility, but also to a harmful mode of self-neglect, and even all-out pessimism.²⁷ But Christian morality also leads to an

²⁴ Nietzsche’s description of pathology also recalls Book IX of Plato’s *Republic*. For Aristotle on the two forms of *akrasia*, see *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VII.1–10. Ribot also draws a similar distinction (which is not remarked by Cowan [2008]) between two main types of pathologies of the will. First, there are pathologies relating to a problem with the “mechanism d’impulsion”, leading to “affaiblissements de la volonté” (i.e. *aboulia* or a depressive state of inaction). Second, there are those relating to a problem with the mechanism “d’arrêt” (“inhibition”), where reasoned plans cannot be carried out due to the anarchy of one’s impulses. See Ribot (1888), pp.53-5.

²⁵ See also NL 17[6] 13.527.

²⁶ See Brusotti (2012), pp.113ff.

²⁷ On the connection of this condition with that of pessimism, see also NL 11[228] 13.89: “Die Hauptarten des Pessimismus, der Pessimismus der Sensibilität (die Überreizbarkeit mit

unrestrained form of reactivity in another important way – namely, on account of the type of attitude it encourages individuals to adopt towards over-powerful impulses for the sake of a “Frieden der Seele”:

[...] Verschneidung, Ausrottung, wird instinktiv im Kampfe mit einer Begierde von Denen gewählt, welche zu willensschwach, zu degenerirt sind, um sich ein Maass in ihr auflegen zu können [...]. Die radikalen Mittel sind nur den Degenerirten unentbehrlich; die Schwäche des Willens, bestimmter geredet, die Unfähigkeit, auf einen Reiz nicht zu reagiren, ist selbst bloss eine andre Form der Degenerescenz. (GD Moral 2 6.83)

This ascetic endeavour to *castrate* one’s passions and instincts (sexual desire, for example) is, according to Nietzsche, symptomatic of degeneration, since it betrays an inability to competently resist a desire, and thus, a complete lack of moderation and measure.²⁸ A healthy, well ordered individual is able to resist and even transform problematic desires; indeed, great men such as Alcibiades and Caesar arise precisely on the basis of their being capable of “die eigentliche Meisterschaft und Feinheit im Kriegführen mit sich, also Selbst-Beherrschung” (JGB 200) – that is, their capacity to *harness* their impulses (again, we will return to this below). Thus, the courses of treatment offered by Christianity to the disorganised individual as a tonic exemplify and even exacerbate the very pathology of disgregation they are meant to ameliorate – namely, by fomenting an attitude of excessive reactivity (i.e. caprice) towards both other individuals and one’s own drives.

But how is disgregation associated with exhaustion? To be sure, Nietzsche (like Marx) directly refers to Christianity as an opiate.²⁹ In the third essay of GM, he

einem Übergewicht der Unlustgefühle) / Der Pessimismus des ‘unfreien Willens’ (anders gesagt: der Mangel an Hemmungskräften gegen die Reize) / Der Pessimismus des Zweifels (: die Scheu vor allem Festen, vor allem Fassen und Anrühren)”.

²⁸ Indeed, in GM II 16 (5.322f.), Nietzsche describes this kind of self-harm as symptomatic of the individual who is unable to discharge their rapacious instincts externally, and so discharges them *internally*.

²⁹ See e.g. NL 2[144] 12.138: “Thatsächlich nähert sich [...] das Christenthum der Erschöpfung: man begnügt sich mit einem opiatischen Christenthum, weil man weder zum Suchen, Kämpfen, Wagen, Alleinstehen wollen die Kraft hat”. GM Vorrede 6 5.253: “[I]m

elaborates upon this at length in his discussion of the widespread “physiologisches Hemmungsgefühl” experienced by modern individuals, and the “zur Epidemie gewordenen Müdigkeit und Schwere”. Though he lists a variety of potential causes that have historically brought about this species of malady (such as bad diet, alcoholism, or the prevalence of diseases such as syphilis), the primary cause in modernity is the “Kreuzung von zu fremdartigen Rassen (oder von Ständen — Stände drücken immer auch Abkunfts- und Rassen-Differenzen aus [...])” (GM III 17 5.378). In the consequent “Kampf mit dem Unlustgefühl”, there are a number of possible strategies available to the afflicted. But what Nietzsche calls the “interessanter” course of action is the provocation of “eine Ausschweifung des Gefühls” (GM III 19 5.385) – in particular, *the feeling of guilt* (“das Schuldgefühl”). This unhealthy internal discharging of one’s instinct for animosity and cruelty (“[d]ie Feindschaft, die Grausamkeit”), due to the inability to externally discharge one’s strength, is what Nietzsche labels “schlechtes Gewissen” (GM II 14 5.321). The excitement of searching within oneself and one’s past for a cause of one’s pain, and subsequently inventing ingenious ways of punishing oneself for the sins one discovers in this search, provides some welcome respite from lethargy Nietzsche tells us.³⁰ However, he is quick to add, this course of treatment through over-excitation leaves sufferers with “[e]in zerrüttetes Nervensystem”, and “unter allen Umständen kränker”.³¹ It can result in the “furchtbare Lähmungen und Dauer-Depressionen” of not just individuals, but entire communities; or it can lead to epileptic epidemics and “todsüchtigen Massen-Delirien” (GM III 21 5.392). The point is that the hangover from these electrifying palliatives leaves individuals in a

‘Guten’ auch ein Rückgangssymptom läge, insgleichen eine Gefahr, eine Verführung, ein Gift, ein Narcoticum, durch das etwa die Gegenwart auf Kosten der Zukunft lebte”.

³⁰ That is an attempt, Nietzsche tells us in GM III 20 5.390-1, “[zu lösen] [d]ie menschliche Seele einmal aus allen ihren Fugen [...], sie in Schrecken, Fröste, Gluthen und Entzückungen derartig unterzutauchen, dass sie von allem Kleinen und Kleinlichen der Unlust, der Dumpfheit, der Verstimmung wie durch einen Blitzschlag loskommt”; and, Nietzsche adds, “mit diesem System von Prozeduren war die alte Depression, Schwere und Müdigkeit gründlich überwunden, das Leben wurde wieder sehr interessant: wach, ewig wach, übernünftig, glühend, verkohlt, erschöpft und doch nicht müde”.

³¹ See also GD Sokrates 9 6.71f.

far greater state of exhausted incapacity than when they began the course of treatment.³² While embracing such frenzy may allow them to *endure* the suffering caused by their disintegrated will (by virtue of its narcotic or numbing effect), it makes them ever less capable of redressing their malaise.

However, Nietzsche indicates another perhaps more trenchant problem with these remedies – namely, that the ascetic values and ideals associated with them are *contagious* (“ansteckend” [GD Streifzüge 35 6.134]) and undermine the health (“Gesundheit”) of the entire *race*.³³ As Alexander Nehamas has highlighted, “[t]he ascetic ideal does not rest content with ordering the lives of those who may actually need it”;³⁴ rather, it further attacks and infects the healthy, the noble, and actively counteracts the emergence of “die seltenen Fälle der seelisch-leiblichen Mächtigkeit” (GM III 14 5.367). Owing to their sickness, the weak are filled with hatred at the sight of the healthy and the strong (“hier wird der Aspekt des Siegreichen gehasst”). In order to conceal their hatred, they conceive of *themselves* as the “die Guten, die Gerechten” and correspondingly demonise the strong, which allows them to express their hatred as righteousness (*Rechtschaffenheit; Gerechtigkeit*) (GM III 14 5.369).³⁵ This impetus of the weak to tyrannise over, and avenge themselves upon, the strong is what Nietzsche calls “ressentiment” (GM III 14 5.370), and it is characteristic of what he describes as the “Sklavenaufstand in der Moral” (GM I 10 5.270).

³² On the topic of disgregation in GM, see also Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, “Nihilism as Will to Nothingness”, in Christa Davis Acampora (ed.), *Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals: Critical Essays* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), pp.212f.

³³ See also GM III 21 5.392: “Ich wüsste kaum noch etwas Anderes geltend zu machen, was dermaßen zerstörerisch der Gesundheit und Rassen-Kräftigkeit, namentlich der Europäer, zugesetzt hat als dies Ideal”.

³⁴ Nehamas (1985), p.125. Nehamas is drawing on Sarah Kofman’s analysis of GM. See Kofman, *Nietzsche et la métaphore* (Paris: Payot, 1972) (esp. p.187).

³⁵ On this demonization of the strong and their values, see also GM I 7 and JGB 260. See also AC 5 6.171: “Man soll das Christenthum nicht schmücken und herausputzen: es hat einen Todkrieg gegen diesen höheren Typus Mensch gemacht, es hat alle Grundinstinkte dieses Typus in Bann gethan, es hat aus diesen Instinkten das Böse, den Bösen herausdestillirt, — der starke Mensch als der typisch Verwerfliche, der ‘verworfenene Mensch’. Das Christenthum hat die Partei alles Schwachen, Niedrigen, Missrathnen genommen, es hat ein Ideal aus dem Widerspruch gegen die Erhaltungs-Instinkte des starken Lebens gemacht”.

According to his account, the sick then subject the strong to unceasing judgement. Eventually the strong and healthy “[begönnen] sich eines Tags ihres Glücks zu schämen [...] und [sagten] vielleicht unter einander sich [...]: ‘es ist eine Schande, glücklich zu sein! es giebt zu viel Elend!’” (GM III 14 5.371). As such, they finally become infected with a great nausea (“Ekel”) and feeling of compassion (“Mitleid”) for man; and, with this, they have succumbed to the insidious spiral of altruism.³⁶ It is therefore owing to the aggressive attitude of *ressentiment* towards those that are healthy and capable of greatness that Nietzsche is most acerbically critical of the kinds of disgregation associated with altruistic morality.

The disgregation of one’s impulses is therefore criticised by Nietzsche on the grounds that it results in depression and caprice, which impedes intended activity – or what we might call *agency*. On the other hand, Nietzsche is critical of disgregation on account of the fact that it leads us towards counter-productive pseudo-remedies; and finally, he disparages this state owing to its virulently contagious nature, which jeopardises the health of humanity. So much for Nietzsche’s critique of *individual* disintegration; but what about *collective* disintegration?

4.2.2. COLLECTIVE DISINTEGRATION

Nietzsche’s view of the healthy society largely mirrors his vision of the healthy individual. As we just saw, he explicitly states that the healthy subject is a “Gesellschaftsbau” or “Gemeinwesen[.]” (JGB 19), describing “unsrer Subjekt-Einheit, [...] als Regenten an der Spitze eines Gemeinwesens, nicht als ‘Seelen’ oder ‘Lebenskräfte’, insgleichen von [...] den Bedingungen der Rangordnung und Arbeitstheilung als Ermöglichung zugleich der Einzelnen und des Ganzen” (NL

³⁶ This is why he states in GM, that morality is both a symptom *and* a cause: “Moral als Folge, als Symptom, als Maske, als Tartüfferie, als Krankheit, als Missverständnis; aber auch Moral als Ursache, als Heilmittel, als Stimulans, als Hemmung, als Gift” (GM Vorrede 6 5.253).

40[21] 11.638). On this interpretation, rank-order is a *sine qua non* of the strong state. Without this, the state is at risk of decaying and even perishing altogether. Yet this rank-order does not just enable the continued existence of society. It also facilitates its highest creative achievements – namely, the generation of higher individuals: “Jede Erhöhung des Typus ‘Mensch’ war bisher das Werk einer aristokratischen Gesellschaft” (JGB 257). The creation of higher individuals is an instance of collective agency that requires (according to Nietzsche) a form of hierarchical organisation that is analogous to that which enables individual agency. Since Nietzsche’s vision of the healthy state will be dissected in greater depth in Section 4, this will suffice as a foil against which we can now illuminate Nietzsche’s vision of social sickness.

As in the case of individual disintegration, Nietzsche is particularly bothered by the way in which social disintegration leads to the adoption of harmful moralities that, though sought as remedies, only serve to exacerbate the original pathology. In JGB 262, for example, he recounts how, when a society becomes an atomistic chaos of amorally self-interested individuals, each holding their own particular values, the members of that society become fearful of those who hold values opposed to them (they see danger “in den Nächsten und Freund, auf die Gasse, in’s eigne Kind”). In their need for law and security, the default course of action usually taken by such a group of individuals is to enact a blanket *suppression* of social conflict. This is achieved by resorting to moralities that encourage homogeneous mediocrity. The preachers of morality thus temptingly declare that mediocre humans “sind die Menschen der Zukunft, die einzig Überlebenden; ‘seid wie sie! werdet mittelmässig!’” they accordingly entreat us.³⁷ The moralities Nietzsche has in mind are those promulgating “Gleichheit der Rechte”, “Würde und Pflicht und Nächstenliebe” (JGB 44³⁸), as well as those which specifically support the

³⁷ Compare also NL 11[130] 9.488 and NL 11[182] 9.511-2, which very clearly prefigure this thought.

³⁸ See also NL 34[176] 11.478-9. In NL 26[282] 11.224, Nietzsche also rebukes democratic thinkers for not believing in higher forms of humanity: “Die Demokratie repräsentirt den

enlightenment democratic movement. Nietzsche censures these for contriving to bring about pacific homogeneity by mediocritising humankind and thereby suppressing all oppositional tension. As such, he indicts people such as Kant, with his vision of the “kingdom of ends”; socialist *libres-penseurs* such as Rousseau, who promoted democracy and equal rights for all; and Utilitarians such as Bentham and Spencer.³⁹

These Christian, or Christianity-inspired secular moralities have the effect of taming humans according to Nietzsche. In recommending universal values, they diminish the difference between individuals that originally gave rise to social struggle; hence, Nietzsche pejoratively brands such moralists *Nivellierer*. The prospect pursued by this moral programme is the society of “der letzte Mensch” – a society invariably dominated by a single type of tame and feeble individual, living in accordance with a universally shared, altruistic morality.⁴⁰

Wehe! *Es kommt die Zeit, wo der Mensch keinen Stern mehr gebären wird.* Wehe! Es kommt die Zeit des verächtlichsten Menschen, der sich selber nicht mehr verachten kann.

Seht! Ich zeige euch den letzten Menschen. [...]

Sie haben die Gegenden verlassen, wo es hart war zu leben: denn man braucht Wärme. Man liebt noch den Nachbar und reibt sich an ihm: denn man braucht Wärme. [...]

Unglauben an große Menschen und an Elite-Gesellschaft: ‘Jeder ist jedem gleich’ ‘Im Grunde sind wir allesamt eigennütziges Vieh und Pöbel’”.

³⁹ For Nietzsche’s critique of utilitarians as representatives of slave morality, see NL 25[242] 11.75 and NL 35[34] 11.523-4, JGB 228. On Spencer and Mill, see JGB 258. On the *libres-penseurs*, see JGB 44. On Kant, see NL 25[437] 11.128, NL 35[31] 11.522 and JGB 188. On Rousseau, see NL 7[46] 12.310, NL 9[3] 12.340-1 and GD Streifzüge 48 6.150.

⁴⁰ On the opposition of the last human and the *Übermensch*, see NL 4[171] 10.162, or Z IV Menschen 3 4.358, where Nietzsche warns that “diese kleinen Leute: die sind des Übermenschen grösste Gefahr!” Or JGB 62: “[E]ndlich [ist] eine verkleinerte, fast lächerliche Art, ein Heerdentier, etwas Gutwilliges, Kränkliches und Mittelmässiges, herangezüchtet [...], der heutige Europäer...” See also NL 11[44] 9.458: “Die Vorwegnehmenden. — Ich zweifle, ob jener Dauermensch, welchen die Zweckmäßigkeit der Gattungs-Auswahl endlich produzirt, viel höher als der Chinese stehen wird. Unter den Würfen sind viele unnütze und in Hinsicht auf jenes Gattungsziel vergängliche und wirkungslose — aber höhere: darauf laßt uns achten! Emancipiren wir uns von der Moral der Gattungs-Zweckmäßigkeit!”

Ein wenig Gift ab und zu: das macht angenehme Träume. Und viel Gift zuletzt, zu einem angenehmen Sterben. [...]

Kein Hirt und Eine Heerde! Jeder will das Gleiche, Jeder ist gleich: wer anders fühlt, geht freiwillig in's Irrenhaus. (Z Vorrede 5 4.19; my italics)

The society of the last human is unable to realise higher men (what Nietzsche refers to as *Sterne*). These tame individuals not only use a poison (“Gift” – i.e. morality) to anesthetise themselves, but also make every effort to create a social condition free of danger and difficulty. In seeking “das allgemeine grüne Weide-Glück der Heerde, mit Sicherheit, Ungefährlichkeit, Behagen, Erleichterung des Lebens für Jedermann” (JGB 44), Nietzsche, echoing social Darwinists such as Spencer, maintains that such egalitarian and altruistic moralities negate the very conditions under which great individuals arise. As Nietzsche asserts in JGB 44, “die Pflanze ‘Mensch’ [ist] am kräftigsten in die Höhe gewachsen” under conditions of tremendous “Gefährlichkeit”, which promote and motivate the cultivation of his higher capacities, particularly those of a *spiritual* kind; thus, “seine Erfindungs- und Verstellungskraft (sein ‘Geist’ —) unter langem Druck und Zwang [entwickeln] sich in’s Feine und Verwegene [...]”⁴¹ In furthering pacifism and comfort, idealist moralities suppress the conditions required for the emergence of exceptional individuals. Indeed, in robbing people of struggle and resistance, we can also infer that they rob people of the opportunity to exercise their will and enjoy the pleasurable feeling of freedom mentioned above. Moreover, in Nietzsche’s

⁴¹ In employing the metaphor of the plant, though Nietzsche is in many ways opposing himself to Kant, the same metaphor can be found in the latter’s *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*, in Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), *Kant’s gesammelte Schriften*, “Akademieausgabe”, 29 vols (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1922), vol.8, p.22. Here Kant argues that men need to live in a competitive society “so wie Bäume in einem Walde eben dadurch, daß ein jeder dem andern Luft und Sonne zu benehmen sucht, einander nöthigen beides über sich zu suchen und dadurch einen schönen geraden Wuchs bekommen; statt daß die, welche in Freiheit und von einander abgesondert ihre Äste nach Wohlgefallen treiben, krüppelig, schief und krumm wachsen.” On the renaissance origins of the notion of *die Pflanze Mensch*, see Nikola Regent, “A ‘Wondrous Echo’: Burckhardt, Renaissance and Nietzsche’s Political Thought”, in Herman Siemens and Vasti Roodt (eds.), *Nietzsche, Power and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche’s Legacy for Political Thought* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), pp.629-66 (pp.654ff.).

dystopian account of the society of the last human, the idea of a shepherd (“Hirt”), who had coordinated individuals into a hierarchy, has been completely done away with (what Nietzsche calls “misarchismus” in GM: “Die demokratische Idiosynkrasie gegen Alles, was herrscht und herrschen will” [GM II 12 5.315]).⁴² Thus, in pushing people towards egalitarian morality, social disgregation leads those people to undermine the very conditions of struggle, command and hierarchy that enable higher forms of collective and individual agency.

Furthermore, as we saw in our analysis of individual disgregation, the moral stance that proliferates in response to the social chaos caused by racial mixing does not merely negate the conditions under which greatness arises, according to Nietzsche, but is also *actively* hostile towards higher individuals insofar as it brands them evil.⁴³ Indeed, Nietzsche calls “das moralische Urtheil” the “Hauptmittel” in the struggle of the many against exceptional individuals (NL 2[168] 12.152). But socialist and democratic movements are not only noxious with respect to higher individuals insofar as they morally devalue these individuals. As Nietzsche makes clear in a note from 1888, the “soziale Mischmasch” brought about by the French-revolution unleashed the hostile forces of *ressentiment* that were previously constrained to the lower strata of society:

[...] der sociale Mischmasch, Folge der Revolution, der Herstellung gleicher Rechte, des Aberglaubens an “gleiche Menschen”. Dabei mischen sich die Träger der Niedergangs-Instinkte (des *ressentiment*, der Unzufriedenheit, des Zerstörer-Triebs, des Anarchismus und Nihilismus) [...] der lange unten gehaltenen Schichten in alles Blut

⁴² On this topic, see also NL 37[8] 11.581, where Nietzsche castigates the hope “aller Art Hirten und Leithammel zu erschlagen”.

⁴³ See e.g. JGB 201: “Alles, was den Einzelnen über die Heerde hinaushebt und dem Nächsten Furcht Macht, heisst von nun an böse; die billige, bescheidene, sich einordnende, gleichsetzende Gesinnung, das Mittelmaass der Begierden kommt zu moralischen Namen und Ehren.” NL 11[153] 13.72-3: “[M]an geradezu [brandmarkte] die großen Virtuosen des Lebens [...] mit den schimpflichsten Namen [...]. Noch jetzt glaubt man einen Cesare Borgia mißbilligen zu müssen [...]. Denkt man ein wenig consequent und außerdem mit einer vertieften Einsicht in das, was ein ‘großer Mensch’ ist, so unterliegt es keinem Zweifel, daß die Kirche alle ‘großen Menschen’ in die Hölle schickt —, sie kämpft gegen alle ‘Größe des Menschen’...”

aller Stände hinein: zwei, drei Geschlechter darauf ist die Rasse nicht mehr zu erkennen — Alles ist verpöbelt. Hieraus resultirt ein Gesamttinstinkt gegen die Auswahl, gegen das Privilegium jeder Art (NL 14[182] 13.367).

By eroding the superordinate structuring elements of society (what Nietzsche referred to as the “Hirt” in Z), he believes that this process of emancipation only worsens the lack of structure within society, culminating in an “Anarchie der Elemente” (NL 9[8] 12.343). Thus, it comes as little surprise that he so bitterly scorns the democratic movement for being “eine Verfalls-Form der politischen Organisation” and for driving the “Verkleinerung”, “Vermittelmässigung” and, indeed, the “gesamt-Entartung des Menschen” (JGB 203).⁴⁴

Nietzsche further reproaches democracy on account of its being a politics “des kurzen Blicks und der raschen Hand” (JGB 256) – that is, he criticises its *capricious* character. Short-term governments focus on correspondingly short-term goals.⁴⁵ Moreover, the impetuous nature of democratic states has infiltrated the modern psyche more generally; hence, in modernity, “[m]an lebt für heute, man lebt sehr geschwind, — man lebt sehr unverantwortlich: dies gerade nennt man ‘Freiheit.’” Nietzsche refers to this as a form of “Nervösität” (GD Streifzüge 39 6.141). In this social condition, the search for higher forms of humanity is marked by caprice: “Wenn dies kein Zeitalter des Verfalls und der abnehmenden

⁴⁴ For an informative summary of Nietzsche’s multifaceted critique of democracy, see Herman Siemens, “Nietzsche’s Critique of Democracy (1870—1886)”, *JNS*, 38 (2009), 20-37; and “Yes, No, Maybe So... Nietzsche’s Equivocations on the Relation between Democracy and ‘Grosse Politik’”, in Herman Siemens and Vasti Roodt (eds.), *Nietzsche, Power and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche’s Legacy for Political Thought* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), pp.231-68. As Herman Siemens (amongst others) has noted, Nietzsche makes a numerous of positive appraisals of democracy.

⁴⁵ This concern is foreshadowed in MA 472, where Nietzsche asserts that democratic “Concurrenz wird bald zu gross, die Menschen und Parteien wechseln zu schnell, stürzen sich gegenseitig zu wild vom Berge wieder herab, nachdem sie kaum oben angelangt sind. Es fehlt allen Maassregeln, welche von einer Regierung durchgesetzt werden, die Bürgerschaft ihrer Dauer; man scheut vor Unternehmungen zurück, welche auf Jahrzehnte, Jahrhunderte hinaus ein stilles Wachstum haben müssten, um reife Früchte zu zeitigen. Niemand fühlt eine andere Verpflichtung gegen ein Gesetz mehr, als die, sich augenblicklich der Gewalt, welche ein Gesetz einbrachte, zu beugen: sofort geht man aber daran, es durch eine neue Gewalt, eine neu zu bildende Majorität zu unterminiren.”

Lebenskraft mit viel Melancholie ist, so ist es zum Mindesten eines des unbesonnenen, willkürlichen Versuchens” (NL 1[236] 12.62). Notwithstanding such turbulent political conditions, under which greatness is at best capriciously groped for, great humans *do* arise (“höherwerthigere Typus ist oft genug schon dagewesen”); however, Nietzsche’s criticism is that their realisation is still too fitful and unintended – it only arises “als ein Glücksfall, als eine Ausnahme, niemals als gewollt” (AC 3 6.170). Hence, modern Europeans suffer from a “demokratische Vielwollerei” (JGB 208) and an inability to commit to long-term, transgenerational goals – precisely what is needed for the deliberate creation of higher forms of humanity.⁴⁶ An example of this is where Nietzsche indicates that education should not be directed towards the short-term needs of society, “sondern einem zukünftigen Nutzen” – that is, “die Züchtung einer stärkeren Rasse” (NL 9[153] 12.425).

As JGB 208 and 256 make evident, disgregation is a condition that, for Nietzsche, afflicts not just the will of individuals and societies, but also that of Europe as a whole. This is due to the prevalence of nationalism, the “krankhaften Entfremdung, welche der Nationalitäts-Wahnsinn zwischen die Völker Europa’s gelegt hat und noch legt” (JGB 256). Nietzsche scathingly refers to this “Kleinstaaterei” as the “auseinanderlösende Politik” of his day. What is therefore exigent at this pan-European level, says Nietzsche, is “Einen Willen zu bekommen” (JGB 208).

Regarding both the individual and society, then, Nietzsche warns of two poles of disorganisation that roughly reflect the two key pathologies of the will. First, that of anarchic disorganisation, where tensions are too high and the constituent parts lack a higher organising force. As a consequence, impulses mutually frustrate one

⁴⁶ This need for a transgeneration project, which will be examined in greater detail below, is most clearly expressed in NL 37[8] 11.581-3. See also GD Streifzüge 39 6.141 and NL 11[31] 13.17-8. On Nietzsche’s emphasis on the need for a long-term will, see also JGB 212: “Heute schwächt und verdünnt der Zeitgeschmack und die Zeittugend den Willen, Nichts ist so sehr zeitgemäss als Willensschwäche: also muss, im Ideale des Philosophen, gerade Stärke des Willens, Härte und Fähigkeit zu langen Entschliessungen in den Begriff ‘Grösse’ hineingehören”.

another, and the activity of the given whole is left erratic and marked by caprice. Secondly, we have the condition of depression – a torpid homogeneity defined by a wholesale *loss* of tension. Whether at the level of society or the individual, these extremes, and the therapies usually adopted to remedy them, are criticised by Nietzsche on account of their frustrating agency and rendering mankind impotent, particularly with respect to the goal of generating higher forms of humanity. This said, it is important to observe that in reality Nietzsche thinks that modern society is an admixture of these extremes:

Überall Lähmung, Mühsal, Erstarrung oder Feindschaft und Chaos: *beides immer mehr in die Augen springend*, in je höhere Formen der Organisation man aufsteigt. Das Ganze lebt überhaupt nicht mehr: es ist zusammengesetzt, gerechnet, künstlich, ein Artefakt. – ” (WA 7 6.27; my italics)

This excerpt from WA also demonstrates that Nietzsche understands these two extremes as states of mere *aggregation* (*Zusammensetzung*), in contrast to which he seeks to establish a form of *holism* (*Ganzheit*) – that is, a species of unity that navigates between the Scylla of anarchy and the Charybdis of depression. In the following two sections, our task is to explore in greater detail just what this condition of healthy measure looks like and, decisively, how it can be achieved.⁴⁷

Before examining this, however, we should consider an objection to my analysis – namely, that perhaps, according to Nietzsche’s presentation of the problem, there is no real need to actively strive for organisation at all. Indeed, there is a highly sanguine overtone to Nietzsche’s later thought insofar as he repeatedly suggests that this vicious cycle (from sickness to poisoned chalice) generates the very conditions for its own overcoming.⁴⁸ Gerd Schank has claimed that far from

⁴⁷ Indeed, Aristotle draws a similar distinction between aggregation and substantial holism. For an excellent summary of this distinction in Aristotle, see Theodore Scaltsas, “Substantial Holism”, in Theodore Scaltsas and David Charles (eds.), *Unity, Identity, and Explanation in Aristotle’s Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.107-28.

⁴⁸ See e.g. NL 35[10] 11.512: “Dieselben Bedingungen, welche die Entwicklung des Heerdenthieres vorwärts treiben, treiben auch die Entwicklung des Führer-Thiers.”

being critical of the mixing of races, Nietzsche is to be distinguished from racist thinkers such as Gobineau insofar as, “[w]enn bei Gobineau die Mischung seiner biologischen ‘Rassen’ grundsätzlich nur zu negativen Resultaten führen kann, *so ist es bei Nietzsche eher umgekehrt*: die Mischung der Völker trägt zur Erhöhung des Menschen bei.”⁴⁹ On the one hand, the psychological melee of impulses gives the tyrant precisely the inner tension he has to harness in order to cultivate a strong self (JGB 200). Added to this, the weakness of will so widespread in others, gives such strong individuals a vulnerable social group ripe for exploitation. As such, “die Demokratisierung Europa’s ist zugleich eine unfreiwillige Veranstaltung zur Züchtung von Tyrannen” (JGB 242).⁵⁰

Nonetheless, a close reading of the relevant texts shows Nietzsche to be at best deeply ambivalent towards, and more often openly critical of, the forms of disintegration associated with the crossing of races (and, similarly, democracy and herd-morality). Indeed, he describes “Willens-Disgregation” (NL 14[83] 13.263) – the “Gegeneinander der Leidenschaften, die Zweiheit, Dreiheit, Vielheit der ‘Seelen in Einer Brust’” – as “sehr ungesund, innerer Ruin, auseinanderlösend, einen inneren Zwiespalt und Anarchismus verrathend und steigernd”, which is to say, as the very quintessence of “Ungesundheit” (NL 14[157] 13.342).⁵¹ Moreover, as Paul van Tongeren notes, in many texts, Nietzsche certainly does not conceive of the overcoming of slave morality as an “automatisch[er] Prozeß”. Rather, Nietzsche emphasises the fact that his higher types “missrathen könnten” (JGB 201).⁵² Herd morality presents us with a very real danger: for example, in JGB 203, he warns that “diese Verthierung des Menschen zum Zwergthiere der gleichen Rechte und

⁴⁹ Schank (2000), p.440; my italics. Schank also cites Ottmann (1987, p.251) in support of his claim.

⁵⁰ As Paul van Tongeren (1989) has noted, for Nietzsche, it seems as though “[d]er Sklavenaufstand schlägt gewissermaßen von selbst in sein Gegenteil um” (p.148). Paul van Tongeren has also drawn a comparison between Nietzsche’s position and the master-slave dialectic in Hegel (ibid., p.148). We also find this thought articulated both in Kant’s later political writings and Karl Marx’s *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*.

⁵¹ See also NL 14[83] 13.262-3, where Nietzsche associates *Willens-Disgregation* with *Décadence*.

⁵² See also JGB 242.

Ansprüche *ist möglich, es ist kein Zweifel!*” (my italics).⁵³ Indeed, in the preface to GM, he states that “die Moral daran Schuld wäre, wenn eine an sich mögliche höchste Mächtigkeit und Pracht des Typus Mensch niemals erreicht würde”, signalling in the same text that he conceives of this situation as a genuine possibility (GM Vorrede 6 5.253).

Accordingly, for Nietzsche, whoever has appreciated this fearsome possibility “kennt einen Ekel mehr, als die übrigen Menschen, — und vielleicht auch eine neue Aufgabe!....” (JGB 203). The task of realising higher forms of humanity is one that can only be achieved “mit einer grundsätzlichen künstlichen und *bewußten Züchtung* des entgegengesetzten Typus und seiner Tugenden” (NL 2[13] 12.73; my italics)⁵⁴; and simultaneously, “[m]an muss ungeheure Gegenkräfte anrufen, um [...] die Fortbildung des Menschen in’s Ähnliche, Gewöhnliche, Durchschnittliche, Heerdenhafte — in’s Gemeine! — zu kreuzen” (JGB 268). In light of these remarks, we can soundly conclude that Nietzsche’s optimism is not intended to breed a complacent sense of confidence, but rather a *hopeful* sense of the real possibility of raising “eine Stärkere Art” out of the “kosmopolitisches Affekt- und Intelligenzen-Chaos” that characterises modern man and society (NL 11[31] 13.17).⁵⁵

As compared with UB, however, this project now faces two novel obstacles. First, in redescribing the problem as one of race, rather than being primarily associated with culturally acquired *Bildung* (as in UB), the crisis has now been traced back to drives, which have a more inveterate component. How can we reorganise these deeply engrained tendencies? Second, Nietzsche cannot prescribe his earlier remedy in response to this later diagnosis of pathological discordance – namely, on account of the fact that he has repudiated the metaphysical bases that preconditioned

⁵³ See also GM I 12 5.278: “Denn so steht es: die Verkleinerung und Ausgleichung des europäischen Menschen birgt unsre grösste Gefahr”.

⁵⁴ On the need to consciously cultivate higher men, see also NL 9[153]12.425.

⁵⁵ However, compare NL 26[117] 11.181, where Nietzsche doubts whether we should consciously struggle for the realisation of higher individuals: “Könnten wir die günstigsten Bedingungen voraussehen, unter denen Wesen entstehen vom höchsten Werthe! Es ist tausend Mal zu complizirt, und die Wahrscheinlichkeit des Mißrathens sehr groß: so begeistert es nicht, danach zu streben! — Sceptis.”

this remedy (i.e. insight into the Platonic self, and the teleological structure of nature). In the following section, I will explicate how he resolves this latter obstacle by formulating a non-metaphysical account of how organisational struggle is able to generate functional coherence.

4.3. A NON-METAPHYSICAL ACCOUNT OF ORGANISATIONAL STRUGGLE

As will become evident, echoing UB, the later Nietzsche once again promotes organisational conflict as a means to establishing functional order – that is, he recommends a struggle for both the exclusion of that which is superfluous or harmful and the instrumentalisation of weaker forces within a hierarchy. To be sure, commentators have observed the parallelism between Nietzsche’s earlier and later conceptions of incorporation, and in support of this, I will be arguing that his later conception of organisational conflict in fact fulfils the majority of the criteria that characterised Schopenhauer’s notion of assimilative conflict.⁵⁶ However, these commentators have not posed the question with which I shall now be concerned: how, in the later works, does Nietzsche think organisational conflict (and therefore the functional order that it supports) emerges without the underlying metaphysical presuppositions of his earlier model?

Answering this question requires that we make a study of Roux’s *Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus. Ein Beitrag zur Vervollständigung der mechanischen Zweckmässigkeitslehre*, which represents a sustained attempt to formulate an account of how the (inner) *Zweckmäßigkeit* of organisms can emerge from purely

⁵⁶ See e.g. Keith Ansell-Pearson, “The Incorporation of Truth: Towards the Overhuman”, in Keith Ansell-Pearson (ed.), *A Companion to Nietzsche* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp.230-49 (p.235). See also Vanessa Lemm (2013), 3-19.

mechanical causal processes.⁵⁷ Indeed, an overview of Nietzsche's writings shows that, despite some notable exceptions, following UB, there is almost no discussion of *Einverleibung* or *Assimilieren* until his reading of Wilhelm Roux in 1881. At this point, this theme suddenly becomes a *Schwerpunkt* in Nietzsche's thought.⁵⁸ If we want to get a clear view of his non-metaphysical account of how *Zweckmäßigkeit* arises from a struggle for organisation, we must therefore first turn to Roux.

4.3.1. ROUX ON THE SOURCES OF *ZWECKMÄßIGKEIT*

For Roux, organisms are characterised by pervasive internal struggle. Indeed, as with Schopenhauer, it is through this struggle that the organism emerges as a complex *zweckmäßig* unity. In KTO, Roux first pits himself against Darwin's and Wallace's thesis that evolutionary development is a result of natural selection, understood as a struggle for existence ("Kampf ums Dasein") that is fought *between* organisms.⁵⁹ He does not deny that this account identifies a pivotal mechanism of evolutionary development, but he nevertheless criticises it for overlooking the role of the struggle fought *within* the individual organism itself – that is, between its constituent parts. Building on Virchow's discovery that cells could be extracted from one organism and transplanted into another – and thus that the organism was a "Bund" or "Gesellschaft" of relatively independent parts – Roux makes the further claim that these semi-autonomous components are engaged in a Darwinian contest with one another. In other words, there is an internal, as well as an external, process of natural selection.⁶⁰ On the other hand, and more importantly with respect to our current

⁵⁷ As the *Nachlass* reveals, Nietzsche's first encounter with KTO was in 1881 and he subsequently revisited the book in 1883 and 1884. See Müller-Lauter (1999), p.163.

⁵⁸ As David Krell has observed. However, as Keith Ansell Pearson (2006, p.235) notes, Krell underemphasises the presence of the theme of incorporation in the early works. See David Krell, *Infectious Nietzsche* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

⁵⁹ See KTO, pp.3-4.

⁶⁰ See KTO, p.65: "Wie dort der Kampf der Ganzen zum Uebrigbleiben des Besten führte, so kann er es wohl auch unter den Theilen gethan haben und noch thun". On Roux's use of

focus, Roux also opposes himself to the idea of teleological causality – specifically the idea (which we saw was propounded by Kant and Aristotle) that we cannot conceive of the origin of organic organisations without resorting to the supposition that they have been *desired* (“gewollt”) by nature. Like the Nietzsche of 1868, Roux sides with Empedocles, rejecting the notion of “einer nach vorbedachten Zielen gestaltenden Kraft”, and wanting to defend the idea that inner *Zweckmäßigkeit* is “eine gewordene, keine teleologische, sondern eine naturhistorische, auf mechanische Weise entstandene.”⁶¹

Roux hypothesises that this internal conflict occurs at four different levels: among (intra-cellular) molecules; among cells; among tissues; and among organs.⁶² Recalling Nietzsche’s vision of the *Wettkampf*, Roux sees this internal conflict as taking place *inter pares* – i.e. confined to parts of similar orders of complexity (cells struggle with cells, organs with organs, etc.). Thus, whereas those co-existing within a given strata are engaged in mutual struggle, there is no such struggle *between* these strata:

[I]n einen Kampf der Zellentheilchen, der Zellen, der Gewebe und der Organe, jede Einheit nur mit Ihresgleichen kämpfend. Denn ein Kampf zwischen Angehörigen verschiedener Einheiten, etwa eines Plasson-Moleküls mit einer Zelle, oder einer Zelle mit einem Organ wäre wie eine Summation von Differentialen verschiedener Ordnung.⁶³

Though the nature of this conflict varies depending on the physiological order in question, the struggle is consistently figured as a struggle over space and nutrition

Virchow, see KTO, pp.65-6. Nietzsche notes this independence in NL 7[92] 10.274: “Relative Selbständigkeit der Theile selbst in den höchsten Organismen Roux p 65.”

⁶¹ KTO, p.1, p.2.

⁶² As we can see from NL 11[128] 9.487, Nietzsche was clearly aware of this: “Jetzt hat man den Kampf überall wieder entdeckt und redet vom Kampfe der Zellen, Gewebe, Organe, Organismen.”

⁶³ KTO, p.72. Yet there are exceptions to this rule – i.e. there is some mobility between the various orders of unities – as cells develop into tissues or organs develop out of tissues through extended use: “Erst wenn sich die Eigenschaft eines Theilchens niederer Ordnung durch Ausbreitung zu einer Individualität höherer Ordnung vergrößert hat, also erst, wenn das Differential zweiter Ordnung zu einem erster Ordnung integriert ist, kann der Kampf mit einem anderen Individuum dieser höheren Ordnung beginnen” (ibid.).

(“Raum und Nahrung”). Roux continues by showing how this conflict is driven by the fact that “die Theile nicht vollkommen gleich unter einander sind”.⁶⁴ Certainly, there can be approximate, temporary equality, but never *absolute* equality (“absolute Gleichheit”) according to Roux: astute observation of nature, he tells us, demonstrates that all apparently stable relations of equality are only ever *temporarily* so, and any state of equality between the parts of an organisation (whether organic or inorganic) will inevitably be disrupted.⁶⁵

Of the four orders of complexity, Roux begins at the bottom with the struggle between molecules (“Molekel”). Within cells, he tells us, there are molecules that serve the function of producing energy. There is then variation in the efficiency with which these molecules are able to assimilate nutrients from their surroundings. It is by means of this assimilation that they replace the energy they have expended in striving to regenerate themselves (i.e. grow and reproduce). This capacity is then correlated with relative differences in how effectively they can respond to certain available “trophic” stimuli, which facilitate this process of assimilation and growth (e.g. warmth, nervous stimulation, or different wavelengths of light).⁶⁶ Roux theorises that, given this inequality, those molecules that exhibit greater efficiency in this struggle will reproduce at a greater rate than other competing variants; consequently, given the limited space within an organism, those lacking the advantageous trait are edged out of existence.⁶⁷ Between molecules of a similar function, responding to similar stimuli, this is an eliminative struggle, and,

⁶⁴ KTO, p.68.

⁶⁵ KTO, p.69: “Jeder Naturkundige weiss, dass nie dasselbe Geschehen unverändert längere Zeit fortbesteht, nie in vollkommen gleicher Weise wiederkehrt, dass alles in fortwährendem Wechsel ist, das Anorganische wie das Organische.” For evidence of Nietzsche’s having read this, see NL [93] 10.274: “Über die thatsächliche vorhandene Ungleichheit Roux. 69.”

⁶⁶ KTO, pp.79-80.

⁶⁷ See KTO, p.73: “So wird zunächst bei dem Ersatze des im Stoffwechsel Verbrauchten das mit stärkeren Affinitäten Versehene und stärker Assimilirende sich rascher regeneriren, als das weniger mit diesen Eigenschaften Ausgestattete.” See also p.75: “Wenn die Substanzen derartig verschieden sind, dass die eine mit der gebotenen Qualität des Nahrungsmaterials vollkommener sich regeneriren kann, als die andere, so wird schliesslich die so günstiger gestellte die stärkere werden und beim Wachstum die andere verdrängen, wiederum im Kampfe um den Raum.”

as Roux puts it, the strongest achieve “Alleinherrschaft” (though new variants are always emerging and challenging this monopoly).⁶⁸

For types of molecules that respond to different trophic stimuli, however, it remains difficult for them to eliminate one another; since they are unable to exploit the same stimuli, each occupy an environmental niche. Hence, various types of molecules, ever more specialised to particular stimuli, are continually emerging from the struggle; these variously specialised molecules are then said to exist in a state of dynamic “Gleichgewicht” as they compete over space and nutrition but are nonetheless unable to eradicate one another.⁶⁹ This improved efficiency and functional differentiation aids the organism as a whole, though it should be underscored that, for Roux, this improvement takes place “ohne jede Rücksicht auf Spezialzweckmässigkeit für den ganzen Organismus”.⁷⁰

We find a similar dynamic as we ascend to the higher strata of this intra-organismic struggle, where there is again conflict between functionally differentiated parts, though now the survival of each of these parts is equally indispensable for the whole. This applies not only to the struggle between different types of cells, but also to the struggle among tissue types or organs. In this case, the stronger organs cannot simply force the less efficient out of existence, for this would result in a Pyrrhic victory, leading to the death of the whole organism (and *a fortiori*, the victorious part). Any part that develops a variation that makes it excessively aggressive, to the detriment of other necessary parts, will either outrightly kill the organism or sufficiently weaken it in its Darwinian struggle against other organisms that this variation will be edged out of existence (as an example, Roux cites the

⁶⁸ See KTO, p.76: “[S]o muss diese wichtige Eigenschaft die Alleinherrschaft über alle anderen Qualitäten gewinnen”. See also p.78. For evidence of Nietzsche’s being aware of this, see NL 7[86] 10.272: “[B]essere Fähigkeit, sich zu ernähren und geringerer Verbrauch für die eigenen Bedürfnisse — moralisch zu wenden! — günstige Vorbedingungen des Wachstums und somit der Alleinherrschaft.”

⁶⁹ See KTO, p.82; see also p.86 on the *Gleichgewicht* of molecule types.

⁷⁰ KTO, p.86.

adverse effect that an excess of fatty tissue has on the heart⁷¹). Indeed, to a limited extent we might consider this process as analogous to the practice of ostracism, whereby excessively dominant individuals (i.e. variants) are removed for the sake of the whole; however, now this measure arises by virtue of a Darwinistic mechanism in nature, rather than (collectively) intended action.⁷² Thus, these biological parts will automatically tend towards relations of harmony with one other, which are always being disrupted and adjusted due to the emergence of novel variations.⁷³ On this account, the struggle over space, nutrition and trophic stimuli must therefore proceed in such a way that an equilibrium (“Gleichgewicht”) is maintained.⁷⁴

However, Roux maintains that this *Gleichgewicht* can, within certain bounds, be *actively* maintained by the higher functions of the organism – namely, insofar as the capacity for growth exhibited by a given part of an organism is conditioned by what he calls functional stimulation (“funktionelle Reize”). This is a type of nervous stimulus that facilitates assimilation and growth: the more

⁷¹ KTO, p.97.

⁷² KTO, p.103: “Wenn der Kampf der Organe somit das Gute hat, dass er Unhaltbares aus der Reihe des Lebenden rasch entfernt, so muss auch daran gedacht werden, dass er zugleich im Stande sein kann, manche vielleicht das stärkste für den Organismus leistenden Verbindungen zu unterdrücken, wenn sie morphologisch kräftiger sind als die der anderen Organe.” Compare Aristotle’s description of why the strongest individual in a human collective must often be removed for the sake of the whole. He compares this political observation to the fact that “the painter will not allow the figure to have a foot which, however beautiful, is not in proportion, nor will the ship-builder allow the stern or any other part of the vessel to be unduly large, any more than the chorus-master will allow anyone who sings louder or better than all the rest to sing in the choir” (*Politics*, 1284b4-1284b34).

⁷³ See KTO, p.98: “Da Mangel des Gleichgewichts zwischen den verschiedenen Geweben sehr rasch zum Tode der Individuen und somit zur Elimination derselben und ihrer nachtheiligen Qualität aus der Reihe der Lebenden führt, so mussten in den überlebenden Individuen bloß Zustände des Gleichgewichts der Gewebe übrig bleiben und so eine harmonische Einheit des ganzen Organismus durch Selbstelimination des Abweichenden gezüchtet werden. Das so entstandene Gleichgewicht wurde aber bloß für eine gewisse normale Lebensbreite erworben und kann durch Veränderung der Bedingungen leicht gestört werden.”

⁷⁴ For evidence that Nietzsche read this, see NL 7[190] 10.302-3: “Mangel an Gleichgewicht zwischen den Geweben führt rasch zum Tode der Individuen und zur Elimination derselben und ihrer nachtheilhaften Qualität aus der Reihe der Lebenden: bloß Zustände des Gleichgewichts bleiben übrig: so würde eine harmonische Einheit des ganzen Organismus gezüchtet durch Selbst-Elimination des Abweichenden.”

stimulation received by a part, or the more responsive a part is to that stimulation, the more nutrients it can assimilate and the more it can therefore grow. Since for Roux *use* increases stimulation, the brain apportions this functional stimulus in such a way that growth correlates to use. Growth is therefore regulated without the need of an internal entelechy or conscious intention, as organisms naturally tend towards a balance between the organs that is suited to their needs.⁷⁵ This is what Roux calls “Selbstregulierung”.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, every organ is perpetually pushing to assimilate and grow as much as possible. As soon as an organ receives more stimulation, it will further succeed in its struggle against other organs and thereby grow at the expense of their counterparts (Roux gives the example of a breastfeeding woman whose bones suffer as a result of the increased growth of the breasts).⁷⁷ In this way, the tense struggle of counterforces over nutrition and space is constant and the *Gleichgewicht* of bodily parts is dynamic and ceaselessly shifting with the changing requirements of the organism.

Roux mistakenly defends the Lamarckian idea that characteristics acquired through these internal conflicts would be passed on to progeny, and that the complexity of organs and bodily systems are the result of their increased *use* and activity across successive generations.⁷⁸ On his account, inner conflict thereby generates the fittest Darwinian organisms in a non-teleological manner. With the constant variation of individual parts blindly struggling for *Reiz*, *Raum* and *Nahrung*, and the capacity and balance of these parts perpetually being tested in the struggle against other organisms, the whole will naturally tend towards a complex and

⁷⁵ KTO, p.113: “Da diese Reize aber bloß infolge der Thätigkeit des ganzen Organismus stattfinden, indem sie alle direct oder indirect von dem Reizcentrum in dem Gehirn abhängen, so werden sie eben bloß das für den ganzen Organismus Zweckmässige hervorbringen”.

⁷⁶ See e.g. KTO, p.112.

⁷⁷ KTO, p.106.

⁷⁸ KTO, p.61: “Durch die Zurückführung erworbener Formänderungen auf chemische Aenderungen und durch deren leichtere Uebertragbarkeit auf den Samen und auf das Ei in dem chemische Stoffwechsel, welcher zwischen ihnen und dem Vater resp. der Mutter stattfindet, wird das Problem der Vererbung als solches aufgehoben [...]” See also, p.24.

functionally integrated holism, although many poorly organised organisms have to perish in the process.⁷⁹

Now that we have a general overview of the struggle Roux identifies within the body of any organism, we should take a closer look at the process of assimilation, which we have seen to be fundamental to this struggle. Assimilation takes two forms for Roux. The first is of a catabolic, nutritive kind. Roux argues that a necessary (and even sufficient) condition of being an organism is having a certain degree of durability (“Dauerhaftigkeit”). In order to survive, he tells us, an organism must consume more energy than it expends – a capacity that is conditioned by the organism’s “Assimilationsfähigkeit”:

Die erste Eigenschaft, welche ihn unter diesen ungünstigen Umständen in der Dauer begünstigt, ist die Assimilationsfähigkeit. Sie besteht darin, dass der organische Process das Vermögen hat, fremd beschaffene Theile in ihm gleiche umzuwandeln, differente Atomgruppierungen in ihm gleiche umzugruppiren, also Fremdes qualitativ sich anzueignen und so das Nöthige sich selber zu produciren, wenn nur die Rohmaterialien dazu vorhanden sind. Das Wesen dieser Fähigkeit ist eine Art Selbstproduction, “Selbstgestaltung des Nöthigen”. (KTO, p.216)

Recalling Nietzsche’s notion of “plastische Kraft”, this is a process of rendering that which is foreign familiar (“Fremdes qualitativ sich anzueignen”). However, Roux’s conception of assimilation is, like Schopenhauer’s, far more obviously destructive – namely, insofar as it involves the attraction and catabolism of existing foreign unities into their different constituent “Atomgruppierungen”, followed by the incorporation of those groupings of atoms that can be used as energetic compensation for the

⁷⁹ We should observe, however, that Roux does not give a clear account of how life and self-organisation *originally* emerged from mechanical laws, nor does he explain how variation occurs. Indeed, at the close of KTO, though he hypothesises that organismic assimilative processes may have originated in fire, he indicates that we must simply wonder at why life processes take place at all, just as we must wonder at why there are physical or chemical laws. See KTO, p.230, pp.240-1.

organismic part in question.⁸⁰ This then issues in growth (“Wachsthum”) and reproduction (“Fortpflanzung”). What should also be accented is that Roux states that what defines an organism is its capacity not merely to compensate, but to *over*-compensate, for its energetic losses.⁸¹ This is the very foundation of an organism’s “Dauerhaftigkeit” because *under*-compensation results in diminution and death, and *mere* compensation does not allow for periods during which there is no available nutrition or during which there are other unanticipated environmental pressures.⁸² Roux describes assimilation as motivated by a form of hunger; however, in this context, hunger does not signify a psychologically represented craving, but rather simply a strong *affinity* for nutrition when there is a need for said nutrition.⁸³

Likewise, in connection with these processes, of almost equal priority for the survival and success of any intra-organismic entity in the *Kampf der Theile* is the organic function of *excretion* or *Beseitigung*. This involves the removal of the harmful byproducts of catabolic assimilation: those parts of the foreign that cannot be rendered familiar and exploited. Thus, as Roux puts it: “Zu den wichtigen allgemeinen Lebensbedingungen gehört auch die Beseitigung der Stoffwechselproducte; denn ihre Anhäufung würde schädlich sein.”⁸⁴ Those parts of the body better able to remove (*beseitigen*) the detrimental byproducts of

⁸⁰ Roux compares this to the process by which a military regiment trains and then incorporates new recruits while expelling old ones – all the while, the regiment retains its general structure: “[Die Assimilation] ist zu vergleichen der Ausbildung der Recruten bei einem Regimente; immer werden neue Mannschaften durch die Unterofficiere eingeschult, ‘assimilirt’, und dies geschieht in den Regimentern jeder Waffengattung in anderer Weise. Und immer scheiden wieder alte oder getödtete aus dem Verbande aus” (KTO, p.56).

⁸¹ See KTO, pp.216-7.

⁸² See KTO, p.217: “[N]eben der Assimilation ist das nächste allgemeine Erforderniss der organischen Wesen die Uebercomensation des Verbrauches.” He also places *Uebercompensation* on an equal footing with *Selbstregulation*: “Selbstregulation und Uebercompensation sind also die Grundeigenschaften und die nöthigen Vorbedingungen des Lebens.” (KTO, p.226). For evidence of Nietzsche’s knowledge of these passages, see e.g. NL 7[95] 10.274.

⁸³ See KTO, p.222: “Die Dauerprocesse müssen Hunger haben. Dieses Wort ist hier natürlich nicht als eine bewusste Empfindung, sondern in der Bedeutung einer stärkeren chemischen Affinität zur Nahrung bei stärkerem Nahrungsbedürfniss aufzufassen.”

⁸⁴ KTO, p.95.

metabolism are favoured in the *Kampf der Theile* since the accumulation of such waste reduces the efficiency with which assimilation and growth can proceed. At the level of functionally similar cells and molecules, those variants which excrete with relatively less efficiency are therefore selected out.

This catabolic process certainly represents the dominant mode of assimilation in Roux's account; however, we also find that he mentions another model. Catabolic assimilation represents an *indirect* form of conflict, in which parts only struggle against one another insofar as they compete for space and nutrition; however, he also contends that parts exhibiting novel traits (i.e. "neu auftretende Eigenschaften") can

[i]m directen Kampfe mit den alten siegen und sich ausbreiten, indem letztere entweder direct zerstört oder von den neuen verbraucht, assimilirt werden (die Assimilation ist ja selber der allgemeinste progressive Process), vielleicht unter fermentativer Wirkungsweise oder ähnlich wie der Erregungszustand in Nerven und Muskeln sich ausbreitet, oder auf sonst eine noch unbekannte Weise. (KTO, p.87)⁸⁵

In the direct struggle of molecules, weaker molecules are often simply destroyed ("zerstört"); yet, sometimes, the weaker molecules are *assimilated*. This is a type of assimilation that results in what contemporary biologists would call "endosymbiosis", in which an existing biological unity is preserved in being incorporated, but in such a way as to allow the stronger, assimilating entity to exploit the activity of the assimilated part. Unfortunately, however, Roux says very little about this secondary type of assimilation.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Nietzsche transcribes this quotation in NL 7[86] 10.272.

⁸⁶ Roux also discusses another form of assimilation – namely, embryonic assimilation, which is not so pertinent to our current study. Moreover, there no evidence (of which I am aware) in the *Nachlass* that Nietzsche paid this much attention. In short, Roux tells us that while an organism is still growing, what it assimilates can alter the structure of the organism itself – namely, because in the process of assimilating new substances, the organism exercises and uses its body and thereby actively alters the way in which it will develop. In opposition to the example of the rigid military regiment, Roux compares this to the school class whose teachers accept new pupils, but as they do so, the teachers are also replaced (and the organisational statutes transformed): "[D]as Wunderbare ist nun, dass die Lehrer sich dabei weiter verändern und die Schüler ebenfalls. Die Statuten sind also keine festen, sondern für

As such, Roux offers us a naturalised account (albeit one that has dated badly) of how complex higher organisms come into existence – that is to say, an account that does not rely on the existence of pre-given metaphysical unities such as Aristotle’s essences or Schopenhauer’s Platonic *Ideen*, or the idea of such unity in the mind of a divine creator (à la Kant). Over the course of generations, how a given organisation will develop out of this process of internal conflict – driven by the impetus for nutritive assimilation, over-compensation and growth – is *contingent*, being determined by the organism’s activity in relation to its environment, rather than by a metaphysically predetermined blueprint. The *Zweckmäßigkeit* of the organism develops simply from the relation of the various parts struggling to overcompensate for losses (“[d]ie Theile leben blos für die eigene Erhaltung”⁸⁷) combined with the higher Darwinian contest *between* organisms, which forces imbalanced organisations out of existence. On the one hand, this is a measured process, whereby certain nutritive materials, or exploitable cells, are selected from the environment and incorporated, and, furthermore, where the struggle of functionally differentiated parts is characterised by a species of *Gleichgewicht*. But we have also discerned that this struggle is conditioned by unmeasured processes: organismic parts must firstly engage in the catabolism of higher unities as a means to extracting nutrition therefrom, and secondly, the exclusion or excretion of unuseable metabolic by-products. Looking ahead to our critique of agonistic readings of Nietzsche, what should be accented is that in Roux, exploitation and exclusion are preconditions of healthy conflictual organisation. On the other hand, against the unmeasured or destructive understanding of exploitation we find in the radical aristocratic reading, Roux’s weaker entities must often be preserved if they are functionally unique, or if they have been incorporated through direct struggle. Nonetheless, it remains to be seen to what extent Roux’s vision of the grounds of healthy organisation is taken up by Nietzsche.

jede folgende Zeit andere für Lehrer und Schüler” (KTO, p.56). See also pp.66-7. Indeed, in this sense, we might view Roux as a forerunner of epigenetics.

⁸⁷ KTO, p.220.

4.3.2. EXPLOITATION NOT PRESERVATION

We know from the *Nachlass* and his heavily annotated copy of KTO, that Nietzsche was very much familiar with Roux's construal of the organism.⁸⁸ Indeed, almost without reservation, Nietzsche initially accepts Roux's model of healthy organisation and the processes that underpin it (i.e. assimilation, over-compensation and self-regulation); moreover, he tries to apply this model to the problem of social and psychological organisation.⁸⁹ However, we should note the way in which, from the outset, he appropriates Roux's vision of the body. As Müller-Lauter has stressed, Nietzsche rejects KTO as an example of scientific realism.⁹⁰ As Nietzsche states: "Jetzt hat man den Kampf überall wieder entdeckt und redet vom Kampfe der Zellen, Gewebe, Organe, Organismen"; however, he argues, struggle is in some sense a peculiarly human affect (i.e. the feeling of being in a state of conflict), and projecting it onto the intraorganismic relation of parts can only ever produce an "intellektuelle[.] Ausdeutung[.]" of "physiologischen Bewegungen," ("dort wo der Intellekt gar nichts weiß, aber doch alles zu wissen meint").⁹¹ As such,

Unsere Naturwissenschaft ist jetzt auf dem Wege, sich die kleinsten Vorgänge zu verdeutlichen durch unsere angelernten Affekt-Gefühle, kurz eine Sprechart zu schaffen für jene Vorgänge: sehr gut! Aber es bleibt eine Bilderrede. (NL 11[128] 9.487)

Despite the lack of its objective truth, he still holds this *Sprechart* to be a helpful heuristic device for talking about fundamental organic processes and rendering them

⁸⁸ See also Giuliano Campioni, Paolo d'Iorio, Maria Christina Fornari, Francesco Fronterotta, Andrea Orsucci, *Nietzsches persönliche Bibliothek* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), p.511.

⁸⁹ See e.g. NL 11[130] 9.487-8; NL 11[134] 9.490-1; NL 11[182] 9.509-12.

⁹⁰ Müller-Lauter (1999), p.165. See also (1978), pp.195f.

⁹¹ See also NL 11[241] 9.532: "Wenn unsere Affekte das Mittel sind, um die Bewegungen und Bildungen eines gesellschaftlichen Organismus zu unterhalten, so würde doch nichts fehlerhafter sein als nun zurückzuschließen, daß im niedrigsten Organismus es eben auch die Affekte seien, welche hier selbstregulieren, assimilieren, exkretieren umwandeln, regenerieren — also Affekte auch da voraussetzen, Lust Unlust Willen Neigung Abneigung."

in some sense comprehensible. So long as we remember that this way of speaking remains a mere *Bilderrede*, using the language of conflict to interpret the world represents an enlightening enterprise. But how does Nietzsche apply this *Bilderrede* himself?⁹²

To be sure, between 1881 and 1883, Nietzsche repeatedly employs this *Bilderrede* as a means to describing the domains of both the individual and society. While it would no doubt prove illuminating to give a full reconstruction of Nietzsche's early appropriation of Roux (and I will be drawing on some of this in the final sections of this chapter), from 1884 onwards Nietzsche began to reject major aspects of the vision of nature depicted in KTO. Consequently, if we want to get a representative view of the extent to which his mature *Weltanschauung* was influenced by Roux, we should begin at this point. What I will demonstrate is that despite rejecting key points of Roux's account, he retains and even expands the idea of life as ineluctably characterised by both a measured struggle for instrumentalisation and an unmeasured struggle to excrete and exclude potentially harmful entities.

The first way in which Nietzsche departs from Roux, and which will form the focal point of our current subsection, is in his rejection of Roux's account of the three main *teloi* or *ends* towards which the dynamic of intra-organismic struggle tends – namely:

- a) *Survival (Erhaltung)*. The idea that “[d]ie ununterbrochene Dauerfähigkeit ist die erste Vorbedingung des Organischen”⁹³ and that “[d]ie Theile leben bloß für die eigene Erhaltung”.⁹⁴

⁹² Indeed, Nietzsche conceives of nation-states as the highest form of organisms. See NL 12[163] 9.604: “Heerden und Staaten sind die höchsten uns bekannten — sehr unvollkommenen Organismen.” See also NL 11[316] 9.563. On Nietzsche's early application of Roux to social issues, see e.g. NL 11[132] 9.490; NL 11[134] 9.490-2.

⁹³ KTO, p.214.

⁹⁴ KTO, p.220.

- b) *The assimilation of nutrition*. The idea that the struggle of the parts is most fundamentally a “Kampf um der Nahrung”.
- c) *Overcompensation*. The idea that the tendency “zur Assimilation” can be described as a struggle to replace losses – that is, as a tendency “zum Ersatz und zur Uebercompensation des Verbrauchten”.⁹⁵

I will now briefly unpack how Nietzsche rejected each of these. Let us begin with (a) – i.e. the conception of survival as a fundamental end of life. Already in Z II *Selbstueberwindung*, Nietzsche criticises the idea of *Erhaltung* as an underlying motivation driving nature (particularly as a Spinozistic conatus or Schopenhauerian will to live).⁹⁶ However, it was only after reading Wilhelm Rolph’s *Biologische Probleme zugleich als Versuch zur Entwicklung einer rationellen Ethik* in 1884 that Nietzsche began to formulate a more thoroughgoing refutation of the logic of preservation.⁹⁷ Aside from Schopenhauer and Spinoza, Nietzsche’s critique of *Erhaltung* as the ultimate end towards which all life (either consciously or unconsciously) tends is, like Rolph’s, (mistakenly) framed as a critique of Darwin and (less mistakenly) Spencer.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ KTO, p.238.

⁹⁶ “Der traf freilich die Wahrheit nicht, der das Wort nach ihr schoss vom ‘Willen zum Dasein’: diesen Willen — giebt es nicht! ‘Denn: was nicht ist, das kann nicht wollen; was aber im Dasein ist, wie könnte das noch zum Dasein wollen!’” (4.149). Nietzsche’s argument here is doubtful. It is an enthymeme, where the missing premise is that we cannot want that which we already have, which is patently false since we can desire the continued possession of that thing.

⁹⁷ Evidence of Nietzsche having read BP can be found in Campioni et al. (2003), p.504. The impact of Rolph on Nietzsche’s thought has been investigated by Moore (2002) (see esp. pp.47-53) and Thomas J. Brobjer, in *Nietzsche's Philosophical Context: An Intellectual Biography* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2008) (see esp. pp.170-1). See also Gregory Moore, ‘Beiträge zur Quellenforschung’, *Nietzsche-Studien*, 27 (1998), 535–51.

⁹⁸ See e.g. Richardson (2004), p.16. On the problems with Nietzsche’s critique of Darwin, see also pp.20-6. As Richardson notes, for Darwin, the unconscious tendency that underlies evolutionary processes is that of *reproductive* success, not survival. Moore (2002) has also noted that Rolph attacks a straw-man Darwin (see p.51, fn.42). However, the notion of a drive for self-preservation is far more present in Herbert Spencer’s *The Data of Ethics* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1882), which Nietzsche was reading in the early 1880s. See e.g. p.135: “As fast as the social state establishes itself, the preservation of the society becomes a means of preserving its units. Living together arose because, on the average, it proved more

Rolph raises the tendency towards accumulation (what he calls *Anziehungskraft*) to the level of an “ursprüngliche Kraft”; indeed, he describes it as the original and fundamental driving force of nature.⁹⁹ Growth (“Wachstum”) is then figured as the result of this process of attraction, as can be seen in the inorganic growth of crystals as well as in the growth of organisms. According to Rolph, then, both the organic and inorganic are similarly characterised by this “Trieb”: “ein dauerndes Streben nach Steigerung seiner Einnahmen”; however, observing protoplasm, Rolph claims that what distinguishes organisms from inorganic entities is that for the former, this impulse is “unersättlich”.¹⁰⁰ One might object to Rolph’s conception of *unersättliche Aufnahme* as the defining process of the organic on account of the fact that some organisms only grow during the adolescent phase of their life-span, and that therefore with such organisms the process of excessive consumption would appear to cease after a certain stage. Against this conclusion, however, Rolph argues that cell division demonstrates that once the organism reaches the boundary (“Grenze”) of its “Aufnahmefähigkeit”, it begins to *reproduce*: “Dann entstehen zwei junge Zellen, die nun das Spiel aufs neue beginnen”.¹⁰¹ According to Rolph, the nucleus of a cell plays the role of ordering newly assimilated material. But, when “eine zu grosse Anhäufung von Masse die centralisirende Anziehungskraft des Kernes überwindet”, there arises a pressure on the periphery of the cell that forces the cell to undergo division.¹⁰² For Rolph, like Mayer, the idea of

advantageous to each than living apart; and this implies that maintenance of combination is maintenance of the conditions to more satisfactory living than the combined persons would otherwise have. Hence, social self-preservation becomes a proximate aim taking precedence of the ultimate aim, individual self-preservation.” Nietzsche obtained *The Data of Ethics* in 1880 and his close reading of the text is evidenced by the degree to which he annotated the text. See Campioni et al. (2003), pp.565-6. Assoun has called Nietzsche’s rejection of Darwin a “spectacular evolution” in Nietzsche’s thought. See Assoun (2000), p.85. See pp.85-7 for an informative summary of Nietzsche’s rejection of survival and hunger as the motivating *teloi* of living organisms.

⁹⁹ BP, p.59.

¹⁰⁰ BP, p.59; see also p.61.

¹⁰¹ BP, p.67.

¹⁰² With higher organisms that reproduce sexually, this process is displaced to the sexually reproductive organs, where there is subsequently a build-up of “Zeugungsstoffe” that generates discomfort in the organism. Such organisms are then driven to discharge this

a “Selbsterhaltungstrieb” is unable to explain organic processes on account of the fact that this assimilation always outstrips the survival needs of the organism: “[D]as Geschöpf bestreitet aus seinen Einnahmen auch die Function der Fortpflanzung, welche doch keineswegs zur Selbsterhaltung gehört.”¹⁰³

Rolph also rejects the Darwinian-Malthusian view of nature, as represented by Darwin’s wedge metaphor – one in which every organism is characterised by an unrelenting struggle over limited resources.¹⁰⁴ Rolph (mistakenly) reads Darwin as suggesting that *this* is the primary motor of evolution.¹⁰⁵ It is only in times of environmental paucity, says Rolph, that the brutal “Darwinian” picture can be said to correspond to nature. Interestingly, Rolph thinks that under such conditions of privation, protoplasm satisfy their urge for assimilation through a quite different form of activity, namely, what Rolph calls “Conjugation”. Rolph’s hypothesis is based on the observation of vorticella, which can reproduce by means of both binary fission and conjugation. In the latter case, an impoverished male cell tries to unite with a healthy female cell (which itself is reluctant to conjugate) in order to benefit from fusing together into a new single cell. This results in a cell that is stronger than the original male. Rolph describes this as a process of self-consumption or *isophagy* since it pools together the stored energy of two cells, though now this is only needed to feed one cell, which can consequently consume the excess. Though this is a mischaracterisation of conjugation (which, it was discovered in the 1950s is rather a means by which cells transfer genetic information rather than a form of isophagy),

through copulation (in the case of the male) or through parturition (in the case of the female). See BP, pp.168-70. This is what Rolph refers to as the “Entleerung”, or what I have called the “displacement”, of the the splitting process. See BP, p.168: “Die Entleerung der Zersetzungsprocesse oder der Nahrungsrückstände, sowie endlich die der Keimproducte, erfolgt auf einen Reiz, der seinen psychischen Ausdruck in einem Drange, im Leid findet.” Compare NL 25[179] 11.62: “Der Mensch, als organisches Wesen, hat Triebe der Ernährung (Habsucht) NB Hier nur die Innere [*sic*] Welt ins Auge gefaßt! Triebe der Ausscheidung (Liebe) (wozu auch die Regeneration gehört) [...]”

¹⁰³ BP, p.92. Yet, Rolph does note that *Fortpflanzung* is recognised by Darwin as a fundamental goal of organisms.

¹⁰⁴ On this, see ch.1, fn.41.

¹⁰⁵ Of course, as Moore (2002) has pointed out, Darwin held no such view (p.51, fn.42).

it is nonetheless relevant because it shows us that there is a type of assimilation that is symptomatic of *declining* health, and by which the weaker exploit the stronger.

This type of assimilation, then, is opposed to the process of *Fortplanzung* that underpins evolution. Indeed, Rolph claims that evolutionary progress only occurs under conditions of plenitude, precisely when a species is *not* engaged in an exhausting struggle for survival. This is because it is only under such conditions that variation arises. The variety of well adapted flora and fauna existing today is, according to Rolph, proof that species must often exist in situations of plenitude. The struggle that is common to *both* of these conditions, and which is therefore the truly fundamental organic drive, is therefore *not* a “Kampf um die ‘Erwerbung der unentbehrlichsten Lebensbedürfnisse’, sondern ein Kampf um Mehrerwerb.”¹⁰⁶ On these grounds, Rolph claims that life should be conceived as a struggle for “Lebensvermehrung”, “Vervollkommung”, and “Wachsthum” rather than mere survival. Animals are only ever temporarily engaged in a defensive struggle (*Vertheidigungskampf*) for preservation, that is, under extreme conditions of hardship.¹⁰⁷

Nietzsche seems to draw very directly on Rolph in rejecting the idea of *Erhaltung* as the fundamental tendency of assimilative processes. In FW 349, his argumentation resonates with that of Rolph, though he now places an emphasis on *power*, which is completely absent in BP:

Sich selbst erhalten wollen ist der Ausdruck einer Nothlage, einer Einschränkung des eigentlichen Lebens-Grundtriebes, der auf Macherweiterung hinausgeht und in diesem Willen oft genug die Selbsterhaltung in Frage stellt und opfert. [...] [I]n der Natur herrscht nicht die Nothlage, sondern der Ueberfluss, die Verschwendung, sogar

¹⁰⁶ See also BP, p.114: “Die Punkte, in denen ich von der Darwinschen Theorie abweiche, sind also [...] folgende: Der Daseinskampf ist in Wirklichkeit ein Streben nach vermehrter Einnahme, nach Lebensmehrung, und unabhängig von dem jedesmaligen Nahrungsangebot; er findet jederzeit, also auch in Ueberflusslage statt.”

¹⁰⁷ See BP, p.97: “[D]er Daseinskampf [ist] kein Vertheidigungskampf, sondern ein Angriffskrieg, der nur unter gewissen Umständen zu einem Vertheidigungskampfe umgewandelt werden kann. Wachsthum aber und Vermehrung und Vervollkommnung sind die Folgen jenes erfolgreichen Angriffskrieges [...].”

bis in's Unsinnige. Der Kampf um's Dasein ist nur eine Ausnahme, eine zeitweilige Restriktion des Lebenswillens; der grosse und kleine Kampf dreht sich allenthalben um's Uebergewicht, um Wachstum und Ausbreitung, um Macht, gemäss dem Willen zur Macht, der eben der Wille des Lebens ist.

As we can see, Nietzsche understands nature to be characterised by opulence and profligacy (“Ueberfluss” and “Verschwendung”).¹⁰⁸ (Elsewhere, he also reiterates Rolph’s argument that variation only arises under conditions of plenitude.)¹⁰⁹ Under such conditions, everything struggles for *Wachstum*. Nietzsche thus characterises the “Lebens-Grundtrieb” as a drive for growth and *Machterweiterung* – a struggle for which animals and individuals will often *risk* their survival. To be sure, the impetus toward *power* often coincides with the goal of self-preservation insofar as it often indirectly promotes our survival or *Dauer*.¹¹⁰ However, it is this very coincidence that can make it appear, to the myopic observer of an impoverished environment, as though survival were the motivating telos of all life, and not merely an epiphenomenon or a particular mode of pursuing power expansion under conditions of scarcity. As Nietzsche says in JGB 16, again echoing Rolph’s discharge based economic model of the organism, though again with an emphasis on *power* or *force* (“Kraft”) that is totally absent in Rolph:

Vor Allem will etwas Lebendiges seine Kraft auslassen — Leben selbst ist Wille zur Macht —: die Selbsterhaltung ist nur eine der indirekten

¹⁰⁸ See also GD Streifzüge 14 6.120: “Anti-Darwin. — Was den berühmten ‘Kampf um’s Leben’ betrifft, so scheint er mir einstweilen mehr behauptet als bewiesen. Er kommt vor, aber als Ausnahme; der Gesamt-Aspekt des Lebens ist nicht die Nothlage, die Hungerlage, vielmehr der Reichthum, die Üppigkeit, selbst die absurde Verschwendung, — wo gekämpft wird, kämpft man um Macht...”

¹⁰⁹ See JGB 262: “Arten, denen eine überreichliche Ernährung und überhaupt ein Mehr von Schutz und Sorgfalt zu Theil wird, [sind] alsbald in der stärksten Weise zur Variation des Typus neigen und reich an Wundern und Monstrositäten (auch an monströsen Lastern)”. See also NL 35[22] 11.516-8.

¹¹⁰ See also AC 6 6.172: “Das Leben selbst gilt mir als Instinkt für Wachstum, für Dauer, für Häufung von Kräften, für Macht”. NL 2[68] 12.92: “Selbst Erhaltung nur als eine der Folgen der Selbsterweiterung.”

und häufigsten Folgen davon. — Kurz, hier wie überall, Vorsicht vor überflüssigen teleologischen Principien!¹¹¹

Nietzsche thus launches a deflationary attack on the idea of a fundamental (conscious or unconscious) drive for self-preservation, even exclaiming in one note that “[e]s giebt keinen Selbsterhaltungstrieb!” (NL 11[108] 9.479). In more moderate moments, however, he drops this conception of the tendency to survive as pure epiphenomenon, suggesting instead that organisms *do* sometimes actively (or in the case of humans, *consciously*) strive for preservation, but that this is an exceptional state only arising when organisms are weak and their existence is in immediate danger (hence, it represents an “Ausnahme” as in FW 349). Notwithstanding, this counters the idea of self-preservation as a fundamental, represented telos of organic beings.

Naturally, the fact that the tendency for power often coincides with that of survival does not entail a necessary connection between the two. In his description of the protoplasma, Nietzsche draws on Rolph in arguing that it consumes until it is forced to relinquish the preservation of its original unity and split into two new protoplasma:

[M]an kann die unterste und ursprünglichste Thätigkeit im Protoplasma nicht aus einem Willen zur Selbsterhaltung ableiten: denn es nimmt auf eine unsinnige Art mehr in sich hinein, als die Erhaltung bedingen würde: und vor allem, es “erhält sich” damit eben nicht, sondern zerfällt... Der Trieb, der hier waltet, hat gerade dieses Sich-nicht-erhalten-Wollen zu erklären [...]. (NL 11[121] 13.57)

At the human level, this tendency towards power, over and against survival, is particularly marked in strong races (“die starken Rassen”), who “dezimiren sich gegenseitig: Krieg, Machtbegierde, Abenteuer; ihre Existenz ist kostspielig, kurz, — sie reiben sich unter einander auf”. Indeed, those that are proficient at pursuing power are often highly inefficient at surviving (and vice versa) (NL 14[182] 13.369). Or we might invoke Nietzsche’s analysis of martyrs, who, he points out, in their

¹¹¹ See also JGB 13; NL 26[277] 11.222-3.

desire to possess the truth, and the “Machtgefühl” elicited by this possession, will gladly sacrifice their own life.¹¹²

But the chief way in which Nietzsche distinguishes himself from Rolph (and Roux for that matter), is in his rejection of (b), that is, the idea of *nutrition* as a fundamental driving telos of the struggle that defines life. For Nietzsche, the struggle is for power – *Macht* or *Übergewicht* – i.e. to overpower foreign entities and assimilate them into the power organisation over which one has control: to *command* them.¹¹³ And, as we saw in Chapter 1, this can take an infinitude of forms.¹¹⁴ Indeed, for Nietzsche, the struggle for *Nahrung* is merely one particular way in which this “Lebens-Grundtrieb” expresses itself: “der Wille zur Macht *sich spezialisierend* als Wille zur Nahrung, nach Eigenthum, nach Werkzeugen, nach Dienern — Gehorchen und Herrschen: der Leib. — der stärkere Wille dirigirt den schwächeren.” (NL 35[15] 11.514; my italics).¹¹⁵

Congruent with this, the parts of the body are first and foremost concerned with the *command* of their counterparts rather than any struggle for nutrition. Higher organisms are of course sometimes motivated by feelings of hunger; however, Nietzsche maintains that this “Hunger ist eine spezialisirte und spätere Form des

¹¹² See FW 13: “[S]elbst wenn wir unser Leben daran setzen, wie der Märtyrer zu Gunsten seiner Kirche, es ist ein Opfer, gebracht unserem Verlangen nach Macht, oder zum Zweck der Erhaltung unseres Machtgefühls. Wer da empfindet ‘ich bin im Besitz der Wahrheit’, wie viel Besitzthümer lässt der nicht fahren, um diese Empfindung zu retten!” See also Z II Selbst-Ueberwindung 4.148: “Lieber noch gehe ich unter, als dass ich diesem Einen absagte; und wahrlich, wo es Untergang giebt und Blätterfallen, siehe, da opfert sich Leben — um Macht!”

¹¹³ Clearly drawing on Rolph, Nietzsche states that “— Gelingt diese Einverleibung nicht, so zerfällt wohl das Gebilde; und die Zweiheit erscheint als Folge des Willens zur Macht: um nicht fahren zu lassen, was erobert ist, tritt der Wille zur Macht in zwei Willen auseinander (unter Umständen ohne seine Verbindung unter einander völlig aufzugeben)” (NL 9 [151] 12.424).

¹¹⁴ See ch.1, §1.4.2.

¹¹⁵ Paul Katsafanas, in *The Nietzschean Self: Moral Psychology, Agency, and the Unconscious* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), has argued that the will to power is “not a drive but the form drives take” (p.170); however, Nietzsche frequent refers to it as a drive – particularly as a *Grundtrieb* or *Lebenstrieb*. See GD Alten 3 6.157. NL 9[151] 12.424: “‘Hunger’ ist nur eine engere Anpassung, nachdem der Grundtrieb nach Macht geistigere Gestalt gewonnen hat.” NL 1[30] 12.17: “[D]ie Begehungen spezialisiren sich immer mehr: ihre Einheit ist der Wille zur Macht (um den Ausdruck vom stärksten aller Triebe herzunehmen, der alle organische Entwicklung bis jetzt dirigirt hat)”.

Triebes [nach Macht], ein Ausdruck der Arbeitstheilung, im Dienst eines darüber waltenden höheren Triebes” (NL 11[121] 13.58). Behind any feeling of hunger, there is always some drive that is actively seeking power.

[D]as Protoplasma streckt seine Pseudopodien aus, um nach etwas zu suchen, was ihm widersteht — nicht aus Hunger, sondern aus Willen zur Macht. Darauf macht es den Versuch, dasselbe zu überwinden, sich anzueignen, sich einzuverleiben [...]. (NL 14[174] 13.360)

“Ernährung” ist nur abgeleitet, das Ursprüngliche ist Alles in sich einschließen wollen[.] (NL 5[64] 12.209)

Nietzsche wants to repudiate the Schopenhauerian supposition that willing is inherently motivated by pain and a feeling of lack (also to be found in Rolph).¹¹⁶ Nietzsche’s position is that willing is grounded in excess, and a need for discharge through the activity of striving to overpower opposed entities. In the act of stretching out its pseudopodia, in the act of trying to increase its power, a protoplasma is *releasing* pent up power.

We then find Nietzsche’s rejection of (c) – the idea of overcompensation, or *Ersatz*, as a fundamental organic end – bound up with these affirmations of *power*

¹¹⁶ For Rolph’s defence of this thesis, see BP, p.177: “Alle Thätigkeit im organischen Leben ist ihrem inneren Kern nach auf ein Flieden des Leides zurückführbar, welches in seiner primitivsten Gestalt in dem Gefühl des Hungers, des Sättigungsstrebens auftritt.” See also BP, pp.169-70; and p.181. See Moore (2002), p.75 (fn.25).

¹¹⁶ At other times, Nietzsche also indicates that pain is a constitutive part of pleasure: “[W]as ist denn Lust anderes als: eine Reizung des Machtgefühls durch ein Hemmniß (noch stärker durch rhythmische Hemmungen und Widerstände) — so daß es dadurch anschwillt: Also in aller Lust ist Schmerz einbegriffen” (NL 35[15] 11.514). See also NL 16[15] 10.505: “Lust-Unlust sind Begleit -Erscheinungen, keine Zwecke.” NL 5[64] 12.209: “Lust als Machtgefühl (die Unlust voraussetzend)”. NL 7[18] 12.302-2; NL 11[71] 13.33-4. NL 14[173] 13.358: “[D]as Wesen der Lust zutreffend bezeichnet worden ist als ein Plus-Gefühl von Macht”. Another interesting note in this context is NL 25[378] 11.111: “Die Instinkte als Urtheile auf Grund früherer Erfahrungen: nicht von Lust- und Unlust-Erfahrungen: denn die Lust ist erst die Form eines Instinkt-Urtheils (ein Gefühl von vermehrter Macht oder: wie wenn sich die Macht vermehrt hätte) Vor den Lust- und Unlustgefühlen giebt es Kraft- und Schwächegefühle im Ganzen.” See also NL 14[174] 13.360: “Der Mensch sucht nicht die Lust und vermeidet nicht die Unlust [...]. Lust und Unlust sind bloße Folge, bloße Begleiterscheinung, — was der Mensch will, was jeder kleinste Theil eines lebenden Organismus will, das ist ein plus von Macht. Im Streben danach folgt sowohl Lust als Unlust”.

qua fundamental telos. To figure this process of seeking assimilation “als sei er auf ‘Ersatz’, wohl gar auf ‘überreichlichen Ersatz’ gerichtet, ein tiefes und gefährliches Missverständniss enthalte”.¹¹⁷ The expression of power is always an act of striving to *increase*, not merely *replace*, one’s power in *relation* to another resisting power.¹¹⁸ As we saw above, the pleasurable feeling of freedom comes from precisely the feeling of exercising the will. As Deleuze has noted, for Nietzsche, the will is “joyful”.¹¹⁹

The will to power is therefore a “Willen der Überwältigung, der an sich kein Ende hat” (NL 9[91] 12.385). Needless to say, this figuration of the will to power is wholly at odds with what we found to be the non-instrumentalising character of Nietzsche’s conception of agonal struggle. And to be sure, when we read the remainder of the note cited by Hatab and Connolly to substantiate the agonistic reading of Nietzsche’s conception of the will to power (NL 9[151] 12.424), we can see that the vision of nature contained therein is in fact wholly incompatible with agonism insofar as it forcefully asserts the necessity of instrumentalisation:

Der Wille zur Macht kann sich nur an Widerständen äußern; er sucht also nach dem, was ihm widersteht, — dies die ursprüngliche Tendenz des Protoplasma, wenn es Pseudopodien ausschickt und um sich tastet. *Die Aneignung und Einverleibung ist vor allem ein Überwältigenwollen*, ein Formen u<nd> An- und Umbilden, bis endlich das Überwältigte ganz in die Macht des Angreifers übergegangen ist u<nd> denselben vermehrt hat. (NL 9[151] 12.424; my italics)

Thus, although Nietzsche rejects Roux’s hypothesis that survival and overcompensation for energetic loss are the fundamental tendencies (in either a conscious or unconscious sense) driving living beings, he nonetheless clearly retains Roux’s vision of nature as a struggle for instrumentalisation and exploitation – i.e. incorporation. We should now further examine the nature of this impetus.

¹¹⁷ Quoted in Müller-Lauter (1978), p.207.

¹¹⁸ See Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 1983), p.85. See also Ciano Aydin, “Nietzsche on Reality as Will to Power: Toward an ‘Organization–Struggle’ Model”, *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 33(1) (2007), 25-48 (p.26). See also NL 14[82] 13.261-2.

¹¹⁹ See Deleuze (1983), p.85.

4.3.3. PATHOS NOT MECHANISM

In this subsection, I will inquire into Nietzsche's reasons for abandoning Roux's method of purging the concept of *Zweckmäßigkeit* of its metaphysical presuppositions – namely, insofar as Nietzsche rejects Roux's mechanistic explanation of nature, preferring to conceptualise existence as a constellation of actively striving forces. Nonetheless, it will become manifest that he retains, and even foregrounds, Roux's measured conception of exploitative conflictual relations. Crucially, as we shall then see in the final sections, this contradicts the radical aristocratic interpretation of Nietzsche's view of nature.

For Roux, the parts of the body are *not* affective agents. They are merely physical entities defined by a particular set of mechanical processes.¹²⁰ Yet recall how, for Nietzsche, what we call willing is merely an “Affekt des Commandos” (JGB 19). Correspondingly, Nietzsche suggests that the body is suffused with this affect or *pathos*.¹²¹ The parts of the body, he contends, have some form of affective, agential existence: “Hier ist die Voraussetzung gemacht, daß der ganze Organismus denkt, daß alle organischen Gebilde Theil haben am Denken Fühlen Wollen” (NL 27[19] 11.280).¹²² In Z II Selbst-Ueberwindung, for example, every living thing that is commanded, is fundamentally characterised by an endogenous “Lust” to instrumentalise entities that are yet weaker than it.¹²³ And continuing the idea that there exists an experiential or perceptual relation of symmetry between the

¹²⁰ As Müller-Lauter has noted, for Roux, “[d]ie Lebewesen sind für [Roux] ‘Selbsterhaltungs-, Selbstvermehrungs- und Selbstregulierungsmaschinen’ geblieben”. See Müller-Lauter (1978), p.209, quoting Wilhelm Roux, “Prinzipielles der Entwicklungsmechanik”, *Annalen der Philosophie*, 3 (1923), 454-473 (p.471).

¹²¹ See NL 14[79] 13.259: “[D]er Wille zur Macht nicht ein Sein, nicht ein Werden, sondern ein Pathos ist die elementarste Thatsache”.

¹²² See also NL 34[124] 11.462: “Die Logik unseres bewußten Denkens ist nur eine grobe und erleichterte Form jenes Denkens, welches unser Organismus, ja die einzelnen Organe desselben, nöthig hat.”

¹²³ See Z II Selbst-Ueberwindung 4.148: “[N]och im Willen des Dienenden fand ich den Willen, Herr zu sein. Dass dem Stärkeren diene das Schwächere, dazu überredet es sein Wille, der über noch Schwächeres Herr sein will: dieser Lust allein mag es nicht enttrathen.”

macrocosmic world of willing humans and the microcosmic world of striving organismic parts, he compares the body to a society of under-souls (“ein Gesellschaftsbau vieler *Seelen*”) (JGB 19; my italics).¹²⁴

In the *Nachlass*, Nietzsche’s principal justification for attributing awareness to the parts of organisms is that in order for a living unity to bring a foreign entity under its command (i.e. assimilate it) – or to jettison an entity that cannot be assimilated (i.e. excrete it) – it must *evaluate* what practical stance it should take towards each body that it encounters. He calls this “*ein Abschätzen in Bezug auf Einverleibung oder Abscheidung*” (NL 24[14] 10.651; my italics). They must have some form of *perceptual awareness*. For Nietzsche, this act of evaluation requires an active form of “Fühlen, Vorstellen, Denken” (ibid.). He then makes the further argument that in order for an entity to command another entity, there must exist the possibility of communication between said entities.¹²⁵ In other words, there must be “[e]in Zugleich-denken” (NL 34[124]11.462) and a “sich-verstehen” – as Nietzsche points out, “ein Fels läßt sich nicht kommandiren” (NL 2[69] 12.92).¹²⁶

What is more, he does not think that this argument solely applies to organic unities. Just like the organic parts of the body, he understands inorganic entities as being likewise characterised by a “Denken, Fühlen, Wollen”. This is evidenced (he claims) by the fact that inorganic entities need to be able to distinguish what they need to assimilate from that which they need to repel: “[D]amit dieser Wille zur Macht sich äußern könne, er jene Dinge wahrnehmen muß, welche er zieht, daß er

¹²⁴ On Nietzsche’s use of political metaphors to describe the body, see Eric Blondel, *Nietzsche. The Body and Culture*, trans. by Sean Hand (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp.230-4.

¹²⁵ See also NL 14[21] 11.638: “Das Wichtigste ist aber: daß wir den Beherrscher und seine Unterthanen als gleicher Art verstehn, alle fühlend, wollend, denkend — und daß wir überall, wo wir Bewegung im Leibe sehen oder errathen, wir auch ein zugehöriges subjektives unsichtbares Leben hinzuschließen lernen.”

¹²⁶ See NL 34[123] 11.461: “Alle diese lebendigen Wesen müssen verwandter Art sein, sonst könnten sie nicht so einander dienen und gehorchen.” On this issue, see Patrick Wotling, “What Language do the Drives Speak?”, in João Constâncio and Maria João Mayer Branco (eds.), *Nietzsche on Instinct and Language* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), pp.80-116 (esp. pp.73ff.). See also Moore (2002), p.39, who claims that Michael Forster had an important influence on Nietzsche thoughts on this topic.

fühlt, wenn sich ihm etwas nähert, das ihm assimilierbar ist” (NL 34[247] 11.504). In this manner, he collapses the organic–inorganic distinction.¹²⁷ On the one hand, Nietzsche seems to be attempting to make a deductive argument: given that atoms behave in a particular way (attracting and repelling other atoms), they *must* have perceptual awareness and be driven by an active endogenous willing.¹²⁸ On the other hand, we might read him as trying to find the best *Bilderrede* or *Sprechart* for expressing the dynamic nature of reality. In either case, however, Nietzsche’s hypothesis is incompatible with mechanistic ontologies, which figure the external world as a collection of corpuscular bodies whose motion is merely the result of their reacting to an impact received from another corpuscular body. The corollary of Nietzsche’s thesis is that existence must be conceived as a conglomeration of organisations engaged in *direct* conflict with one another – i.e. insofar as each opposed organisation strives to incorporate its counterpart; hence: “*Alles Geschehen, alle Bewegung, alles Werden als ein Feststellen von Grad- und Kraftverhältnissen, als ein Kampf...*” (NL 9[91] 12.385; my italics).¹²⁹

Nietzsche further maintains that these organised entities must practice certain virtues (“Tugenden”) towards one another: “[I]m Verhältniß der Organe zu einander müssen schon alle Tugenden geübt werden — Gehorsam, Fleiß, Zuhilfekommen, Wachsamkeit — es fehlt ganz der Maschinen-Charakter in allem Organischen (Selbst-Regulierung)” (NL 25[426] 11.124).¹³⁰ Any organised body

¹²⁷ See also NL 2[172] 12.153: “Das ‘Sein’ — wir haben keine andere Vorstellung davon als ‘leben’. — Wie kann also etwas Todtes ‘sein’?” See also NL 36[21] 11.560. NL 25[356] 11.106: “Aber der Gegensatz ‘organisch’ ‘unorganisch’ gehört ja in die Erscheinungswelt!”

¹²⁸ On the need for inorganic organisations to have some endogenous source of *activity* (rather than being merely reactively propelled), see NL 1[30] 12.17: “Frage, ob er nicht das mobile ebenfalls in der unorganischen Welt ist? Denn in der mechanistischen Welt-Auslegung bedarf es immer noch eines mobile.”

¹²⁹ Harking back to Schopenhauer (and Nietzsche’s reading of Balfour Stewart in NL 9[2] 8.183), Nietzsche also argues that this process takes place at the level of atoms, which he conceives as being in a state of struggle with one another: “Das Atom kämpft um seinen Bestand, aber andere Atome greifen es an, um ihre Kraft zu vermehren. Beide Prozesse: den der Auflösung und den der Verdichtung als Wirkungen des Willens zur Macht zu begreifen” (NL 43[2] 11.702).

¹³⁰ See also NL 37[4] 11.578, where Nietzsche speaks of “[d]ie prachtvolle Zusammenbindung des vielfachsten Lebens, die Anordnung und Einordnung der höheren

must, says Nietzsche, be governed by a kind of moral order that is completely incompatible with the vision of the body as a machine. Moreover, he argues that the simultaneity and reciprocity of the relations that define such organisation are incompatible with the cause and effect structure of mechanical explanation, which construes the world as a series of diachronic relations of the form A causes B; B causes C; etc.¹³¹

Nietzsche's analysis prompts us to ask the following epistemic question: How can we possibly *know* that, on the inside, things are all thinking, feeling, desiring? It is worth stating that in the published works, Nietzsche frames his argument in a slightly different manner. In JGB 22, he thus suggests that it is merely *possible* to posit the world as will to power, rather than as a realm of atomistic units of matter governed by natural law:

[E]s könnte Jemand kommen, der, mit der entgegengesetzten Absicht und Interpretationskunst, aus der gleichen Natur und im Hinblick auf die gleichen Erscheinungen, gerade die tyrannisch-rücksichtenlose und unerbittliche Durchsetzung von Machtansprüchen herauszulesen verstünde.

Here the will to power is offered as an explanatory model, equally able to account for phenomenal effects as the notion of natural law. The subtext of this aphorism is that Nietzsche deems the will to power thesis to be a better or stronger interpretation by virtue of the fact that it refuses an interpretation of nature that vindicates the movement towards degenerate democratic homogeneity – that is, it eschews the

und niederen Thätigkeiten, der tausendfältige Gehorsam welcher kein blinder, noch weniger ein mechanischer sondern ein wählender, kluger, rücksichtsvoller, selbst widerstrebender Gehorsam ist [...].” Thus, he concludes, “[a]m Leitfaden des Leibes wie gesagt, lernen wir daß unser Leben durch ein Zusammenspiel vieler sehr ungleichwerthigen Intelligenzen und also nur durch ein beständiges tausendfältiges Gehorchen und Befehlen — moralisch geredet: durch die unausgesetzte Übung vieler Tugenden — möglich ist.”

¹³¹ NL 34[124] 11.462: “Unser Causal-Gefühl ist etwas ganz Grobes und Vereinzelt gegen die wirklichen Causal-Gefühle unseres Organismus. Namentlich ist das ‘Vorher’ und ‘Nachher’ eine große Naivetät.”

judgement that there exists “[ü]berall Gleichheit vor dem Gesetz, — die Natur hat es darin nicht anders und nicht besser als wir”.¹³²

Nietzsche similarly refrains from arguing for the objective truth of his vision of the world as will to power in JGB 36. Rather, he indicates that his account “ausreicht, um [...] die sogenannte mechanistische [...] Welt zu verstehen”. It is *enough* to comprehend (“verstehen”) the world.¹³³ On this reading, we are justified in assenting to the hypothesis that the world is will to power on the grounds that it is both *possible* and practically *desirable* (as demonstrated by JGB 22)?¹³⁴

But given that every entity is hypothetically a will to power organisation, how does this relate to *Zweckmäßigkeit*? According to his model, a part exhibits a certain function with respect to the whole in which it is contained not because that part was originally designed to fit within that whole, but because it was *perceived*

¹³² This argument was already roughly outlined in §2.4.2.3., though it is worthwhile reiterating it here.

¹³³ In the same aphorism, Nietzsche also proposes the will to power thesis on the grounds of its explanatory simplicity. He speculates that in describing the world, we should, if possible, try to employ only *one* form of causality (according to the principle of parsimony). Since we know that *we* act by means of the commanding force of our (non-Schopenhauerian, synthetic) “will”, and “‘Wille’ kann natürlich nur auf ‘Wille’ wirken — und nicht auf ‘Stoffe’”, he contends that we are justified in extrapolating from this that *all* activity is the product of (synthetic) wills working upon (synthetic) wills.

¹³⁴ In this way, I reject interpretations of JGB 36 as ironic (i.e. the idea that Nietzsche does not actually hold the proposition that he is *prima facie* defending in this aphorism – namely, that the world is *actually* will to power). Maudmarie Clark and David Dudrick contend that, “[b]oth the rhetoric and the logic of BGE 36 indicate that Nietzsche does not accept the argument’s conclusion: he does not, that is, accept the claim that the world is will to power. This absolves Nietzsche of the implausible metaphysical view sometimes attributed to him on the basis of this passage [...]” See Maudmarie Clark and David Dudrick, *The Soul of Nietzsche’s Beyond Good and Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.242. See also Paul Loeb, “Will to Power and Panpsychism”, in Manuel Dries & P. J. E. Kail (eds.), *Nietzsche on Mind and Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), ch.4. Indeed, in light of the extensive attempt to understand the world as will to power that we find in the notebooks at this time, it would be very odd for Nietzsche to *invert* this position in the published works. Indeed, the ironic reading only seems tenable if one neglects to read the preparatory work that informs these published aphorisms. For an argument (with which I broadly concur) against this reading, see Christopher Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche’s Genealogy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp.153-63. Janaway also gives an informative overview of the Anglophone debate over how the concept of the will to power should be interpreted.

by an organisation to be useful in some way, then overpowered and finally incorporated – i.e. shaped and augmented to fulfil that use – by the predominant power organisation:

— Das Individuum selbst als Kampf der Theile (um Nahrung, Raum usw.): seine Entwicklung geknüpft an ein Siegen, Vorherrschen einzelner Theile, an ein Verkümmern, “Organwerden” anderer Theile [...]

— daß die von Innen her gebildeten neuen Formen nicht auf einen Zweck hin geformt sind, aber daß im Kampf der Theile eine neue Form nicht lange ohne eine Beziehung zu einem partiellen Nutzen stehen wird, und dann dem Gebrauche nach sich immer vollkommener ausgestaltet[.] (NL 7[25] 12.304)

In this way, the ascendant power and the subjugated organ form into a new relation of ends and means: “sobald die Übermacht über eine geringere Macht erreicht ist und letztere als Funktion der größeren arbeitet, eine Ordnung des Rangs, der Organisation den Anschein einer Ordnung von Mittel und Zweck erwecken muß” (NL 9[91] 12.386).¹³⁵ So whereas for Roux it was *indirect* struggle over *Raum* and *Nahrung*, and the effect of the functional *Reiz*, which together formed the mainspring driving organisational development, for Nietzsche it is the *direct* struggle for *command* that performs this function (NL 26[272] 11.221).

This should be sufficient to show that Nietzsche repudiates the mechanistic view of the organism in favour of an understanding of any functionally organised entity as constituted through the active struggle for command among its parts. We have seen him put forward various arguments for this rejection. Thus, he argues that it is the only means of explaining the relational activity of entities (which in some sense entails perception and

¹³⁵ The preceding part of NL 9[91] 12.386, which is also pertinent, reads: “[...] [D]ie anscheinende ‘Zweckmäßigkeit’ (‘die aller menschlichen Kunst unendlich überlegene Zweckmäßigkeit’) bloß die Folge jenes in allem Geschehen < sich > abspielenden Willens zur Macht ist daß das Stärkerwerden Ordnungen mit sich bringt, die einem Zweckmäßigkeits-Entwürfe ähnlich sehen.”

endogenous striving), and that it is pragmatically preferable while being just as epistemically possible as the mechanistic worldview.

But what *kind* of exploitative command defines a healthy organisation in Nietzsche's eyes? In the first place, he does not view this as a monarchic organisation centralised around a single ruling centre. Indeed, he asks whether it is more likely "[e]ine Art Aristokratie von 'Zellen', in denen die Herrschaft ruht? Gewiß von pares, welche mit einander an's Regieren gewöhnt sind und zu befehlen verstehen?"¹³⁶ In order to see just how Nietzsche envisions this aristocratic order, it is worth making a close reading of NL 40[21] 11.638-9, where he describes the human subject in a manner that sheds light on his general conception of functional unity:

Wir gewinnen die richtige Vorstellung von der Art unsrer Subjekt-Einheit, nämlich als Regenten an der Spitze eines Gemeinwesens, nicht als "Seelen" oder "Lebenskräfte", insgleichen von der Abhängigkeit dieser Regenten von den Regierten und den Bedingungen der Rangordnung und Arbeitstheilung als Ermöglichung zugleich der Einzelnen und des Ganzen. Ebenso wie fortwährend die lebendigen Einheiten entstehen und sterben und wie zum "Subjekt" nicht Ewigkeit gehört; ebenso daß der Kampf auch in Gehorchen und Befehlen sich ausdrückt und ein fließendes Machtgrenzen-bestimmen zum Leben gehört. Die gewisse Unwissenheit, in der der Regent gehalten wird über die einzelnen Verrichtungen und selbst Störungen des Gemeinwesens, gehört mit zu den Bedingungen, unter denen regiert werden kann. Kurz, wir gewinnen eine Schätzung auch für das Nichtwissen, das Im-Großen-und-Groben-Sehen, das Vereinfachen und Fälschen, das Perspectivische.

There are three key points that should be foregrounded in this note insofar as they tell us what kind of aristocracy characterises functional organisations. The first is that Nietzsche does not envision this hierarchy as analogous to rigid hereditary nobility, but rather as a flexible oligarchy, which is never kept wholly isolated from

¹³⁶ See also NL 40 [38] 11.647, where Nietzsche states that the affects "sind eine Vielheit, hinter der es nicht nöthig ist eine Einheit anzusetzen: es genügt sie als eine Regentschaft zu fassen."

subordinate groups, and whose membership is always shifting. Since rule within the organism is always fluctuating between different drives or organs, these living unities are defined by “ein fließendes Machtgrenzen-bestimmen”. As he also states, “[d]iese Wesen sind isolirt gar nicht vorhanden: das centrale Schwergewicht ist etwas Wandlbares [...]” (NL 34[123] 11.462).¹³⁷ Moreover, if we look elsewhere, we can see that Nietzsche views these units or parts as being just as fluid and changeable as the whole: “[J]ene kleinsten lebendigen Wesen, welche unseren Leib constituiren [...] gelten uns nicht als Seelen-Atome, vielmehr als etwas Wachsendes, Kämpfendes, Sich-Vermehrendes und Wieder-Absterbendes” (NL 37[4] 11.577). Every commanding unit is itself therefore a fluid power organisation.¹³⁸ We are left with a world that is will to power all the way down, so to speak: “Bis in seine kleinsten Fragmente hinein hat er den Willen, sich zu verdichten. [...] Weltkörper und Atome nur größenverschieden, aber gleiche Gesetze” (NL 43[2] 11.702). There is therefore no ultimate stable reality to the commanding unit(s) of any organisation. Moreover, since the locus of power is relatively flexible, we can assume that Nietzsche affirms the idea that previously subordinate units may climb to participate in executive command, or, vice versa, formerly commanding units may correspondingly suffer demotion.

It is thus the units that contingently happen to be commanding an organisation at a given time that impose a function on the subordinate parts and

¹³⁷ See also NL 9[98] 12.391: “Keine Subjekt- ‘Atome’. Die Sphäre eines Subjektes beständig wachsend oder sich vermindernd — der Mittelpunkt des Systems sich beständig verschiebend [...].”

¹³⁸ Nietzsche draws on Boscovich’s critique of atomism to make this argument. Boscovich’s alternative to atomism was to posit extensionless “centres of force” that either repel or attract other centres of force. Nietzsche combines this idea with the observations in cellular biology made by Wilhelm Rolph, according to which cells can divide and unite: “Bei gewisser Stärkeverschiedenheit wird aus zwei Atomen Eins, und aus zwei Individuen Eins. Ebenso umgekehrt aus Eins werden zwei [...]. Also gegen den absoluten Begriff ‘Atom’” (NL 43[2] 11.701). As Gregory Moore (2002) has noted, Nietzsche “elevates Rolph’s discussion of reproduction in primitive organisms to the level of a universally valid principle describing the behaviour of entities in the inorganic as well as the organic world” (p.49). On Nietzsche’s use of Boscovich, See Peter Poellner, *Nietzsche and Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.46ff.

create an order of means and ends. However, the second point of note, is that these commanding units rule in partial ignorance (“[d]ie gewisse Unwissenheit, in der der Regent gehalten wird”). Therefore, no commanding unit could intentionally organise the whole because they could not possibly *know* (or “feel”) the whole. There is simply too much information to process – an infinitude of actions and relations.¹³⁹ Nietzsche uses this argument to reject the Kantian position that we must assume that the *Zweckmäßigkeit* of the body is the result of any kind of “zweckbewußter Wesen”.¹⁴⁰

The third point of interest is that Nietzsche does not limit conflict to the separate orders of the organisation in question, as was the case with Roux, or indeed, Nietzsche’s conception of agonal struggle. For Nietzsche, this species of struggle is primarily figured as one occurring *between* the various orders. Moreover, we now see that subalterns continue to struggle upwards in resisting their commanders (“der Kampf auch in Gehorchen und Befehlen sich ausdrückt”).¹⁴¹ The process by which

¹³⁹ This particularly applies to human consciousness: “Wie ein Feldherr von vielen Dingen nichts erfahren will und erfahren darf, um nicht die Gesamt-Überschau zu verlieren: so muß es auch in unserem bewußten Geiste vor Allem einen ausschließenden wegscheuchenden Trieb geben, einen auslesenden, welcher nur gewisse facta sich vorführen läßt” (NL 34[131] 11.464).

¹⁴⁰ See also NL 26[60] 11.164: “Daß etwas zweckmäßig vor sich geht z.B. der Prozeß des Verdauens, das wird durch die Annahme eines hundertfältig verfeinerten Erkenntnißapparates nach Art des bewußten Intellekts noch keineswegs erklärt: er könnte der Aufgabe, die thatsächlich geleistet wird, nicht angemessen gedacht werden können, weil viel zu feine Verhältnisse (in Zahlen) in Betracht kämen. Der zweite Intellekt würde immer noch das Räthsel ungelöst lassen.” Compare NL 24[16] 10.654, where Nietzsche suggests that there is an unconscious intellect ordering the body: “[N]ehmen wir wahr, daß eine Zweckmäßigkeit im Kleinsten Geschehn herrscht, der unser bestes Wissen nicht gewachsen ist, eine Vorsorglichkeit, eine Auswahl, ein Zusammenbringen, Wieder-Gut-Machen usw. Kurz, wir finden eine Thätigkeit vor, die einem ungeheuer viel höheren und überschauenden Intellekte zuschreiben wäre als der uns bewußte ist. Wir lernen von allem Bewußten geringer denken: wir verlernen uns für unser Selbst verantwortlich zu machen, da wir als bewußte, zwecksetzende Wesen nur der kleinste Theil davon sind.” See also NL 14[144] 13.328: “Wir werden uns hüten, die Zweckmäßigkeit durch den Geist zu erklären: es fehlt jeder Grund, dem Geiste die Eigenthümlichkeit zu organisiren und zu systematisiren zuzuschreiben.”

¹⁴¹ Regarding this point, see Tongeren (1989), pp.184-5.

these relations are established (*festgestellt*) – a kind of *Selbst-Regulierung* that controls growth – is described by Nietzsche as

[...] ein Kampf, vorausgesetzt, daß man dies Wort so weit und tief versteht, um auch das Verhältniß des Herrschenden zum Beherrschten noch als ein Ringen, und das Verhältniß des Gehorchenden zum Herrschenden noch als ein Widerstreben zu verstehen.
(NL 40[55] 11.655)¹⁴²

As will become more apparent as we progress through this chapter, subordinate entities are able to successfully resist their superordinates since, as in Roux, the higher orders depend upon the lower for their existence (Nietzsche speaks “von der Abhängigkeit dieser Regenten von den Regierten”). The dominant parties must therefore limit their exploitative practices and even actively care for the existence of their functionaries – i.e. satisfy or *obey* their demands. Thus, within these hierarchies (“Rangordnungen”), “der Befehlende den Gehorchenden alles schaffen muß, was zu ihrer Erhaltung dient, somit selber durch deren Existenz bedingt ist” (NL 34[123] 11.461).¹⁴³ As Heidegger (recalling Hegel’s master–slave dialectic) puts it, “sofern der Diener als ein solcher dem Herrn sich unentbehrlich macht und den Herrn so an sich zwingt und auf sich (den Knecht) anweist, herrscht der Knecht über den Herrn”.¹⁴⁴ In this way, then, the moral order of virtues that underpins a healthy power organisation is not unidirectional. The ideal commanders do not amorally stand

¹⁴² See also NL 26[276] 11.222: “Herrschen ist das Gegengewicht der schwächeren Kraft ertragen, also eine Art Fortsetzung des Kampfs. Gehorchen ebenso ein Kampf: so viel Kraft eben zum Widerstehen bleibt.” See also NL 36[22] 11.561: “In wie fern auch im Gehorchen ein Widerstreben liegt; es ist die Eigenmacht durchaus nicht aufgegeben. Ebenso ist im Befehlen ein Zugestehen, daß die absolute Macht des Gegners nicht besiegt ist, nicht einverleibt, aufgelöst. ‘Gehorchen’ wie ‘Befehlen’ sind Formen des Kampfspiels.”

¹⁴³ Indeed, Nietzsche highlights the non-destructive nature of this process by which “sich ein schwächeres Subjekt, *ohne es zu vernichten*, zu seinem Funktionär umbilden und bis zu einem gewissen Grad mit ihm zusammen eine neue Einheit bilden” (NL 9[98] 12.392; my italics). Compare, however, NL 9[151] 12.424, where Nietzsche also states that incorporation proceeds until “endlich das Überwältigte ganz in die Macht des Angreifers übergegangen ist u<nd> denselben vermehrt hat.” However, this note, which suggests that incorporation is an unmeasured process, represents an exception to the rule with respect to the later Nietzsche’s conception of incorporation.

¹⁴⁴ See Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 2 vols (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961), vol.2, p.265.

above the order of virtues that supports the organisation, determining it from above, but must themselves practice certain *Tugenden* towards those whom they command. It is this reciprocal process of overcoming – of command and obedience – that Nietzsche refers to as the “Kampfspiel” that *is* the organism (NL 36[22] 11.561):

Alle Einheit ist nur als Organisation und Zusammenspiel Einheit: nicht anders als wie ein menschliches Gemeinwesen eine Einheit ist: also Gegensatz der atomistischen Anarchie; somit ein Herrschafts-Gebilde, das Eins bedeutet, aber nicht eins ist. (NL 2[87] 12.104)

The ramification of these postulations is that the way in which a power organisation expresses itself is a function of its relation to those parts of “itself” or alterity, which it is trying to command. It has no essence to speak of, and can only manifest itself in its reciprocal relations with other living unities.¹⁴⁵ In this way, “die anscheinende ‘Zweckmäßigkeit’”, which *all* (and not just organic) purposive organisations exhibit, is “bloß die Folge jenes in allem Geschehen <sich> abspielenden Willens zur Macht” (NL 9[91] 12.386).

So though Nietzsche does away with Roux’s mechanistic interpretation of the organism in favour of positing active command as the basis of inner *Zweckmäßigkeit*, he retains the idea contained in Roux’s notion of *direct* struggle that assimilation is a measured process, which tends to establish relations of interdependence. In this way, we will see that Nietzsche’s vision of nature is at odds with the radical aristocratic readings of his work insofar as it does not unequivocally identify healthy command with the amoral and destructive exploitation of weaker subordinate parties. Notwithstanding, as we shall now see, this does not mean that Nietzsche does not see unmeasured conflict as a vital life process.

¹⁴⁵ We therefore certainly cannot assent to Müller-Lauter’s (1999) claim (on the basis of this note) that Nietzsche felt himself “moved to accept *fundamentally determinative* commanders” at the head of the body (p.179). Indeed, Nietzsche also uses this critique of organismic command to further undermine the idea of a *Selbsterhaltungstrieb*, namely by rejecting the idea that there is any fixed thing, or “essence” (“Wesen”), that is trying to preserve itself: “sich nicht ein Wesen, sondern der Kampf selber erhalten will, wachsen will und sich bewußt sein will” (NL 1[124] 12.40); quoted in Tongeren (1989), p.184.

4.3.4. EXCLUSION AND EXCRETION

Despite discarding much of Roux's account, Nietzsche nonetheless retains Roux's conviction that the struggle for incorporation is conditioned by unmeasured conflict, which likewise constitutes an essential life-process. Nietzsche views the two fundamental activities that define the struggle for organisation (i.e. the activity of will to power) as shared by the organic and inorganic alike: "Der Trieb, sich anzunähern — und der Trieb, etwas zurückzustoßen, sind in der unorganischen wie organischen Welt das Band. Die ganze Scheidung ist ein Vorurtheil" (NL 36[21] 11.560). But this process of *Zurückstoßen* takes a number of forms. On the one hand, echoing Rolph, Nietzsche thinks that the weaker are always seeking to conjugate with the stronger and must accordingly be repelled by the latter.¹⁴⁶ Exclusionary activity is also central to his account of the will to power as interpretation. Nietzsche claims that in order to exploit that which has been overpowered, a will to power organisation has to be able to "reinterpret" the overpowered organisation into an organ, to impose a new meaning and function on it and fit it into a new command structure: "Der Wille zur Macht interpretirt: bei der Bildung eines Organs handelt es sich um eine Interpretation; er grenzt ab, bestimmt Grade, Machtverschiedenheiten" (NL 2[145] 12.139).¹⁴⁷ However, this process demands the occlusion of those things that are perceived to be harmful or useless to the dominant power organisation, what Nietzsche also refers to as the darkening (*Verdunkeln*), thinking away (*Wegdenken*)

¹⁴⁶ See NL 36[21] 11.560: "Das Schwächere drängt sich zum Stärkeren, aus Nahrungsnoth; es will unterschlüpfen, mit ihm womöglich Eins werden. Der Stärkere wehrt umgekehrt ab von sich, er will nicht in dieser Weise zu Grunde gehen; vielmehr, im Wachsen, spaltet er sich zu Zweien und Mehreren. [...] [J]e mehr der Drang nach Varietät, Differenz, innerlichem Zerfall, um so mehr Kraft ist da."

¹⁴⁷ Thus, Nietzsche states the following in NL 2[145] 12.140: "In Wahrheit ist Interpretation ein Mittel selbst, um Herr über etwas zu werden". See also GM II 12 5.314: "Aber alle Zwecke, alle Nützlichkeiten sind nur Anzeichen davon, dass ein Wille zur Macht über etwas weniger Mächtiges Herr geworden ist und ihm von sich aus den Sinn einer Funktion aufgeprägt hat; und die ganze Geschichte eines "Dings", eines Organs, eines Brauchs kann dergestalt eine fortgesetzte Zeichen-Kette von immer neuen Interpretationen und Zurechtmachungen sein."

or even extinguishing (*Auslöschten*) of previous interpretations that were imposed on the power-organisation that is to be assimilated.¹⁴⁸ Thus, referring to the organic – though he also claims this describes “die ganze Geschichte eines ‘Dings’” – he states

[...] dass alles Geschehen in der organischen Welt ein Überwältigen, Herrwerden und dass wiederum alles Überwältigen und Herrwerden ein Neu-Interpretieren, ein Zurechtmachen ist, bei dem der bisherige “Sinn” und “Zweck” nothwendig verdunkelt oder ganz ausgelöscht werden muss (GM II 12 5.313-4).

With this dynamic in mind, we can also further elucidate the logic of “Selbstüberwindung”. As any power organisation grows and has to reorder its own internal hierarchy, it concurrently has to break apart its own *self*-interpretation. As part of this reshuffle, the organisation must also undertake a process of *Ausscheidung*, excluding the functions that, though previously serviceable, now fail to fit within the new ordering:

Daß die Organe sich überall herausgebildet haben, was die morphologische Entwicklung zeigt, darf als Gleichniß gewiß auch für das Geistige benutzt werden: so daß etwas “Neues” immer *nur durch Ausscheidung einer einzelnen Kraft aus einer synthetischen Kraft zu fassen ist.* (NL 40[38] 11.647; my italics)

According to Nietzsche then, the process of development – of growing, commanding new organs and forces, of producing new synthetic forces – is inextricable from the unagonistic activity of excluding parts of this synthesis that have become redundant or even counter-productive.¹⁴⁹ This is why “das Leben” tells Zarathustra that it is

¹⁴⁸ See also NL 5[99] 12.226-7: “— der Wille, der alles das unterstreicht (*und das Übrige eliminirt*), was ihm an einem Objekte dazu dient, mit sich selbst zufrieden u<nd> harmonisch zu sein [...] [D]as Wegdenken aller schädigenden und feindseligen Faktoren im Angeschauten [...]” (my italics).

¹⁴⁹ See also NL 7[9] 12.297: “— die größere Complicirtheit, *die scharfe Abscheidung*, das Nebeneinander der ausgebildeten Organe und Funktionen, mit Verschwinden der Mittelglieder — wenn das Vollkommenheit ist, so er giebt sich ein Wille zur Macht im organischen Prozeß, vermöge dessen herrschaftliche gestaltende befehlende Kräfte immer das Gebiet ihrer Macht mehren und innerhalb desselben immer wieder vereinfachen [...]” (my italics). NL 34[194] 11.486: “‘Entwicklung’ in jedem Sinne ist immer auch ein Verlust, eine Schädigung; selbst die Spezialisirung jedes Organs.” Compare also NL 7[9] 12.296:

“das, was sich immer selber überwinden muss”: “was ich auch schaffe und wie ich’s auch liebe, — bald muss ich Gegner ihm sein und meiner Liebe” (Z II Selbst-Ueberwindung 4.148). A condition of possibility of an organisation’s growth and transformation is that it breaks out of its outmoded hierarchical organisation. This is Nietzsche’s own cosmological conception of creative-destruction – or what he also dubs his “Dionysian” view of reality.¹⁵⁰

This should make clear the various reasons why Nietzsche views unmeasured struggle as indissociable from healthy organisation. Indeed, his commitment to the idea that will to power can only manifest itself against resistances does not entail that it cannot reject, exclude or even destroy a *particular* entity or interpretation presenting itself as a resistance. It merely means that resistance cannot be eschewed *completely*. This affirmation of exclusion and excretion starkly contravenes any reading of the will to power as a wholly non-destructive process of agonistic struggle or sublimation.

With this affirmation of unmeasured conflict posited as a necessary condition of forming strong organisations, we can see that, coming through Roux, Nietzsche has in fact reprised the majority of the key features of his earlier, Schopenhauerian conception of the kind of conflict that underpins vitality. We can therefore state that Nietzsche’s later conception of organisational struggle fulfils the first four criteria of Schopenhauer’s assimilative struggle:

1. Within it, opposed relata (will to power organisations) are aimed at subjugating their counterparts into a functional hierarchy;

“Die Individuation, vom Standpunkte der Abstammungstheorie beurtheilt, zeigt das beständige Zerfallen von Eins in Zwei, und das ebenso beständige Vergehen der Individuen auf den Gewinn von wenig Individuen, die die Entwicklung fortsetzen: die übergroße Masse stirbt jedes Mal ab (‘der Leib’) Das Grundphänomen: unzählige Individuen geopfert um weniger willen, als deren Ermöglichung. — Man muß sich nicht täuschen lassen: ganz so steht es mit den Völkern und Rassen: sie bilden den ‘Leib’ zur Erzeugung von einzelnen werthvollen Individuen, die den großen Prozeß fortsetzen.”

¹⁵⁰ See FW 371; see also EH GT 3 and 4 (6.312-5). We find an interesting precursor of this in VM 323.

2. Its telos is instrumental hierarchy (which for Nietzsche is synonymous with *power expansion*), and this is associated with health;
3. It is inextricably connected to unmeasured conflict (the exclusion of that which cannot be incorporated);
4. It continues within instrumental hierarchies even once these have been established.

What we have crucially found, however, is that it is no longer the case that this struggle is driven by a species of metaphysically substantial entity (5). Every actively striving will to power, which drives a given organising process in its struggle for power, is inherently *immanent* to reality, there is nothing beyond or behind the plurality of wills to power that compose the world in which we live. We should now turn to how Nietzsche suggests we *implement* this conception of organisation as a means to overcoming the collective and personal maladies of depression and anarchy.

4.4. INDIVIDUAL ORGANISATION

In these final two sections, I will now explore how Nietzsche thinks this description translates into a practical ethic. We should begin by asking how he deploys the above model in trying to combat disgregation at an individual level. Since social existence supervenes on that of individuals, this analysis will give us the basis we need to move up to the ontological level of the collective in the final section. As we saw in Section 1, the malady affecting humans was one that was traced back to a disgregation of *Triebe* and *Wertschätzungen*. In this section, beginning with drives, and then moving on to his account of values, I will give a reconstruction of how

Nietzsche describes these in terms of will to power, and how he thinks we can go about actively organising them. My chief objective is to show that, consonant with his account of the world as will to power, Nietzsche valorises *organisational* conflict, which combines a measured struggle to exploit some drives and values, with an unmeasured struggle to exclude, eradicate or repress others.

Despite Nietzsche's emphasis on the analogy between different ontological levels of power organisations, commentators have generally found it much easier to accept that Nietzsche promotes exploitation at the level of the self than at the socio-political level. However, they nonetheless almost invariably argue that Nietzsche promotes a *non-destructive* or *measured* form of struggle with respect to our discordant behavioural tendencies. The critic who initiated this line of interpretation was undoubtedly Walter Kaufmann. Based on his reading of Z II Selbst-Ueberwindung, Kaufmann claims that, according to Nietzsche's conception of the world as will to power, "all that exists strives to transcend itself – and is thus engaged in a fight against itself. The acorn strives to become an oak tree, though this involves its ceasing to be an acorn and, to that extent, self-overcoming".¹⁵¹ At the specifically human level, however, it is through the exercise of rationality that man achieves self-mastery and enacts the process of self-overcoming, since rationality allows him "to develop foresight and to give consideration to all the impulses, to organize their chaos, to integrate them into a harmony – and thus to give man power: power over himself and over nature." But pivotally, for Kaufmann, this process of overcoming caprice (enslavement to our impulses) is a non-destructive process:

We would do this now, and another thing the next moment—and even a great number of things at the same time. We think one way and live another; we want one thing and do another. No man can live without bringing some order into this chaos. This may be done by thoroughly weakening the whole organism or by repudiating and repressing many of the impulses: but the result in that case is not a "harmony," and the *physis* is castrated, not "improved." Yet there is another way—namely,

¹⁵¹ Kaufmann (1974), p.242. See pp.206f. and p.248 for Kaufmann's reading of Z II Selbst-Ueberwindung.

to “organize the chaos”: sublimation allows for the achievement of an organic harmony [...].¹⁵²

Reason enables man to conceive of ways in which his brutal impulses can be put to new more advantageous ends *instead of being repressed*. This is what Kaufmann calls Nietzsche’s theory of *sublimation*. Kaufmann implies that it was by this means that “a sexual impulse, for example, could be channelled into a creative spiritual activity, instead of being fulfilled directly”, or “the barbarian’s desire to torture his foe [could] be sublimated into the desire to defeat one’s rival, say, in the Olympic contests”.¹⁵³ To support his non-destructive reading, Kaufmann refers us to texts from GD (particularly GD Moral 1-4 6.82-5), where Nietzsche criticises Christianity for trying to extirpate, rather than exploit, the affects. In addition, he also explicitly cites NL 1[122] 12.39:

Überwindung der Affekte? Nein, wenn es Schwächung und Vernichtung derselben bedeuten soll. Sondern in Dienst nehmen: wozu gehören mag, sie lange zu tyrannisiren (nicht erst als Einzelne, sondern als Gemeinde, Rasse usw.) Endlich giebt man ihnen immer vertrauensvoller Freiheit wieder: sie lieben uns wie gute Diener und gehen freiwillig dorthin, wo unser Bestes hin will.

To be sure, texts such as this would appear to vindicate Kaufmann’s reading of Nietzsche as suggesting that “the impulses should be ‘overcome’: not by extirpation, but by sublimation.”¹⁵⁴ Indeed, Ken Gemes has also drawn on the same text to argue that Nietzsche’s ideal is a non-destructive process of *sublimation*, according to which, “weaker drives are not suppressed or shackled. Rather, they are to be harnessed to allow their expression in service to a higher aim.”¹⁵⁵

Yet this model of human overcoming does not sit well with our exposition of the exclusionary character of the will to power. Of course, Kaufmann does accept

¹⁵² Kaufmann (1974), p.227.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p.220.

¹⁵⁴ Kaufmann (1974), p.226.

¹⁵⁵ See Gemes (2009), pp.47f. See also Günter Haberkamp, *Triebgeschehen und Wille zur Macht: Nietzsche – zwischen Philosophie und Psychologie* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2000), pp.114-30.

that there is a destructive dimension to this dynamic, namely, insofar as the impulse's "essential objective is preserved no less than is the energy, while the immediate objective is cancelled".¹⁵⁶ The essential objective of every impulse, according to Kaufmann, is *power*. However, the idea that it is only the ideational content of an impulse that is negated is at odds with our exposition of Nietzsche's notion of the will to power, by which the formation of a new synthesis can *only* be achieved "*durch Ausscheidung einer einzelnen Kraft*". If our drives and affects are open to a "Reduction [...] auf den Willen zur Macht", and psychology is understood merely as a "Morphologie und Entwicklungslehre des Willens zur Macht", then surely we would expect an unmeasured struggle to exclude certain drives or impulses – that is, *the forces (Kräfte)* themselves, rather than their mere ideational content. Is Nietzsche's view of human psychology simply inconsistent with his vision of the world as will to power? Or can we make these texts cohere? Let us begin by making a detailed study of how Nietzsche conceives of the subject and their impulses as will to power organisations.

4.4.1. THE SELF AS WILLS TO POWER

In the introduction to this chapter, we established that Nietzsche thinks that our impulses should ideally be organised hierarchically. But before establishing how this is achieved, we should first inquire into what impulses actually *are* for Nietzsche. Although he usually refers to the impulses, or spiritual forces that constitute the self, as *Triebe* or "drives", he uses a panoply of different terms in close conjunction, or

¹⁵⁶ Kaufmann (1974), p.236.

interchangeably with *Trieb* – for example, *Affekt*,¹⁵⁷ *Gefühl*,¹⁵⁸ *Instinkt*,¹⁵⁹ *Begierde*,¹⁶⁰ and *Hang*.¹⁶¹ Deciphering what Nietzsche means by *Trieb* has thus come to represent a thorny philosophical problem, over which there has been much interpretive dispute. Peter Poellner, for instance, has argued that Nietzsche's drives are akin to homunculi with much the same kind of agency and even consciousness as our higher self.¹⁶² Against this, Paul Katsafanas has argued that we can describe a drive as merely that which generates a particular "evaluative orientation" within our mind, and that we can therefore account for them "without treating drives as homunculi".¹⁶³ John Richardson, taking an evolutionary biological tack, has then presented the case for interpreting drives as *genetically* ingrained behavioural dispositions.¹⁶⁴ Finally, Tom Stern has even urged that the lack of consistency in

¹⁵⁷ In JGB 117, Nietzsche refers to affects in a way that gives them a will, thereby rendering them remarkably similar to *Triebe* (though he does often distinguish between *Trieb* and *Affekt*). See also NL 7[76] 10.268: "Die Thiere folgen ihren Trieben und Affekten: wir sind Thiere." NL 4[142] 10.155: "[A]lle Affekte und Triebe sind durch unsere Werthschätzungen gefärbt". NL 9[173] 10.155: "In Anbetracht, daß Affekte und Grundtriebe bei jeder Rasse und bei jedem Stande etwas von ihren Existenzbedingungen ausdrücken".

¹⁵⁸ See e.g. NL 25[413] 11.120: "Der ganze innere Widerstreit der Gefühle, das Bewußtsein der übermächtigen Triebe".

¹⁵⁹ See e.g. NL 14[92] 13.270, where Nietzsche speaks almost synonymously of the "[d]ie Wildheit und Anarchie der Instinkte" and "die Wildheit der Triebe". See Assoun (2003) (pp.54-8) on the connection of drive and instinct in the early works.

¹⁶⁰ See e.g. NL 17[81] 10.564: "Die Triebe, deren Wirken am stärksten selbstsüchtig genannt wird, sind es am wenigsten, z.B. die Begierden des Essens Geschlechtes und Reichthums. Hier ist an Ein Selbst noch nicht gedacht, sondern nur an die Erhaltung eines Exemplars 'Mensch'."

¹⁶¹ NL 25[460] 11.135. See also FW 294.

¹⁶² See Poellner (1995). Poellner claims that, "when it comes to specifying the actual mode of operation or agency of these drives, which [Nietzsche] in fact seems to conceive as ultimate agents, Nietzsche invariably uses intentional-mentalist terms" (p.215). Nonetheless, Poellner does also take stock of Nietzsche's attempt to describe the drives in non-conscious, non-mentalist terms. Likewise, as Katsafanas has noted, this reading can be found in Clarke and Dudrick (2009) (pp.264-5).

¹⁶³ Paul Katsafanas, "Nietzsche's Philosophical Psychology", in Ken Gemes and John Richardson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.727-55 (p.745).

¹⁶⁴ See John Richardson, *Nietzsche's System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.38.

Nietzsche's usage renders the concept totally devoid of any determinate meaning whatsoever.¹⁶⁵

In contrast to Stern's defeatism, or Richardson's and Katsafanas' excessive specificity, I would suggest that drives should be quite loosely conceived as the power wills of which our self is composed, and which express themselves as impulses towards particular patterns of behaviour. They do not have a precise definition beyond this, and are more of a heuristic device (i.e. a *Bilderrede*) for talking about the murky conglomerate of "organs" that constitutes the self.¹⁶⁶ These forms of behaviour then support the conditions of existence (i.e. of power augmentation) of a particular form of life: "Alle menschlichen Triebe, wie alle thierischen sind unter gewissen Umständen als Existenz-Bedingungen ausgebildet" (NL 25[460] 11.135).¹⁶⁷ However, it is important to remark that the unit whose existence is furthered by those compulsions is not necessarily that of the individual – it could also be that of the community, or one's family (even at the expense of the individual agent).¹⁶⁸ Nietzsche does nonetheless seem to distinguish between subjective forces that are engrained in a deeper fashion and those that are only superficially rooted in the individual. John Richardson, for example, has argued that the driving forces of human behaviour should be parsed into two separate groups: "drives", which are biologically selected, and therefore biologically encoded; and habits, customs and practices, which are tendencies that can be acquired culturally, and which Nietzsche treats "as less securely or solidly or deeply settled in this way

¹⁶⁵ Tom Stern, "Against Nietzsche's 'Theory' of the Drives", *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, 1 (2015), 121-140. Stern argues that "Nietzsche did not in fact have anything like a coherent account of 'the drives', according to which the self, the relationship between thought and action, or consciousness could be explained [...] [or] on which his positive ethics could rest" (p.121).

¹⁶⁶ Indeed, in NL 7[198] 10.304, Nietzsche writes that "Triebe sind höhere Organe ..."

¹⁶⁷ See also NL 26[72] 11.167: 'Jeder Trieb ist angezchtet worden als zeitweilige Existenz-Bedingung.' NL 27[29] 11.283: "Je nach der Umgebung und den Bedingungen unseres Lebens tritt ein Trieb als der höchstgeschätzte und herrschendste hervor".

¹⁶⁸ See NL 26[72] 11.167: "Es giebt ein Gutes, das die Erhaltung des Einzelnen; ein Gutes, das die Erhaltung seiner Familie oder seiner Gemeinde oder seines Stammes zum Maaße hat — es kann ein Widerstreit im Individuum entstehen, zwei Triebe."

than our animal inheritance; they can go as quickly as they came.”¹⁶⁹ However, as we have seen from the proximity of *Hang* and *Trieb*, there is not such a clear-cut line between culturally acquired inclinations and Nietzsche’s conception of drives – in fact, Nietzsche suggests that there exists a relation of continuity between the two insofar as culturally acquired habits can *become* drives as they grow increasingly inveterate: “Zuerst Zwang, dann Gewöhnung, dann Bedürfnis, dann natürlicher Hang (Trieb)” (NL 25[460] 11.135).

He thus appears to use the term *Trieb* to signify an impulse with a certain degree of embeddedness.¹⁷⁰ Richardson has tried to argue that Nietzsche is a Lamarckian through a literal reading of Nietzsche’s statement that we inherit cultural mores in our blood (i.e. they are “in’s Blut vererbt” [JGB 208]). There is unfortunately not space for a full interrogation of this issue; however, it is well worth pointing out that in UB, the process of “taking into the blood” was merely a metaphor for *cultural* incorporation (“alles Vergangene, eigenes und fremdestes, würde sie an sich heran, in sich hineinziehen und gleichsam zu Blut umschaffen” [UB II 1 1.251]).¹⁷¹ Accordingly, I would submit that Nietzsche merely distinguishes between deeply ingrained behavioural tendencies, which may be deeply culturally *or* biologically entrenched, and those that are more superficial or malleable, which are more directly associated with culturally instilled habits.

Since drives are described as will to power organisations (“Unterwillen”), we can anticipate that Nietzsche would ascribe some form of independent perceptual and affective awareness to them (i.e. a “Denken, Fühlen, Wollen”). And indeed, as Poellner has pointed out, Nietzsche speaks of our drives as “feeling”, “choosing,

¹⁶⁹ See Richardson (2004), p.35 and pp.81-2.

¹⁷⁰ See also NL 25[408] 11.118: “Ehrfurcht vor den Instinkten, Trieben, Begierden, kurz alledem, dessen Grund man nicht völlig durchschaut! Es sind Kräfte da, welche stärker sind als alles, was formuliert werden kann am Menschen. Aber ebenso Furcht und Mißtrauen gegen dies Alles, weil es das Erbe sehr verschiedenwerthiger Zeiten und Menschen ist, das wir da in uns herumschleppen!”

¹⁷¹ See Richardson (2004), p.79, where on the basis of JGB 208 (and JGB 261 and 264), he claims that “[v]alues and drives [...] [are] carried in the ‘blood’ of organisms [...] and transmitted in that blood to genetic descendants.” See also p.17, fn.23; p.41; p.84, p.157, p.160, p.192.

commanding, and obeying”, and as being able to “reason”.¹⁷² Indeed, Poellner continues, Nietzsche even states that they are often conceived as in some sense “conscious”.¹⁷³ Each drive is a will to power organisation that seeks to direct the perception and activity of the organism – primarily by means of taking control of its intellect – in such a way as to provide itself with what *it* needs to augment *its* power. Thus, through control of the intellect, ascendant drives can direct the organism towards forms of behaviour that allow them to expand – the sex drive wants to drive us towards sexual activity, the drive for truth would like to compel us to pursue truth, and so on.¹⁷⁴ It goes without saying that this deeply problematizes Kaufmann’s claim that, for Nietzsche, rationality can be used to control our impulses, since our rationality is not something over and above our impulses; indeed, it is more commonly described by Nietzsche as a *tool* of our impulses.¹⁷⁵

But the drives do not just seek to control our intellect, they also strive to command *each other*: “Jeder Trieb ist eine Art Herrschsucht, jeder hat seine Perspektive, welche er als Norm allen übrigen Trieben aufzwingen möchte” (NL 7[60] 12.315).¹⁷⁶ According to Nietzsche, this command consists in the lower drive

¹⁷² See Poellner (1995), p.215.

¹⁷³ See Poellner (1995), p.223. Of course, Nietzsche does not think drive-consciousness should be *identified* with our own consciousness, but his way of talking certainly implies that there is degree of symmetry between our higher synthetic will, and the structure and awareness of our many “Unterwillen”.

¹⁷⁴ See NL 26[72] 10.274: “Das allgemeinste Bild unseres Wesens ist eine Vergesellschaftung von Trieben, mit fortwährender Rivalität und Einzelbündnissen unter einander. Der Intellekt Objekt des Wettbewerbes”. As Katsafanas (2013) has observed, drives often express their command by making certain features in our environment more salient (p.470). We also find this reading in Ken Gemes (2009), pp.50-1.

¹⁷⁵ As Detwiler (1990) has remarked (pp.158-9). Though Gemes suppresses the destructive aspect of Nietzsche’s project, he is alert to this problem, preferring to talk only about one drive overcoming another drive – there is no rationality or individual over and above the drives themselves bringing about ordering (as Kaufmann’s analysis often inadvertently implies).

¹⁷⁶ See also JGB 6. For an earlier example of this, see NL 11[119] 9.483: “In Wahrheit sind alle unsere Triebe tätig, aber in einer besonderen gleichsam staatlichen Ordnung und Anpassung an einander, so daß ihr Resultat kein Phantasma wird: ein Trieb regt den anderen an, *jeder phantasirt und will seine Art Irrthum durchsetzen*: aber jeder dieser Irrthümer wird sofort wieder die Handhabe für einen anderen Trieb [...]” (my italics).

having to act as an impulse or *Reiz* for another, superordinate drive.¹⁷⁷ Thus, when a scholar thinks he is exercising his disinterested and objective drive for truth, he might in actuality be discharging his drive to hunt, or merely fulfilling his interests “in der Familie oder im Gelderwerb oder in der Politik” (JGB 6).¹⁷⁸ And to be sure, our drives are always in contention with one another according to Nietzsche. Just like the body’s organs, they have to organise themselves into a tense hierarchy of command and obedience.¹⁷⁹ As in Roux, this inner struggle of impulses strengthens the individual so long as it is kept within bounds, which is to say *gebändigt* or *measured*:

Der höchste Mensch würde die größte Vielheit der Triebe haben, und auch in der relativ größten Stärke, die sich noch ertragen läßt. In der That: wo die Pflanze Mensch sich stark zeigt, findet man die mächtig gegen einander treibenden Instinkte (z.B. Shakespeare), aber gebändigt. (NL 27[59] 11.289)¹⁸⁰

Ideally, the contention of our drives, and the mutual stimulation arising therefrom, leaves us strong and active and, we might infer, forecloses depression insofar as it renders our impulses vivacious enough to initiate action; on the other hand, their *ordering* forecloses caprice. Thus, Nietzsche seems to call on us to actively undertake a conscious struggle to organise our drives and to incorporate them into a vibrant hierarchy. But *how* can we actually achieve this? How is it that the strongest man “bändigt” his drives according to the later Nietzsche?

¹⁷⁷ See NL 27[59] 11.289: “[A]lso ein Trieb als Herr, sein Gegentrieb geschwächt, verfeinert, als Impuls, der den Reiz für die Thätigkeit des Haupttriebes abgiebt.”

¹⁷⁸ We find the hunting example in an earlier note from 1881, NL 11[47] 9.459: “[D]er Eigentumstrieb – Fortsetzung des Nahrungs und Jagd-Triebs.” As Richardson (1996) has put it, “Drive A rules B insofar as it has turned B towards A’s own end, so that B now participates in A’s distinctive activity” (p.33; quoted in Gemes [2009], p.48). See also NL 14[142] 13.326: “Der sogenannte Erkenntnißtrieb ist zurückzuführen auf einen Aneignungs- und Überwältigungstrieb”.

¹⁷⁹ NL 25[411] 11.119: “Unterschied von niederen und höheren Funktionen: Rangordnung der Organe und Triebe, dargestellt durch Befehlende und Gehorchende.”

¹⁸⁰ See NL 27[59] 11.289: “Der Mensch hat, im Gegensatz zum Thier, eine Fülle gegensätzlicher Triebe und Impulse in sich groß gezüchtet: vermöge dieser Synthesis ist er der Herr der Erde.” See also NL 1[4] 12.11.

As he informs us in JGB 284, it is necessary “[s]eine Affekte, sein Für und Wider willkürlich haben und nicht haben, sich auf sie herablassen, für Stunden; sich auf sie setzen”.¹⁸¹ We might read this as one of Nietzsche’s primary solutions to the problem of depressive *akrasia* since it keeps the deeper forces of oneself active. But how then to order this cacophony once “we” have lent it our ear and successfully identified a drive that is problematically discordant. We can certainly say that what Nietzsche discourages is the precipitous attempt to fully negate, exclude or silence any troublesome impulse, which he argues characterises the Christian strategy of controlling passions:

Die Kirche bekämpft die Leidenschaft mit Ausschneidung in jedem Sinne: ihre Praktik, ihre “Kur” ist der Castratismus. Sie fragt nie: “wie vergeistigt, verschönt, vergöttlicht man eine Begierde?” — sie hat zu allen Zeiten den Nachdruck der Disciplin auf die Ausrottung (der Sinnlichkeit, des Stolzes, der Herrschsucht, der Habsucht, der Rachsucht) gelegt. — Aber die Leidenschaften an der Wurzel angreifen heisst das Leben an der Wurzel angreifen: die Praxis der Kirche ist lebensfeindlich... (GD Moral 1 6.83)¹⁸²

Our passions constitute the root (“Wurzel”) of our vitality, and to try to eradicate them is therefore to attempt to deny life itself. Crucially, in this context, Nietzsche is referring to passions such as sexual desire – that is, passions that are *indispensable* for the furtherance of life (after all, we *must* reproduce). According to Nietzsche, this is a process of categorising passions as separate from oneself, and then subsequently trying to excise these passions (which underpin one’s very existence):

Dasselbe Mittel, Verschneidung, Ausrottung, wird instinktiv im Kampfe mit einer Begierde von Denen gewählt, welche zu willensschwach, zu degenerirt sind, um sich ein Maass in ihr auflegen zu können [...]. [I]rgend eine endgültige Feindschafts-Erklärung, eine

¹⁸¹ See NL 9[139] 12.414: “[J]e größer die Herren-Kraft des Willens ist, um so viel mehr Freiheit darf den Leidenschaften gegeben werden. [D]er ‘große Mensch’ ist groß durch den Freiheits-Spielraum seiner Begierden und durch die noch größere Macht, welche diese prachtvollen Unthiere in Dienst zu nehmen weiß.”

¹⁸² On Nietzsche’s criticism of the church’s destructive impulse, see also AC 58.

Kluft zwischen sich und einer Passion. Die radikalen Mittel sind nur den Degenerierten unentbehrlich. (GD Moral 2 6.83)¹⁸³

Prima facie, these texts might have the appearance of an unqualified rejection of repressive spiritual exercises. But closer scrutiny reveals that he is *specifically* criticising those who A) unreflectively resort to castration – i.e. who *instinctively* resort to this method, *without first asking* “how can a desire be spiritualized” (which does not entail that a desire *can* always be spiritualised); B) *only* resort to castration in the face of a troublesome passion – i.e. for whom this method is in *all* circumstances “indispensable” (*unentbehrlich*); C) try to eradicate impulses that are fundamental to life – such as the acquisitive drives (e.g. “greed”), and the sexual (or “sensual”) passions. That his criticisms are qualified suggests there might be conditions under which we might, after deliberation, decide that a given impulse is *not* necessary for life and *cannot* be sublimated into the conglomerate of our drives (though let us recall that for Nietzsche this deliberating “I” is not a rational ego distinct from our impulses, but a dominant drive, or alliance of drives¹⁸⁴).

But what about his *positive* thesis? In one of the few notes from the later period where Nietzsche gives us an explicit account of how we might achieve control of a drive, we find that the strong individual should in fact, to some extent at least, employ ascetic practices. Indeed, he even advocates practices of the self involving *Entsagung*: “Alle Tugend und Tüchtigkeit am Leibe und an der Seele ist mühsam und im Kleinen erworben worden, durch viel Fleiß, Selbstbeziehung, Beschränkung auf Weniges, durch viel zähe treue Wiederholung der gleichen Arbeiten, *der gleichen Entsagungen*” (NL 26[409] 11.260; my italics).¹⁸⁵ Though

¹⁸³ On Nietzsche’s critique of castration as a method of self-cultivation, see also NL 10[157] 12.545, entitled, “Moral-Castratismus. — Das Castraten-Ideal.”

¹⁸⁴ See JGB 117: “Der Wille, einen Affekt zu überwinden, ist zuletzt doch nur der Wille eines anderen oder mehrerer anderer Affekte.” See also D 109.

¹⁸⁵ See also M 109. See also NL 9[93] 12.387, where Nietzsche also indicates that ascetic practices can be employed to strengthen drives: “Ich will auch die Asketik wieder vernünftlichen; an Stelle der Absicht auf Verneinung die Absicht auf Verstärkung; eine Gymnastik des Willens; eine Entbehrung und eingelegte Fastenzeiten jeder Art, auch im Geistigsten”.

this remains vague, self-discipline is posited as requisite, and it is undeniable that Nietzsche is advocating some kind of temporary suppression, if not repression, even if the eventual idea is that, having been denied release for a period of time, the drive will thereby be tamed and once again be allowed to exercise itself.

But on my reading of Nietzsche's notion of the will to power, and assuming that "[u]nsere Triebe sind reduzierbar auf den Willen zur Macht" (NL 40[61] 11.661), we might expect Nietzsche to propound an even more unmeasured approach. After all, in JGB 36, he describes our "Triebleben" as being defined not just by the debatably limited processes of "Selbst-Regulierung, Assimilation, Ernährung", but also by the unmeasured process of "Ausscheidung". Indeed, one of the major problems is that we have inherited, or been infected by, drives and instincts that are harmful to us. As he states in one note: "Jeder Trieb ist angezuchtet worden als zeitweilige Existenz-Bedingung. Er vererbt sich lange, auch nachdem er aufgehört hat, es zu sein" (NL 26[72] 11.167). Moreover, we also remarked how noble individuals have been infected by altruistic herd-morality. We thus have impulses to particular patterns of behaviour that simply cannot be bent to fit within what Nietzsche would consider a healthy ordering.

At times, he implies that this merely means that *parts* or *degrees* of inherited drives are simply allowed to disappear with time as they fall out of use across the generations: "Ein bestimmter Grad des Triebes im Verhältniß zu anderen Trieben wird, als erhaltungsfähig, immer wieder vererbt; ein entgegengesetzter verschwindet" (NL 26[72] 11.168). But at other times, he proposes a far more radical kind of excision. For example, in GD, the very same book in which he censures the excision of our instincts, he can also be found recommending that we take an aggressively unmeasured stance towards at least some of these instincts. Thus, after defining the modern human as a "physiologischen Selbst-Widerspruch" of instincts, he claims the following:

Die Vernunft der Erziehung würde wollen, dass unter einem eisernen Drucke wenigstens Eins dieser Instinkt-Systeme paralysirt würde, um einem andren zu erlauben, zu Kräften zu kommen, stark zu werden,

Herr zu werden. *Heute müsste man das Individuum erst möglich machen, indem man dasselbe beschneidet: möglich, das heisst ganz ...*
(GD Streifzüge 41 6.143; my italics)

Forging the self into a holistic organisation is not merely a matter of mastering our instincts and pressing them into the service of higher goals. Where those instincts are simply harmful or incompatible we must often *paralyse* them, and even excise them – the individual must be “beschneidet” Nietzsche asserts. The hope underlying his comments is that if certain impulses are denied satisfaction for long enough, they will eventually wither out of existence altogether. This call for excision is then repeated in AC with reference to what Nietzsche considers to be the harmful impulse towards *Mitleid*:

Nichts ist ungesunder, inmitten unsrer ungesunden Modernität, als das christliche Mitleid. Hier Arzt sein, hier unerbittlich sein, hier das Messer führen — das gehört zu uns, das ist unsre Art Menschenliebe, damit sind wir Philosophen, wir Hyperboreer! — — —
(AC 7; my italics)

Moreover, we find further texts in the *Nachlass* in which Nietzsche ostensibly calls for an *Ausrottung*, or *Vernichtung* of certain impulses; and indeed, he gestures towards the fact that he wants us to undertake this without resentment:

[S]o wenig werden wir eines Tages die Verleumdung und Verlästerung nöthig haben, um gewisse Triebe in uns als Feinde zu behandeln; [...] mit göttlichem Auge und ungestört vernichten! (NL 1[81] 12.31)

Die Ausrottung der “Triebe”
die Tugenden, die unmöglich sind oder
die Tugenden, welche bei Slaven, von Priestern beherrscht, am
schätzenswerthesten sind
(NL 25[349] 11.104)

Though the quotation marks in the second quote indicate that Nietzsche does not consider the impulses underlying our life-denying values to be genuine “Triebe”, he is nonetheless calling for some kind of an eliminative struggle towards our impulses more broadly conceived.

We might add that this is an impetus that is not confined to the notebooks and texts from 1888, where it might be argued that his thought tends towards hyperbole in a way that is often suppressed from the majority of his later published works. In the second essay of GM, for instance, Nietzsche advises that we turn our “schlechtes Gewissen” – what he describes as the inwardly turned “Lust an der Verfolgung, am Überfall, am Wechsel, an der Zerstörung” (GM II 16 5.323) – onto our life-denying “unnatürliche Hänge”, which, as we saw earlier, promote the various pathologies of the will:

Der Mensch hat allzulange seine natürlichen Hänge mit “bösem Blick” betrachtet, so dass sie sich in ihm schliesslich mit dem “schlechten Gewissen” verschwistert haben. Ein umgekehrter Versuch wäre an sich möglich — aber wer ist stark genug dazu? — nämlich die unnatürlichen Hänge, alle jene Aspirationen zum Jenseitigen, Sinnenwidrigen, Instinktwidrigen, Naturwidrigen, Thierwidrigen, kurz die bisherigen Ideale, die allesammt lebensfeindliche Ideale, Weltverleumder-Ideale sind, mit dem schlechten Gewissen zu verschwistern. (GM II 24 5.335)

In this way, Nietzsche hopes that an essential component of the ascetic ideal – i.e. the “schlechtes Gewissen” – can be *used* to undermine that ideal itself in favour of the counter-ideal of “grossen Gesundheit”. Such a text reveals just how Nietzsche’s ideal of sublimation is married to a destructive impetus – he calls for a mastery of our “schlechtes Gewissen” but only in order to purify ourselves of the *Hänge* that are wholly incompatible with his vision of the healthy self. While Nietzsche often wants to avoid labelling these life-denying impulses “Triebe”, it is undeniable that he seeks the complete exclusion, eradication or repression of certain impulses.

It is of course hard to square this with his proto-Freudian belief in the pathological “return of the repressed” – that is, the idea that engrained impulses that are denied external release will inevitably discharge themselves internally. As he also states earlier in WS 83, when the Christian believes he has “ertötet” his sensuality, it in fact “lebt auf eine unheimliche vampyrische Art fort und quält ihn

in widerlichen Vermummungen.”¹⁸⁶ We might speculate that Nietzsche’s policy of amputation avoids this problem insofar as it is only impulses or facets of our character that are *indispensable* to life (*qua* will to power) that are forced to return. Needless to say, ascetic impulses are not preconditions of life, as are the impulses for sensuality and acquisition. I do not propose to resolve this problem here, since my aim has merely been to illustrate that, as our exposition of his conception of the will to power anticipated, Nietzsche’s ethics of self-cultivation cannot sufficiently be explained in terms of sublimation or measured struggle.

4.4.2. ORGANISATION THROUGH *UMWERTHUNG*

Aside from the failure of the sublimational reading to countenance the repressively unmeasured aspect of the practices of the self affirmed by Nietzsche, there are further reasons for why we might want to reject this reading. In addition to the fact that our rational self does not exist in opposition to our drives, a major practical issue for the sublimational model of self-cultivation concerns the degree of *epistemological access* that we have to our drives and, correspondingly, the degree to which we can practically engage with them. Nietzsche (in contrast to Descartes, for example) did not think that the individual enjoys self-transparency. As Katsafanas has emphasised, our drives should not be equated with the compulsions or motives for action that we consciously feel. This is because the drives are often conceived by Nietzsche as *pre-conscious* – presenting our consciousness with motives (whether these be strictly rational or affective) like carrots on a stick. As we just saw, the desire for truth may appear to a scholar as the main motive for his work, when really there are other deeper interests – i.e. drives – being served by this

¹⁸⁶ See Adrian del Caro, *Grounding the Nietzsche Rhetoric of Earth* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), p.124. See also FW 292.

activity.¹⁸⁷ Accordingly, Nietzsche is highly sceptical regarding the degree of knowledge we can expect to obtain with respect to our drives. Often they are represented as wholly inscrutable: “[D]er Haushalt unsrer Triebe geht [...] weit über unsre Einsicht (NL 7[268] 10.323).”¹⁸⁸ And self-consciousness is accordingly a deeply problematic notion for Nietzsche: “[D]as ‘Selbstbewußtsein’ ist fiktiv!” (NL 1[58] 12.25). The scepticism which is already prominent in M thus perseveres through his later writings. How can one make rational decisions as to how one might best organise one’s self when the component parts of that self are largely hidden from view?

Although Nietzsche sometimes indicates that the life of our drives is characterised by complete opacity, at other times he also intimates that we only have very *limited* access to our drives, and that we should not mistake this for no access whatsoever; our drives often *do* manifest themselves to our consciousness.¹⁸⁹ To be sure, he describes our conscience (*Gewissen*) as “das Gefühl, in dem uns die Rangordnung unsrer Triebe zum Bewußtsein kommt” (NL 15[51] 10.493). Another important way in which our drives and their ordering are discernable to us is through our values. As he tells us in JGB 268, “[d]ie Werthschätzungen eines Menschen

¹⁸⁷ See Katsafanas (2013), pp.731ff. See also NL 1[20] 12.15: “Alle unsere bewußten Motive sind Oberflächen-Phänomene: hinter ihnen steht der Kampf unserer Triebe und Zustände, der Kampf um die Gewalt.” NL 27[26] 11.282: “Die Vielheit der Triebe — wir müssen einen Herrn annehmen, aber der ist nicht im Bewußtsein, sondern das Bewußtsein ist ein Organ, wie der Magen.” NL 39[6] 11.621: “Hinter dem Bewußtsein arbeiten die Triebe.”

¹⁸⁸ See NL 27[27] 11.282: “Die Gesamtheit des Menschen hat alle jene Eigenschaften des Organischen, die uns zum Theil unbewußt bleiben <zum Theil> in der Gestalt von Trieben bewußt werden.” NL 25[359] 11.107: “Der größte Theil unserer Erlebnisse ist ungewußt und wirkt”. NL 40[21] 11.638. See Haberkamp (2000), pp.88-92.

¹⁸⁹ Stern (2015) has pointed out that Nietzsche occasionally refers to certain conscious *Affekte* as drives (see p.126). Nietzsche often implies that our feelings and thoughts reflect the underlying “Gesamtzustand” of our drives. See e.g. NL 1[61] 12.26: “Jeder Gedanke, jedes Gefühl, jeder Wille ist nicht geboren aus Einem bestimmten Triebe, sondern er ist ein Gesamtzustand, eine ganze Oberfläche des ganzen Bewußtseins und resultirt aus der augenblicklichen Macht-Feststellung aller der uns constituirenden Triebe — also des eben herrschenden Triebes sowohl als der ihm gehorchenden oder widerstrebenden.” NL 1[58] 12.25: “Die einzelne angeblichen ‘Leidenschaften’ (z.B. der Mensch ist grausam) sind nur fiktive Einheiten, insofern das, was von den verschiedenen Grundtrieben her als gleichartig ins Bewußtsein tritt, synthetisch zu einem ‘Wesen’ oder ‘Vermögen’, zu einer Leidenschaft zusammengedichtet wird.”

verrathen etwas vom Aufbau seiner Seele, und worin sie ihre Lebensbedingungen, ihre eigentliche Noth sieht.” Our “Werthschätzungen” “entsprechen unseren Trieben” according to Nietzsche (NL 40[61] 11.661).¹⁹⁰ We can therefore glean at least *some* epistemological access to our drives through an analysis of our values. In the remainder of this section, I will therefore examine how he thinks we should struggle to organise our drives via our values (*Werthe*, *Werthschätzungen*), ideals (*Ideale*) and aims (*Ziele*), and how, even by this route, we find him promoting an aggressively unmeasured approach to our impulses.

Values represent and promote the behavioural means by which a drive, or alliance of drives, augments its power and towards which it therefore strives: “Jeder ‘Trieb’ ist der Trieb zu ‘etwas Gutem’, von irgend einem Standpunkte aus gesehen; es ist Werthschätzung darin, nur deswegen hat er sich einverleibt.” (NL 26[72] 11.162).¹⁹¹ It is also imperative to observe that in this fragment Nietzsche indicates that there is a disparity between the “good” sought by a drive, and what we would call a “Werthschätzung”. Drives lead us towards “goods”, but it is only when these drives have been incorporated into the command structure of the self, that their “etwas Gutem” is accepted as an end for the organism and thereby becomes a “Werthschätzung”.¹⁹² Echoing his distinction between superficial habits and embedded drives, Nietzsche thus wants to distinguish between the transitory “goods” posited by less sedimented drives, and the deeper values intrinsic to our existence.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ See also NL 27[28] 11.283: “Das verschiedene Werthgefühl, mit dem wir diese Triebe von einander abheben, ist die Folge ihrer größeren oder geringeren Wichtigkeit, ihrer thatsächlichen Rangordnung in Hinsicht auf unsere Erhaltung.”

¹⁹¹ See also NL 9[35] 12.350: “[D]ie Kraft des Geistes kann so angewachsen sein, daß ihr die bisherigen Ziele (‘Überzeugungen’, Glaubensartikel) unangemessen sind — ein Glaube nämlich drückt im Allgemeinen den Zwang von Existenzbedingungen aus, eine Unterwerfung unter die Autorität von Verhältnissen, unter denen ein Wesen gedeiht, wächst, Macht gewinnt...”

¹⁹² Compare M 38.

¹⁹³ See also NL 14[104] 13.282, where Nietzsche once again draws a similar distinction: “Die Moralwerthe als Scheinwerthe, verglichen mit den physiologischen”. Indeed, Schacht distinguishes between two orders of value in Nietzsche. See e.g. Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche*

But as he already suggests in FW, our values can in fact affect the very ordering of our behavioural impulses: “[S]icherlich [gehören] unsere Meinungen, Werthschätzungen und Gütertafeln zu den mächtigsten Hebeln im Räderwerk unserer Handlungen” (FW 335). Contrary to objectivists about value, and sounding more like an expressivist, Nietzsche holds all values to be the contingent expression of a particular power organisation with a particular perspective.¹⁹⁴ On this understanding, our values are irreducibly man-made; as he states in Z, “Werthe legte erst der Mensch in die Dinge, sich zu erhalten” (Z I Ziele 4.75), and they are created to serve the power augmenting needs of particular human organisations (individual, family, state, etc.).¹⁹⁵ These organisations increase their power by regulating the drives out of which they are composed, namely, through the propagation of moral values:

Moralen sind der Ausdruck lokal beschränkter Rangordnungen in dieser vielfachen Welt der Triebe: so daß an ihren Widersprüchen der Mensch nicht zu Grunde geht. Also ein Trieb als Herr, sein Gegentrieb geschwächt, verfeinert, als Impuls, der den Reiz für die Thätigkeit des Haupttriebes abgiebt. (NL 27[59] 11.289)

By disparaging harmful drives and promoting those that are expedient to the given organisation’s power-augmenting needs, moral values serve as a form of *functioneller Reiz* that ensures an economy by which the various parts of the whole are kept in healthy hierarchy and balance so as to serve the organisation’s higher

(London: Routledge, 1983), p.403. As I have argued, however, the degree of continuity in Nietzsche model of the self disallows us from making such a clear distinction.

¹⁹⁴ See NL 11[96] 13.44f., where Nietzsche, in describing the will to power, states the following: “[D]aß Zwecke, Ziele, Absichten haben, wollen überhaupt soviel ist wie Stärkerwerden-wollen, wachsen wollen, und dazu auch die Mittel wollen; [...] Alle Werthschätzungen sind nur Folgen und engere Perspektiven im Dienste dieses Einen Willens [...]”

¹⁹⁵ As with the drives, then, the power-organisation whose augmentation is being promoted by a given value is not necessarily that of the individual: “[B]ei aller Werthschätzung handelt es sich um eine bestimmte Perspektive: Erhaltung des Individuums, einer Gemeinde, einer Rasse, eines Staates, einer Kirche, eines Glaubens, einer Cultur” (NL 26[119] 11.181). Hence, Nietzsche speaks of “die Rangordnung von Werthschätzungen [...] nach welchen ein Volk, eine Gesellschaft, ein Mensch lebt” (NL 35[2] 11.509; see also JGB 224).

ends.¹⁹⁶ The chief polemical target of this naturalisation of values is of course idealist morality. So-called altruistic moral values can now be seen to be hypocritically grounded in selfish interests; moreover, Nietzsche has also denuded the absurdity of the idea of a universal morality insofar as he emphasises the fact that every individual and organisation has its distinct needs and therefore requires, and tends to generate, its own distinct morality.¹⁹⁷

As the opening section of this chapter (§4.2.) indicates, however, far from being opposed to the will to power, these universalizing and altruistic values are in fact posited as part of a long-term power-winning strategy of weaker individuals: “[D]as asketische Ideal entspringt dem Schutz- und Heil-Instinkte eines degenerirenden Lebens, welches sich mit allen Mitteln zu halten sucht und um sein Dasein kämpft” (GM III 13 5.366).¹⁹⁸ Just like the defensive strategies of Rolph’s conjugating protoplasma, under conditions of weakness, humans pursue power expansion in an abnormal fashion, and accordingly have values that promote this behaviour. For example, in their desire to form a herd, Nietzsche describes the

¹⁹⁶ See NL 10[10] 12.459: “Die ökonomische Abschätzung der bisherigen Ideale. Der Gesetzgeber (oder der Instinkt der Gesellschaft) wählt eine Anzahl Zustände und Affekte aus, mit deren Thätigkeit eine reguläre Leistung verbürgt ist [...] Gesezt, daß diese Zustände und Affekte Ingredienzien des Peinlichen anschlagen, so muß ein Mittel gefunden werden, dieses Peinliche durch eine Werthvorstellung zu überwinden, die Unlust als werthvoll, also, in Ehren dh lustvoll empfinden zu machen.” See also NL 10[57] 12.490: “— der Begriff des Lebens — es drücken sich in dem anscheinenden Gegensatze (von ‘gut und böse’) Machtgrade von Instinkten aus, zeitweilige Rangordnung, unter der gewisse Instinkte im Zaum gehalten werden oder in Dienst genommen werden (— Rechtfertigung der Moral: ökonomisch usw.”

¹⁹⁷ As Nehamas (1974) has laconically articulated it, “[t]he revaluation [of values] is thus the alleged discovery that our morality is, by its own standards, poisonously immoral” (p.113; quoted in Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality* [London: Routledge, 2015], p.60)). Leiter also enumerates the various other Anglophone scholars who have argued that it is this revelation of hypocrisy that is the core feature of Nietzsche’s moral critique. See also NL 10[154] 12.542 (which is *contra* hypocrisy): “Meine Absicht, [...] zu zeigen, wie all das, was moralisch gelobt wird, wesensgleich mit allem Unmoralischen ist und nur, wie jede Entwicklung der Moral, mit unmoralischen Mitteln und zu unmoralischen Zwecken ermöglicht worden ist...”. See e.g. JGB 43 (which is *contra* universality): “‘Gut’ ist nicht mehr gut, wenn der Nachbar es in den Mund nimmt. Und wie könnte es gar ein ‘Gemeingut’ geben! Das Wort widerspricht sich selbst: was gemein sein kann, hat immer nur wenig Werth.”

¹⁹⁸ See also AC 10.

slavish as practising a form of isophagy. The formation of a herd allows individuals to exercise their will to power and incorporation in a manner *internal* to the social whole – namely, by means of performing small acts of pity towards one another. This enables them to experience a feeling of power over others, in spite of their impotence.¹⁹⁹ Hence, just like Rolph’s starving protoplasma, “[a]lle Kranken, Krankhaften streben instinktiv [...] nach einer Heerden-Organisation [...]” (GM III 18 5.384). However, this also requires propagating values that support this weak form of human organisation.

As we also saw in Section 4.2., however, these altruistic values have come to dominate modernity. Hence, we might articulate the problem facing us moderns as that of dealing with having inherited, or having been infected by, values that further the interests of the weak; aggravating this problem, these harmful values have become ossified and placed beyond question. As such,

[...] wir haben eine Kritik der moralischen Werthe nöthig, der Werth dieser Werthe ist selbst erst einmal in Frage zu stellen — und dazu thut eine Kenntniss der Bedingungen und Umstände noth, aus denen sie gewachsen, unter denen sie sich entwickelt und verschoben haben [...]. (GM Vorrede 6 5.253)²⁰⁰

One of the first steps towards formulating a remedy is to distinguish pathological from healthy values, which can be achieved through a genealogy of all the various moralities. Rather than producing a mere catalogue, however, this involves the formation of a *Rangordnung* of moral values:

Unterschied von niederen und höheren Funktionen: Rangordnung der Organe und Triebe, dargestellt durch Befehlende und Gehorchende. Aufgabe der Ethik: die Werthunterschiede als physiologische

¹⁹⁹ See GM III 18 5.383: “Das Glück der ‘kleinsten Überlegenheit’, wie es alles Wohlthun, Nützen, Helfen, Auszeichnen mit sich bringt, ist das reichlichste Trostmittel, dessen sich die Physiologisch-Gehemmtten zu bedienen pflegen”.

²⁰⁰ See also JGB 186, where Nietzsche calls for a “Sammlung des Materials, begriffliche Fassung und Zusammenordnung eines ungeheuren Reichs zarter Werthgefühle und Werthunterschiede, welche leben, wachsen, zeugen und zu Grunde gehn, — und, vielleicht, Versuche, die wiederkehrenden und häufigeren Gestaltungen dieser lebenden Krystallisation anschaulich zu machen, — als Vorbereitung zu einer Typenlehre der Moral.”

Rangordnung von “höher” und “nieder” (“wichtiger, wesentlicher, unentbehrlicher, unersetzlicher” usw.)[.] (NL 25[4110] 11.119)²⁰¹

But on what *basis* can Nietzsche establish such a rank-order? What is his *Maßstab*?

In his own words:

Woran mißt sich objektiv der Werth? Allein an dem Quantum gesteigerter und organisirter Macht, nach dem, was in allem Geschehen geschieht, ein Wille zum Mehr... (NL 11[83] 13.40)²⁰²

As he indicates in another note, it is the “Wille zur Macht” that represents the “Maaßstab, wonach der Werth der moralischen Werthschätzungen zu bestimmen ist” (NL 2[131] 12.132). The conception of life and the world as will to power acts as the new fulcrum around which the task of self-organisation can begin to take place; in contrast to the metaphysical fulcrum of UB, however, this is purely *immanent* – that is, it does not involve positing any unchanging metaphysical essences that exist beyond the world in which we live.²⁰³

²⁰¹ See also GM Vorrede 3 5.249, where Nietzsche asks, “unter welchen Bedingungen erfand sich der Mensch jene Werthurtheile gut und böse? und welchen Werth haben sie selbst? Hemmten oder förderten sie bisher das menschliche Gedeihen? Sind sie ein Zeichen von Nothstand, von Verarmung, von Entartung des Lebens? Oder umgekehrt, verräth sich in ihnen die Fülle, die Kraft, der Wille des Lebens, sein Muth, seine Zuversicht, seine Zukunft? —” See also NL 7[42] 12.308: “Der Antagonismus zwischen der ‘wahren Welt’, wie sie der Pessimismus aufdeckt, und einer lebensmöglichen Welt: — dazu muß man die Rechte der Wahrheit prüfen, es ist nöthig, den Sinn aller dieser ‘idealen Triebe’ am Leben zu messen, um zu begreifen, was eigentlich jener Antagonismus ist: der Kampf des krankhaften verzweifelnden, sich an Jenseitiges klammernden Lebens mit dem gesünderen dümmern verlogneren reicheren unersetzteren Leben. Also nicht ‘Wahrheit’ im Kampf mit Leben, sondern eine Art Leben mit einer anderen. — Aber es will die höhere Art sein! — Hier muß die Beweisführung einsetzen, daß eine Rangordnung noth thut, — daß das erste Problem das der Rangordnung der Arten Leben ist.”

²⁰² See also NL 5[71] 12.215: “Es giebt nichts am Leben, was Werth hat, außer dem Grade der Macht — gesetzt eben, daß Leben selbst der Wille zur Macht ist.” NL 11[414] 13.192: “Was ist gut? — Alles, was das Gefühl der Macht, den Willen zur Macht, die Macht selbst im Menschen steigert.” NL 5[71] 12.215. For an earlier example of this thought, see NL 4[104] 9.126: “[U]nsere Moralität hat das Maaß ihrer Idealität an dem Maaße der uns möglichen Kraft, vorausgesetzt daß wir diese steigern können.”

²⁰³ See Paul Katsafanas, *Agency and the Foundations of Ethics: Nietzschean Constitutivism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) on the way in which Nietzsche posits life as an ultimate value (p.151, fn.11). As commentators have noted, life has a privileged position as

Since it is the human richest in (controlled) opposition who is most vibrant and flourishing for Nietzsche, he sets this individual up as the ultimate standard: “[...] die höchste Kraft, als Herrschaft über Gegensätze, [abgiebt] den Maaßstab” (NL 25[408] 11.119). Nietzsche wants to aggrandize the values that serve the generation of such individuals and disparage those that frustrate this goal.²⁰⁴ We have already seen at length why he deems universalising, egalitarian and altruistic moral values to be degenerate, but it would be a mistake to interpret this as an all-out rejection of the concept of morality or moral values. For example, Nietzsche himself positively values (among other things) socially exploitative practices (JGB 259); *Rangordnung*, and the feeling of distance between the different strata of society and the self (“zwischen Mensch und Mensch” [JGB 62] and “innerhalb der Seele selbst” [JGB 257]); the need for a plurality of moralities suited to the different types of individuals within society (and “nie daran denken, unsre Pflichten zu Pflichten für Jedermann herabzusetzen” [JGB 272]); and externally directed expressions of the struggle for power – i.e. “Krieg, Abenteuer, Jagd, Tanz, Kampfspiele” (GM I 7 5.266).²⁰⁵ These values are all those values associated with what Nietzsche sees as the vital features of any healthy organisation – namely, hierarchy and power augmentation through discharge and struggle.

But the values that Nietzsche sanctions cannot be said to amount to a complete morality. Rather, what they do is promote the very struggle for incorporation that forces us to develop our own morality, which is to say a *Rangordnung* of values that promotes the most effective economy of impulses given the idiosyncratic set of drives we possess and our specific environmental

the highest ordering principle in Nietzsche’s normative worldview. See e.g. Ansell-Pearson (2006), p.243.

²⁰⁴ See e.g. JGB 260: “Die moralischen Werthunterscheidungen sind entweder unter einer herrschenden Art entstanden, welche sich ihres Unterschieds gegen die beherrschte mit Wohlgefühl bewusst wurde, — oder unter den Beherrschten, den Sklaven und Abhängigen jeden Grades.” Indeed, since *all* our values are an expression of the will to power, we should not interpret this project as Paul Katsafanas (2015) has: “In sum, the Nietzschean theory holds that values are legitimate insofar as they do not generate conflicts with will to power” (p.189).

²⁰⁵ See also JGB 270.

conditions.²⁰⁶ But again, this raises another problem: Surely we cannot use our rationality to consciously create a new order of values and drives, since (as we have already seen) reason and consciousness are simply the tools of our drives: “Unserm stärksten Triebe, dem Tyrannen in uns, unterwirft sich [...] unsre Vernunft” (JGB 158); and as he unequivocally states in JGB 191, “die Vernunft ist nur ein Werkzeug”. It would therefore appear that rational, critical reflection is not alone capable of bringing about the kind of order sought by Nietzsche. However, I want to suggest that his alternative is a less rationally oriented openness to experimentation with novel values.

There is an argument to be made that, in contrast to UB, Nietzsche wants us to do very little conscious work beyond that of combatting idealist values. Let us first recall that in UB IV, Nietzsche charges Goethe with *failing* to find his guiding idea and consequently of suffering a dissipation of his forces.²⁰⁷ This was in contrast to Wagner, who managed to consciously channel his powers in accordance with his “innere Gesetzlichkeit” or “Wille” (UB IV 2 1.435). If we turn to EH klug 9, however, we witness how much Nietzsche now seems to favour the Goethean model of experimentation:

Man muss die ganze Oberfläche des Bewusstseins — Bewusstsein ist eine Oberfläche — rein erhalten von irgend einem der grossen Imperative. Vorsicht selbst vor jedem grossen Worte, jeder grossen Attitüde! Lauter Gefahren, dass der Instinkt zu früh “sich versteht” — — Inzwischen wächst und wächst die organisierende, die zur Herrschaft berufne “Idee” in der Tiefe, — sie beginnt zu befehlen, sie leitet langsam aus Nebenwegen und Abwegen zurück, sie bereitet einzelne Qualitäten und Tüchtigkeiten vor, die einmal als Mittel zum Ganzen sich unentbehrlich erweisen werden, — sie bildet der Reihe nach alle dienenden Vermögen aus, bevor sie irgend Etwas von der

²⁰⁶ For a more comprehensive overview of Nietzsche’s account of noble values, see Tongeren (1989), pp.151-72.

²⁰⁷ UB IV 3 1.442: “Um das Ungemeine eines solchen Verhaltens zu ermessen, nehme man zum Beispiel das grosse Gegenbild Goethe’s, der, als Lernender und Wissender, wie ein viel verzweigtes Stromnetz erscheint, welches aber seine ganze Kraft nicht zu Meere trägt, sondern mindestens ebensoviel auf seinen Wegen und Krümmungen verliert und verstreut, als es am Ausgange mit sich führt.”

dominirenden Aufgabe, von “Ziel”, “Zweck”, “Sinn” verlauten lässt.
 — Nach dieser Seite hin betrachtet ist mein Leben einfach wundervoll.
 (6.294)

Though it has been suggested that there is continuity between the ethics of the self presented in UB and EH, it should be plain just how mistaken such a conclusion is.²⁰⁸ Whereas in UB IV, Nietzsche affirmed the Schopenhauerian conception of a worthy life as one that traces a *straight line*, he now contests this, accenting the need for life to be a *zigzag*, or what Schopenhauer called a *Fläche*. To be sure, the formation of one’s impulses into a vibrant functional unity is still postulated as the underlying goal; however, this is no longer a question of becoming conscious of an essential aspect of oneself, and then organising one’s impulses around this in order to bring an end to “das Tastende, Schweifende, das Wuchern der Nebenschösslinge”. An openness to what may appear to us as digressions, diversions and distractions is an essential to the development of a guiding “Instinkt”, “Zweck” (i.e. a superordinate value) or ruling “Idee” (though Nietzsche tellingly places this last term in scare quotes in the above citation, consciously distancing himself from the Platonic metaphysical foundations of his earlier synthetic model). In JGB, this is formulated as a need for experimentation, which is to say *the ability to explore the worth of new values*. His ideal *Versucher* (JGB 42) (experimenters and tempters) are philosophers “welchen anderen umgekehrten Geschmack und Hang haben als die bisherigen” (JGB 2), who work without “die Sicherheit der Werthmaasse, die bewusste Handhabung einer Einheit von Methode” (JGB 210).²⁰⁹ Moreover, one’s ruling

²⁰⁸ See Gemes (2009): “The story of Wagner’s achievement of a higher unity born from some master drive is of course the story Nietzsche would repeat about himself in the dramatic section of *Ecce Homo* [EH klug 9] where Nietzsche elaborates the subtitle of that work, ‘How One Becomes What One Is’” (p.47).

²⁰⁹ See also NL 9[93] 12.388, where Nietzsche calls for “ein Versuch mit Abenteuern und willkürlichen Gefahren.” While there is no set method, a prerequisite of Nietzsche’s strategy is the willingness and desire to break customary norms and engage in experimentation. And Nietzsche describes those who have foreshadowed his ideal Europeans of the future – like Goethe, Napoleon, Stendhal, Beethoven, Schopenhauer and Wagner – as those “mit unheimlichen Zugängen zu Allem, was verführt, lockt, zwingt, umwirft, geborene Feinde der Logik und der geraden Linien, begehrlisch nach dem Fremden, dem Exotischen, dem Ungeheuren, dem Krümmen, dem Sich-Widersprechenden” (JGB 256).

“Idee” forms an order within oneself *without* the interference of our conscious, rational self. All we need to consciously do, according to Nietzsche, is *refrain* from trying to overmanage this process.²¹⁰ Indeed, *not* actively pursuing self-knowledge is a necessary condition of becoming who one is; hence Nietzsche’s quotation of Goethe’s apothegm: “Wahrhaft hochachten kann man nur, wer sich nicht selbst sucht” (JGB 266).²¹¹

This attitude, however, is not to be confused with an endorsement of an amoral state of *laisser-aller*. The first reason not to confound Nietzsche’s stance with amoralism, is that he aims to generate novel relatively fixed standards, to create new values (“Werthe schaffen”), to forge future ideals and a new “wozu” for humanity (JGB 211).²¹² In the second place, this experimentation requires a range of core virtues – for example, *courage*.²¹³ Third, as already noted above, the philosopher cannot simply deny that they are “in ein strenges Garn und Hemd von Pflichten eingesponnen”; and insofar as they cannot escape the world of commitments and duties, Nietzsche’s ideal experimenters are still “Menschen der Pflicht” – they must rather learn to dance (“tanzen”) in their chains (“Ketten”).²¹⁴

But to get this process of experimentation off the ground, there must obviously be some initiating form of *Umwertung* of Christian values, which do not readily permit such deviance. To what extent, though, do we need to denigrate idealist morality, and the behavioural impulse to behave as an ideal Christian (or

²¹⁰ See FW 382, where Nietzsche paints his “Ideal eines Geistes, der naiv, das heisst ungewollt und aus überströmender Fülle und Mächtigkeit mit Allem spielt, was bisher heilig, gut, unberührbar, göttlich hiess; für den das Höchste, woran das Volk billigerweise sein Werthmaass hat, bereits so viel wie Gefahr, Verfall, Erniedrigung oder, mindestens, wie Erholung, Blindheit, zeitweiliges Selbstvergessen bedeuten würde”.

²¹¹ See JGB 198, where Nietzsche valorises Goethe’s “kühne Fallen-lassen der Zügel”. Note that here Nietzsche only endorses this approach under the condition that one is so old that one *can* let one’s drives loose.

²¹² Indeed, in AC, he explicitly rebukes anarchism, and hopes that experimentation will lead to a stable set of laws able to sustain an enduring society akin to the *Imperium Romanum*. See e.g. AC 57 and 58.

²¹³ See e.g. EH Bücher 3 6.303, where Nietzsche calls his perfect reader “ein Unthier von Muth”.

²¹⁴ Compare WS 140.

utilitarian or Kantian, etc.)? NL 10[117] 12.523 reveals that Nietzsche's declaration of war against Christian values is in a sense limited:

Ich habe dem bleichsüchtigen "Christen-Ideale" den Krieg erklärt (samt dem, was ihm naheverwandt ist), nicht in der Absicht, es zu vernichten, sondern nur um seiner Tyrannie ein Ende zu setzen und einen Platz frei zu bekommen für neue Ideale, für robustere Ideale [...]: unser Selbsterhaltungstrieb will, daß unsere Gegner bei Kräften bleiben, — will nur Herr über sie werden.²¹⁵

Nietzsche thus proclaims that he only wants to *dominate* Christian values and ideals ("Herr über sie werden"). Since, as we will remark in the following section, he wants to preserve and exploit the herd, and herd-morality is a condition of existence for the herd, it is unsurprising that he thinks that "[d]er Sinn der Heerde soll in der Heerde herrschen, — aber nicht über sie hinausgreifen" (NL 7[6] 12.280).²¹⁶ But he also argues that higher individuals should ideally remain in conflict with herd-morality *within themselves*, since inner plurality and struggle is a necessary precondition of health: "[M]an bleibt nur jung unter der Voraussetzung, dass die Seele nicht sich streckt, nicht nach Frieden begehrt" (GD Moral 3 6.84). This is undoubtedly one of the reasons that he believes every higher culture to be defined by the struggle of slave and master morality, "sogar im selben Menschen, innerhalb Einer Seele" (JGB 260). And to be sure, if we turn back to EH 9 klug, we can see what kind of struggle Nietzsche might mean in practice:

²¹⁵ See also NL 10[2] 12.454, where Nietzsche describes this as his "Kampf gegen die Überherrschaft der Heerden-Instinkte".

²¹⁶ On Nietzsche's desire for the preservation of Christian morality within society, see also NL 7[6] 12.280: "Meine Philosophie ist auf Rangordnung gerichtet: nicht auf eine individualistische Moral. Der Sinn der Heerde soll in der Heerde herrschen, — aber nicht über sie hinausgreifen: die Führer der Heerde bedürfen einer grundverschiedenen Werthung ihrer eignen Handlungen, insgleichen die Unabhängigen, oder die 'Raubthiere' usw." See also NL 35[9] 11.511f.: "Diese guten Europäer, die wir sind; was zeichnet uns vor dem M<enschen> der Vaterländer aus? Erstens: wir sind Atheisten und Immoralisten, aber wir unterstützen zunächst die Religionen und Moralen des Heerden-Instinktes: mit ihnen nämlich wird eine Art Mensch vorbereitet, die einmal in unsere Hände fallen muß, die nach unserer Hand begehren muß. Jenseits von Gut und Böse, aber wir verlangen die unbedingte Heilighaltung der Heerden-Moral." See also Leiter (2015), p.119.

Nächstenliebe, Leben für Andere und Anderes kann die Schutzmassregel zur Erhaltung der härtesten Selbstigkeit sein. Dies ist der Ausnahmefall, in welchem ich, gegen meine Regel und Überzeugung, die Partei der “selbstlosen” Triebe nehme: sie arbeiten hier im Dienste der Selbstsucht, Selbstzucht. (EH klug 9 6.294)

We see Nietzsche struggling to reinterpret (and appropriate) the Christian value of neighbourly love (“Nächstenliebe”) for his own higher purposes. In promoting “Sich-Vergessen, Sich-Missverstehn, Sich-Verkleinern, -Verengern, -Vermittelmässigen”, altruistic practices can, Nietzsche avers, foster the development of a synthesis of one’s drives insofar as they prevent the species of pseudo-self-knowledge that constricts this process (ibid.). Thus, he condones the drive to care for others at the temporary expense of one’s own wellbeing as a long-term strategy for achieving the egoistically oriented goal of self-cultivation. In this way, he places an interpretation on this drive for, and valuation of, altruism that robs it of its unconditional status and subordinates it the drive for individual health. Some Christian values can therefore obviously be retained within a healthy subjective organisation as long as their *Herrschaft* over healthy values is overturned.

Yet, if Nietzsche’s endorsement of the instrumentalisation of values is occasioned by an affirmation of life as will to power, we would expect it to be married to an affirmation of an unmeasured species of axiological struggle. Surely not every aspect of Christian morality can be rendered compatible with the higher ideal of health? For example, Nietzsche’s ideal experimenter can explore any value *except* that of weakness (*qua* fundamental good) (or we might say, meekness) – he is someone “für den es nichts Verbotenes mehr giebt, es sei denn die Schwäche” (GD Streifzüge 49 6.151). But in other texts, he seems to suggest that *no* part of idealist morality is compatible with his vision of thriving life. For example, in NL 7[6] 12.274:

Meine Einsicht: alle die Kräfte und Triebe, vermöge deren es Leben und Wachstum giebt, sind mit dem Banne der Moral belegt: Moral als Instinkt der Veneinung des Lebens. Man muß die Moral vernichten, um das Leben zu befreien.

This text implies that “Moral” (by which he means idealist morality) is an expression of an “Instinkt” that is fundamentally directed towards life-denial. To free life, then, (idealist) morality must be *vernichtet*, by which we can assume he means that the existing moral values associated with idealist morality must be subjected to radical critique – i.e. criticised without restriction – and the forms of behaviour associated with these values must correspondingly be subjected to unmeasured suppression.²¹⁷ A text such as this is wholly incompatible with the sublimational reading. Nietzsche is unequivocally stating that we should in some cases completely eradicate (i.e. exclude from our internal organisation) the “Instinkt der Verneinung des Lebens”.

Indeed, Nietzsche consistently recommends that we engage in an active *Vernichtung* or *Zerbrechung* of our values. In AC, it becomes clear that Nietzsche has set his sights upon Christianity, declaring his “Todkrieg gegen der Laster,” where “der Laster ist das Chistenthum” (AC Gesetz 6.254). This is then prefigured in Z III, where Nietzsche repeatedly incites his readers to an apparently destructive struggle against the old Christian moral-order: “Zerbrecht, zerbrecht mir, oh meine Brüder, diese alten Tafeln der Frommen!” (Z III, Tafeln 15 4.257). However, what Nietzsche has in mind is not mere wanton negation; rather, he promotes unmeasured critique as a precondition of creating new, more vibrant moral orders. Hence, in GM he asserts that “[d]amit ein Heiligthum aufgerichtet werden kann, muss ein Heiligthum zerbrochen werden [...]!” (GM II 24 5.335; my italics); and again in EH, that “*im Jasagen* ist Verneinen und Vernichten Bedingung” (EH Schicksal 4 6.368; my italics); or as he also declares in the context of his affirmation of radical value critique in Z III Tafeln: “Das Erdbeben macht neue Quellen offenbar” (Z III Tafeln 25 4.265). As such, these statements are intimately tied to his Dionysian notion of

²¹⁷ After calling for the destruction of morality in NL 7[6] 12. 273-83, he goes on to list a number of different ways he envisions this critique proceeding; for example, by showing how such morality is a “Werk des Irrthums”; how it is a “Werk der Unmoralität” insofar as it relies on the very egoistic drives that it condemns, and is therefore “mit sich in Widerspruch” (12.276); and how it is “dem Leben Schädlich” (ibid.).

creative-destruction.²¹⁸ But in what does this *Zerbrechung* consist? And how is it a prerequisite of creativity in the specific context of moral values?

One might begin by arguing that this *Zerbrechung* consists in merely negating the *unconditionality* of moral values. By negating their tyrannous claim to transcendence and universality one thereby opens up a creative space for the formation of novel values and *Rangordnungen* of values. After all: “[D]as Unbedingte kann nicht das Schaffende sein. Nur das Bedingte kann bedingen” (NL 26[203] 11.203). On this interpretation, the drives, values and behaviours inscribed on those tablets might be retained so long as they lose their unconditional value and are thereby opened up to creative engagement – i.e. reorganisation within new hierarchies of values:

Und wer ein Schöpfer sein muss im Guten und Bösen: wahrlich, der muss ein Vernichter erst sein und Werthe zerbrechen [...].
Und mag doch Alles zerbrechen, was an unseren Wahrheiten zerbrechen — kann! Manches Haus giebt es noch zu bauen! (Z II Sebsterüberwindung 4.149).²¹⁹

On this interpretation, creativity is enabled by breaking a certain *modality* to which our values lay claim.²²⁰ This might be achieved through Nietzsche’s naturalisation of values (as we saw above) or by disclosing the *falsity*, and even logical incoherence, of unconditional values – this is the “Wahrheit” of which Nietzsche speaks in the text cited above.²²¹ But he also contests this universality by highlighting the detriment practical consequences furthered by such a belief – namely, insofar as

²¹⁸ NL 13[13] 10.462: “Ihr Verdunkeler, ihr fragt, was aus euch wird, wenn ihr die Wahrheit sagt — aber die Wahrheit soll die Welt zerbrechen, *damit die Welt gebaut werde!* [...] Ich liebe das Leben: ich verachte den Menschen. Aber *um des Lebens willen will ich ihn vernichten*” (my italics).

²¹⁹ See also NL 11[16] 10.381

²²⁰ See Leiter (2015), p.60 for a review of Nietzsche’s attempt to undermine the universal claims of idealist morality.

²²¹ On the logical incoherence of the notion of an absolute value, see e.g. NL 34[28] 11.429: “Aberglaube: an das Seiende zu glauben, an das Unbedingte, an den reinen Geist, an die absolute Erkenntniß, an den absoluten Werth, an das Ding an sich! In diesen Ansätzen steckt überall eine *contradictio*.”

it blocks the possibility of creativity. Indeed, in 1883 he even claims that the inability to adapt our values to our power-augmenting needs (i.e. “um den Willen zur Macht zu befriedigen”) has fatal consequences:

Gäbe es eine absolute Moral, so würde sie verlangen, daß unbedingt der Wahrheit gefolgt werde: folglich, daß ich und die Menschen an ihr zu Grunde gehen. — Dies mein Interesse an der Vernichtung der Moral. Um leben und höher werden zu können — um den Willen zur Macht zu befriedigen, müßte jedes absolute Gebot beseitigt werden. (NL 7[37] 10.252)

Nietzsche gives those wishing to avoid destructive conflict a very plain ultimatum: “[E]ntweder schafft eure Verehrungen ab oder — euch selbst!” (FW 346). While it may be tempting to read this as a measured abolition of values – one limited to their modal status – it is still difficult not to interpret this as a *total* rejection of the value of universality and the drive we have to make *a priori* axiological claims.

But Nietzsche does not just endorse the active destruction of the values that constrict the process of ordering our drives; he also advocates a policy of quarantining oneself from such values. To be sure, one part of the spirit, says Nietzsche in JGB 230, is marked by measured, exploitative struggle – namely, “den Willen aus der Vielheit zur Einfachheit, einen zusammenschnürenden, bändigenden, herrschsüchtigen und wirklich herrschaftlichen Willen”. Yet this works in tandem with another, “entgegengesetzter Trieb des Geistes”, which is marked by an unmeasured struggle “zur willkürlichen Abschliessung, ein Zumachen seiner Fenster, ein inneres Neinsagen zu diesem oder jenem Dinge, ein Nicht-herankommen-lassen, eine Art Vertheidigungs-Zustand gegen vieles Wissbare”. In the first place, he describes this ommisive activity as necessary in order to get a vision of human nature *qua* will to power. Thus, to get an insight into the “Grundtext homo natura”, one must stop one’s ears to the fantastical descriptions and valuations of the human that have hitherto been noisily imposed on his existence:

[M]it unerschrocknen Oedipus-Augen und verklebten Odysseus-Ohren, taub gegen die Lockweisen alter metaphysischer Vogelfänger,

welche ihm allzulange zugeflötet haben: “du bist mehr! du bist höher!
du bist anderer Herkunft!” (JGB 230)

But in the second place, Nietzsche further maintains in GM that insulation from those propagating altruistic values is necessary as a means to preventing one from becoming sick: “Und darum gute Luft! gute Luft! Und weg jedenfalls aus der Nähe von allen Irren- und Krankenhäusern der Cultur! Und darum gute Gesellschaft, unsre Gesellschaft! Oder Einsamkeit, wenn es sein muss!” (GM III 14 5.371).²²² Again then, within Nietzsche’s later writings, the exclusion of harmful values and the impulses they promote is repeatedly posited as a precondition of self-cultivation.

By now it should be quite irrefutable that Nietzsche’s ethics of self-cultivation is one that can neither be glibly referred to as promoting an “agonistic” self, nor as a purely measured, sublimational form of struggle. Though Nietzsche *does* promote measured conflict with those drives and values that can be incorporated into a renewed, healthy self, this conflict should not be conceived as agonistic due to the emphasis on the fact that it is directed towards the *instrumentalisation* of that which has been overcome. On the other hand, I have argued that the sublimational reading, while acknowledging the exploitative thrust of Nietzsche’s conception of self-cultivation, over-generalises its claim that Nietzsche is opposed to the full negation of drives or impulses. Although he may equivocate on precisely *what* is to be eradicated and how this is to be achieved, there can be little doubt that he views the full suppression or eradication of certain impulses to be a prerequisite of healthy unity. Indeed, this is perfectly in keeping with his vision of the will to power as being fundamentally characterised by organisational conflict, which is at once a measured struggle to integrate the serviceable *and* an unmeasured struggle to exclude the injurious. However, contrary to his earlier Schopenhauerian model, we have seen that it is no longer knowledge

²²² Thus, Nietzsche reiterates the warning of Goethe that the greatest danger for the Romantics was “[zu ersticken] am Wiederkäuen sittlicher und religiöser Absurditäten” (WA 3 6.19). See also Appel (1999), p.66 for a number of other instances where Nietzsche seems to propound a prophylactic attitude toward herd-morals.

of our particular metaphysical essence that acts as the fixed point for individual organisation; rather, it is an appreciation of the world (and particularly the *self*) from a radically immanent viewpoint – that is, *qua* will to power. This should encourage us to embrace and even stimulate (rather than spurn or suppress) inner, subjective conflict as a condition of life. On Nietzsche’s account, this would enable us to avert both the risk of aboulia and the corollary danger of succumbing to idealist morality (as a pseudo-therapy for aboulia). But furthermore, Nietzsche gives us a yardstick by which we can organise our drives and values into a relatively stable functional hierarchy, thereby circumventing the risk of caprice and anarchy to which excessive tension gave rise.

Nonetheless, Nietzsche’s conception of self-cultivation faces a serious obstacle. This can be traced back to his reframing the problem of disgregation as one of *race*, which implies that there are some aspects of the self that are so deeply embedded that they remain impervious to our best efforts at self-cultivation:

Es ist aus der Seele eines Menschen nicht wegzuwischen, was seine Vorfahren am liebsten und beständigsten gethan haben [...]. Es ist gar nicht möglich, dass ein Mensch nicht die Eigenschaften und Vorlieben seiner Eltern und Altvordern im Leibe habe: was auch der Augenschein dagegen sagen mag. Dies ist das Problem der Rasse. [...] Und mit Hülfe der besten Erziehung und Bildung wird man eben nur erreichen, über eine solche Vererbung zu täuschen. (JGB 264)

Taking a more moderate line than Nietzsche’s sublimational readers, though with a notable lack of textual evidence, Connolly has contended that it is only when a “disposition” becomes “an *ineliminable* aspect of our self” that we must “simply make the most of it, expressing, sublimating or concealing it, but not repressing, eliminating or denying it.”²²³ But Connolly’s solution is perhaps too quick, not only is Nietzsche critical of the policy of “Täuschung” (Connolly’s “concealment”), but he further implies that there are parts of one’s self that are wholly impervious to

²²³ Connolly (1988), p.163; see also (1991): “[O]ne may deploy techniques to conceal, sublimate, restrain, or revise others that do not synchronize with one’s ideals and are unsusceptible to elimination” (p.180).

sublimational transformation: “im Grunde von uns, ganz ‘da unten’, giebt es freilich etwas Unbelehrbares, einen Granit von geistigem Fatum, von vorherbestimmter Entscheidung und Antwort auf vorherbestimmte ausgelesene Fragen” (JGB 231). To view this granite as a reprisal of his earlier essentialist conception of the self, however, would be a mistake; rather, he is merely referring to parts of the self that are too inveterate to undergo transformation or elimination – i.e. which exist beyond the reaches of our self-creative enterprises.²²⁴ However, the following section will demonstrate that he does not simply recommend that we abandon all attempts to eliminate harmful drives that happen to be impervious to transformation within our own lifetime. Indeed, I will now argue that he entreats us to eradicate or transform drives *in others* – namely, future individuals; and with this, we move decisively into the social dimension of his later philosophy.

4.5. COLLECTIVE ORGANISATION

The fact that the crisis of disgregation is now framed as a problem of *race* – i.e. as one stemming from deeply rooted impulses – means that in order to cure the pathology of the will afflicting modern Europeans, Nietzsche needs to formulate a longer-term programme of treatment. An ethics of *self*-cultivation will simply not suffice: “[D]ie Lebensdauer Eines [*sic*] Menschen [bedeutet] beinahe nichts [...] in Hinsicht auf die Durchführung so langwieriger Aufgaben und Absichten” (NL 37[8] 11.581-2). Cultivating the ideal human is a transgenerational project for Nietzsche, one that can only be pursued by means of a collective struggle to *breed* or cultivate this individual. The question that I want to answer in this section is therefore: What

²²⁴ Quoted in Richardson (2004), p.193 (fn.149). This difficulty is something that neither Nehamas (1985, ch.7) nor Kaufmann (1974) fully acknowledge in their optimistic models of Nietzschean self-creation.

kind of society does Nietzsche think can most effectively undertake this project? And more specifically, what forms of social struggle define this society?

I will contend that the society best able to achieve this goal, according to Nietzsche, is one that embodies his general model of a healthy will to power organisation – though he is by no means univocal regarding how this model translates into a socio-political philosophy. In the critical literature, however, we uncover two starkly opposed accounts of how Nietzsche’s conception of the world as will to power translates into a theory of political governance. It will serve us well to briefly delineate these divergent interpretations.

First, we have Nietzsche’s agonistic readers, who read the will to power as implying an agonistic-democratic model of political organisation. As we have repeatedly seen, this is best represented by Connolly and Hatab, who argue that Nietzsche’s ontology of power implies a non-destructive and non-exclusionary mode of political contest. In Chapter 2, we saw that both cite NL 9[151] 12.424 (“Der Wille zur Macht kann sich nur an Widerständen äußern”) in defence of this ontology. Hatab thus claims that “will to power expresses an agonistic force-field” in which each force is constituted through its relations. Hatab claims that this demands agonistic restraint at a social level, namely insofar as “my Other is always implicated in my nature; the annulment of my Other would be the annulment of myself.”²²⁵ To further buttress his agonistic vision of the healthy socio-political expression of the will to power, Hatab cites GD Moral 3 6.84f. (a text also used by Connolly). In this aphorism, Nietzsche explains how the *Vergeistigung der Feindschaft*

darin [besteht], dass man tief den Werth begreift, den es hat, Feinde zu haben [...]. Die Kirche wollte zu allen Zeiten die Vernichtung ihrer Feinde: wir, wir Immoralisten und Antichristen, sehen unsern Vortheil darin, dass die Kirche besteht... Auch im Politischen ist die Feindschaft jetzt geistiger geworden, — viel klüger, viel nachdenklicher, viel

²²⁵ Hatab (1995), p.68. See also p.8.

schonender. Fast jede Partei begreift ihr Selbsterhaltungs-Interesse darin, dass die Gegenpartei nicht von Kräften kommt [...].²²⁶

On the basis of this text, Hatab argues that Nietzsche's ontology of difference translates into a political ethos of democratic respect, which "forbids exclusion, [and] demands inclusion".²²⁷ Moreover, according to this,

[...] not only would eliminating one's Other violate this ideal, but so too would seeking or effecting complete *control* over one's Other. [...] Political domination can be unmasked as a flight from competition, a will to eliminate challenges, a fear of possible loss, and therefore as a weakness in a Nietzschean sense.²²⁸

As a consequence of this, equality of opportunity is requisite for any strong state oriented toward perfectionism. Representative democracy, what Hatab calls a "contest of speeches",²²⁹ then generates "temporary aristocracy" insofar as it meritocratically grants power to the winning contestants.²³⁰ Nonetheless, Hatab recognises that this is "not in keeping with Nietzsche's version of aristocratism", which he rightly recognises is of a more traditional mould.²³¹

Connolly, on the other hand, argues that Nietzsche formulates two ethical responses to his notion of life as will to power. One of these is that of aristocratic world-mastery, whereas the other "counsels us to come to terms with difference and to seek ways to enable difference to be." As we saw in Chapter 2, this latter account can be described as an ethic of "letting be".²³² It was further discerned in Chapter 2 that Connolly argues that *ressentiment* results from futilely striving to overcome the contingency, difference and resistance that are intrinsic to ourselves and society

²²⁶ See Hatab (1995), p.69. For Connolly's appropriation of the passage, see William Connolly, *Augustinian Imperative* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993), pp.156-7.

²²⁷ Hatab (1995), p.69.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.122.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.63.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.123.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p.125. For Hatab's exegesis of Nietzsche's aristocratism, see pp.39ff.

²³² Connolly (1988), p.161.

(according to Nietzsche's "ontology of resistance").²³³ He maintains that "Nietzsche's aristocratic solution [...] recreates the very resentment it seeks to redress".²³⁴ Connolly thus disavows Nietzsche's aristocratic solution as inconsistent with Nietzsche's own broader aims. Connolly therefore submits that it is only the ethic of "letting be" that we should take from Nietzsche insofar as it is more obviously congruent with his denigration of *ressentiment*. What is more, he maintains that a democratic politics is most consistent with this ethical outlook since it "provides the best way to incorporate the experience of contingency into public life"; moreover, he also maintains that rough equality of income would "relieve social causes of resentment."

Following a similar and equally imaginative line, Mark Warren admits that for Nietzsche the will to power translates into what he calls a "neoaristocratic conservatism"; yet Warren nevertheless argues that this "violates [Nietzsche's] own critique of metaphysics" insofar as it is grounded in a crude species of naturalism.²³⁵ Warren conceives of the will to power as, above all, a human drive for "autonomy of the self". Leading on from this, he asserts that at the level of the collective, the "will to power as an organised capacity for action is not inconsistent with social and political equality, simply because the universal motive identified by the concept of will to power is not domination but self-constitution."²³⁶ Indeed, Warren echoes Cavell's reading of the early Nietzsche in suggesting that if Nietzsche had judged societies in a manner more consistent with his philosophy of power, "he would have done so in terms of their capacities to enable the positive freedom of individuals".²³⁷ Like both Hatab and Connolly then, Warren intimates that for Nietzsche, it is an agonistic society founded on the principle of equal opportunity

²³³ See ch.2, §2.3.

²³⁴ Connolly (1988), p.160.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.211, p.209.

²³⁶ Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991), p.141, p.232.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.234.

that could most effectively “serve as a means to organizing individual power as agency”.²³⁸

In each of these democratic readings, the conviction is that Nietzsche’s distinctive brand of aristocratism is *disempowering* according to the very logic of the will to power; indeed, they all comparably claim that some form of democratic political arrangement would be more congruent with this logic and better suited to Nietzschean perfectionism.²³⁹ In strong contrast to this chorus of interpretations, however, there are then the radical aristocratic readings of Nietzsche’s will to power. For example, Bruce Detwiler and Frederick Appel both invoke JGB 259 in order to defend their reading of Nietzsche’s aristocratism as being quite consistent with his notion of the will to power:

Leben selbst ist wesentlich Aneignung, Verletzung, *Überwältigung des Fremden und Schwächeren*, Unterdrückung, Härte, Aufzwingung eigner Formen, Einverleibung und mindestens, mildestens, Ausbeutung [...]. Auch jener Körper, innerhalb dessen, wie vorher angenommen wurde, die Einzelnen sich als gleich behandeln — es geschieht in jeder gesunden Aristokratie —, muss selber, falls er ein lebendiger und nicht ein absterbender Körper ist, alles Das gegen andre Körper thun, wessen sich die Einzelnen in ihm gegen einander enthalten: er wird der leibhafte Wille zur Macht sein müssen, er wird wachsen, um sich greifen, an sich ziehn, Übergewicht gewinnen wollen, — nicht aus irgend einer Moralität oder Immoralität heraus, sondern weil er lebt, und weil Leben eben Wille zur Macht ist. [...] Die “Ausbeutung” gehört nicht einer verderbten oder unvollkommenen und primitiven Gesellschaft an: sie gehört in’s Wesen des Lebendigen, als organische Grundfunktion, sie ist eine Folge des eigentlichen Willens zur Macht, der eben der Wille des Lebens ist. (My italics)²⁴⁰

On the basis of this text, Detwiler convincingly argues against Warren that the will to power is *not* purely oriented towards *self*-overcoming, but is rather irreducibly oriented toward the domination of *others*. According to Detwiler, the will to power

²³⁸ Ibid., p.72. I am indebted to Detwiler’s (1990) succinct summary of Warren (pp.160-1).

²³⁹ David Owen (2002), can also be said to occupy this vein of Nietzsche interpretation.

²⁴⁰ See Detwiler (1990), pp.43-8 for his interpretation of the political ramifications of JGB 259.

“finds its highest expression in the artistic will to give form, whether to the self or the state”.²⁴¹ Thus, he explicitly rejects Warren’s reading, asserting that Nietzsche’s “discussion of the political ramifications of life as will to power do indeed flow from the same ontology as his thoughts on self-constitution”.²⁴²

Appel draws attention to the way in which JGB 259 portrays pursuing power as an amoral activity (“er wird [...] Übergewicht gewinnen wollen, — nicht aus irgend einer Moralität oder Immoralität heraus”). Appel also cites JGB 44 in arguing that Nietzsche esteems individuals who exercise an “*unconditional* will to power”, that revels in the ‘art of experiment and devilry of every kind’.”²⁴³ Indeed, from their exegeses of the will to power as an amorally exploitative process, both Appel and Detwiler take Nietzsche to unequivocally support the idea that the human pursuit of power should ideally proceed unencumbered by moral considerations. On their readings, commanding individuals and social groups should rule with ruthless *sangfroid*, exploiting the masses without consideration for their well-being, since it is only through such instrumentalisation that the state can generate higher men, who represent the ultimate goal of humanity.²⁴⁴

In support of their construal of ideal Nietzschean command, both cite NL 1[56] 12.24, where Nietzsche champions figures such as Napoleon and Cesare Borgia as his exemplars. From men such as these, one gets a picture “von einem ‘interesselosen’ Arbeiten an seinem Marmor, mag dabei von Menschen geopfert werden, was nur möglich.” This presents us with a conception of statecraft as a disinterested aesthetic activity, according to which the masses should be treated as no more than mere chips of marble; indeed, Appel and Dombowsky insist that this is the only way to create a society capable of producing great individuals according

²⁴¹ Ibid., p.160.

²⁴² Ibid., p.161.

²⁴³ Appel (1999), p.31 (my italics).

²⁴⁴ See Detwiler (1990), pp.53f. See also Appel (1999), pp.147f.: “Nietzsche wishes to dissuade [his higher men] from feeling responsible in any way to ostensibly inferior human beings. Indeed, in his account the path to species improvement entails a wilful disregard of any accountability to the majority.” See also p.132.

to Nietzsche.²⁴⁵ Likewise, various other commentators have read Nietzsche as endorsing an undiluted form of amoralism, and even *immoralism*, in his celebration of the practice of slavery.²⁴⁶ Therefore, on the one side, according to his agonistic democrat readers, Nietzsche's notion of the will to power is read as inconsistent with his aristocratism and more consonant with agonistic democracy. Conversely, his radical aristocratic interpreters identify a harmony between his callous conception of the world as will to power and his aristocratic political outlook. I want to look at how we might go about resolving this *aporia*.

One possible response to this has been proffered by Herman Siemens. His reading states that Nietzsche's conception of the world as will to power figures the goal of "Machtsteigerung" as fundamental to all life, and that the most pressing threat to this goal is that of "Gleichmachung", that is, a negation of plurality and dynamism in favour of homogenous stasis.²⁴⁷ Moreover, Nietzsche explicitly indicts certain instantiations of democracy for nurturing just such homogeneity. However, on this reading, Nietzsche fundamentally equivocates regarding what he considers to be the ideal (i.e. most effective) mode of political organisation with respect to the task of fostering plurality and perfectionism. Predominantly drawing on the *Nachlass*, Siemens claims that Nietzsche commends a plethora of incompatible approaches. For example, Nietzsche prescribes i) that we should altogether refrain from trying to consciously bring about the ideal social conditions for the production of higher individuals (NL 26[117] 11.181); ii) that higher individuals should mercilessly instrumentalise the masses in some form of pyramidal Platonic society (NL 35[47] 11.533); and iii) that such higher individuals should in no way sully

²⁴⁵ See Detwiler (1990), p.53 and Appel (1999), pp.120-6.

²⁴⁶ See e.g. Conway (1997): "According to Nietzsche, political lawgivers are bound in their deliberations by no moral considerations whatsoever – all of which have been cast adrift in the passage beyond good and evil" (p.4). Dombowsky (2004): "Nietzschean *virtù* is egoistic and immoralistic. [...] The egoism which belongs to the nature of a noble soul carries with it the conviction that 'other beings must be subordinate by nature and have to sacrifice themselves' (BGE 265). In short, the perfectionism which accompanies Nietzschean 'self-fashioning' cannot be separated from the perfectionism which uses 'the great mass of people as . . . tools' (WP 660 Nachlaß 1885–86 KSA 12 2[76])" (pp.140f.; see also pp.140ff.).

²⁴⁷ Herman Siemens (2008), p.267 and p.235.

themselves with the dirty task of ruling (NL 7[21] 10.244). The plurivocality of these theses, Siemens insists, “falsifies any attempt to ascribe a coherent, settled political vision to Nietzsche”.²⁴⁸ Siemens further argues that Nietzsche’s conception of instrumentalisation is highly underdetermined – sometimes it is pitilessly exploitative (e.g. NL 35[9] 11.512); but at other times, Nietzsche’s “exploitative” higher individuals are conceived as in actuality serving the masses – namely, insofar as they give meaning to the toilsome lives of the majority (e.g. NL 10[17] 12.463),²⁴⁹ finally, one also finds a relation of total reciprocity, by which both higher individuals and the mediocre mutually condition the existence of their counterparts (e.g. NL 10[59] 12.492).²⁵⁰ Indeed, Siemens uses these texts to corroborate his conviction that “Nietzsche’s efforts to think through the demands that issue from his critique of democracy in political terms remain fragmentary, contradictory and inconclusive.”²⁵¹

It is imperative that we acknowledge this lack of coherence in Nietzsche’s political thinking, and that we accordingly refrain from ascribing an overly concrete or “thick” political ideal to his thought. This said, however, I will now defend the idea that we *can* attribute a positive political vision to him, even if this may be “thin” in nature, and not always able to account for each and every politically oriented text in the later corpus. In addition, I will endeavour to demonstrate how this thin political ideal gels with his conception of the will to power as I have construed it above.

As should by now be plain, the agonistic democrats (particularly Hatab and Connolly) misconceive of the will to power. Healthy will to power organisations can certainly destroy particular resistances; what they cannot do, if they are to remain healthy, is negate resistance *tout court*. Moreover, exclusionary struggle is a vital life process for any power organisation –relinquishing it would entail death on Nietzsche’s analysis. Nonetheless, the radical aristocrats misconceive of Nietzsche’s

²⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, p.242. See pp.239-42.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.248-54. This recalls one of Nietzsche’s arguments in favour of serving elite genius in UB (see §3.3.5.).

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.258-267.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.232.

notion of command and exploitation, which should ideally preserve that which is commanded. More importantly, however, to the extent that within any healthy organisation commanding units must continuously obey those they command, power over an incorporated entity is never *unconditional* and command is never unidirectional. Indeed, insofar as they must heed the demands of those weaker than them, it would appear that Nietzsche's ideal commanding forces *do* have certain moral obligations towards those whom they exploit (even if these are not dictated by a transcendent moral law). So, both the agonistic democrat and radical aristocratic readings respectively misconceive of the will to power as either an excessively measured or unmeasured ontology. My interpretation of Nietzsche's political vision as broadly consistent with his conception of the will to power *qua* organisational struggle (i.e. a balance of measured and unmeasured struggle), is therefore offered as a positive corrective to these one-sided readings.

4.5.1. ARISTOCRACY AND EXPLOITATION

We should commence by collating some of the features that Nietzsche's plurivocal depictions of healthy social order have in common. Many such shared characteristics are to be found in his idealising portrayal of historical aristocracies, such as those of ancient Greece, the Roman imperium, the Italian Renaissance and even ancient Hindu societies. Naturally, we should observe that Nietzsche stresses the impossibility of returning to these historical modes of social arrangement; indeed, he is certainly not to be considered an advocate of atavistic regression: "Wir 'conserviren' Nichts, wir wollen auch in keine Vergangenheit zurück", he declares (FW 377). Nonetheless, an overview of his idealising representation of these societies reveals a range of recurrent features that he strongly implies are essential to any thriving community.

The first feature of the vital Nietzschean society is its prioritisation of the *individual*; indeed, for the later Nietzsche, social organisation should only ever be

directed towards the perfectionist goal of bearing ever more exceptional individuals – this is its principal *Zweck*:

[D]ie Gesellschaft nicht um der Gesellschaft willen dasein dürfe, sondern nur als Unterbau und Gerüst, an dem sich eine ausgesuchte Art Wesen zu ihrer höheren Aufgabe und überhaupt zu einem höheren Sein emporzuheben vermag [...]. (JGB 258)²⁵²

Nietzsche maintains that engendering such higher individuals is the ultimate goal (and justification) of society.²⁵³ These higher creative types are what he sometimes refers to as “eine Art Übermensch” (AC 4), the antithesis of the “letzter Mensch”.²⁵⁴ When Nietzsche says that he wants to advance the “Typus Mensch”, this should be interpreted not so much as a generalized concern with improving the conditions of every strata of humanity, but rather as a concern with elevating the *highest* products of society, since it is these that stand as the true representatives of humanity, or what he calls the “an sich mögliche höchste Mächtigkeit und Pracht des Typus Mensch” (GM Preface 6 5.253). As we saw in Chapter 1, these higher individuals are invariably *culturally creative* persons, akin to Goethe, Leonardo da Vinci and Napoleon. For Nietzsche, one of the ways in which a society discharges its accumulated capital is in the production of such “Übermensch[en]”, who represent the “Ausscheidung eines Luxus-Überschusses der Menschheit” (NL 10[17] 12.462). Indeed, the generation of the *Übermensch* is the highest form of agency through which a social organisation can express its power. We will return to the highly

²⁵² See also NL 10[111] 12.520: “[M]an [soll] durchaus nicht verkennen, daß es sich trotzdem nur um das Zustandekommen des synthetischen Menschen handelt, daß die niedrigen Menschen, die ungeheure Mehrzahl bloß Vorspiele und Einübungen sind, aus deren Zusammenspiel hier und da der ganze Mensch entsteht, der Meilenstein-Mensch, welcher anzeigt, wie weit bisher die Menschheit vorwärts gekommen. Sie geht nicht in Einem Striche vorwärts; oft geht der schon erreichte Typus wieder verloren...” JGB 126: “Ein Volk ist der Umschweif der Natur, um zu sechs, sieben grossen Männern zu kommen. — Ja: und um dann um sie herum zu kommen.”

²⁵³ See also NL 10[17] 12.462f.

²⁵⁴ AC 4: “In einem andren Sinne giebt es ein fortwährendes Gelingen einzelner Fälle an den verschiedensten Stellen der Erde und aus den verschiedensten Culturen heraus, mit denen in der That sich ein höherer Typus darstellt: Etwas, das im Verhältniss zur Gesamt-Menschheit eine Art Übermensch ist.”

underdetermined nature of Nietzsche's conception of the *Übermensch* below, as well as to his justifications for exalting this frustratingly obscure figure; for now, supposing we accept this discharge of higher creative individuals as a goal, under what social conditions can this discharge be said to take place?

What is evident from this preference for great individuals over the happiness of the greatest possible number is that Nietzsche's healthy society is inherently inegalitarian. And in keeping with his notion of the will to power, he invariably views healthy (i.e. fecund) societies as aristocratically organised, which is to say *stratified*:

Jede Erhöhung des Typus "Mensch" war bisher das Werk einer aristokratischen Gesellschaft — *und so wird es immer wieder sein*: als einer Gesellschaft, welche an eine lange Leiter der Rangordnung und Werthverschiedenheit von Mensch und Mensch glaubt und Sklaverei in irgend einem Sinne nöthig hat. (JGB 257; my italics)²⁵⁵

Nietzsche defines an aristocratic social order quite minimally as a mode of organisation in which individual members form a *Rangordnung* both insofar as they are held to be of differing worth *and* insofar as individuals always obey the directives of those occupying higher rungs. Indeed, in AC 57, he implies that the necessity of such hierarchy is sanctioned by *nature* itself: "Die Ordnung der Kasten, das oberste, das dominirende Gesetz, ist nur die Sanktion einer Natur-Ordnung, Natur-Gesetzlichkeit ersten Ranges" (6.242).

One of the chief reasons Nietzsche supports an aristocratic social arrangement is on account of its association with the institution of slavery (*Sklaverei*). He describes slavery as "eine Bedingung jeder höheren Cultur, jeder Erhöhung der Cultur" (JGB 239), and in FW 377, he calls for "einer neuen Sklaverei: denn zu jeder Verstärkung und Erhöhung des Typus 'Mensch' gehört auch eine neue Art Versklavung hinzu". Furthermore, he affirms slavery as a precondition of producing higher individuals: "[D]ie Sklaverei ist, wie es scheint, im größeren und

²⁵⁵ See also NL 2[76] 12.96-7.

feineren Verstande das unentbehrliche Mittel auch der geistigen Zucht und Züchtung” (JGB 188). As we have seen from JGB 259, Nietzsche justifies exploitative social relations on the naturalistic grounds that “Leben selbst ist wesentlich [...] Einverleibung und mindestens, mildestens, Ausbeutung” (JGB 259). A healthy society is defined by a constant struggle for *Einverleibung*, that is, the overpowering and subsequent *exploitation* of others. But why? And what forms can this exploitation take?

One reason that slavery is necessary according to Nietzsche, is insofar as it functions as a *sine qua non* of cultivating *self*-tyranny. As he states in JGB 257,

Ohne das Pathos der Distanz, wie es aus dem eingefleischten Unterschied der Stände, aus dem beständigen Ausblick und Herabblick der herrschenden Kaste auf Unterthänige und Werkzeuge [...], könnte auch jenes andre geheimnissvollere Pathos gar nicht erwachsen, jenes Verlangen nach immer neuer Distanz-Erweiterung innerhalb der Seele selbst, die Herausbildung immer höherer, seltnerer, fernerer, weitgespannterer, umfänglicherer Zustände, kurz eben die Erhöhung des Typus “Mensch”, die fortgesetzte “Selbst-Überwindung des Menschen” [...].

As commentators such as Keith Ansell-Pearson and David Owen have argued, in JGB, the external *Pathos der Distanz* (i.e. towards others) is only postulated as necessary insofar as it stands as a condition of possibility for the feeling of distance within *oneself* – that is, insofar as it functions as a means to *self*-exploitation.²⁵⁶ However, despite this emphasis on slavery as a means to self-tyranny, Nietzsche nonetheless stresses the need for the institution on a variety of other grounds.

On the one hand, he proffers a purely economic argument insofar as he conceives of the *Übermensch* as the product of a collective or communal “Luxus-Überschuß”, as already mentioned above. As in the case of the genius in CV 3, we can assume that the reason for this is that *Übermenschen* must live off this surplus in order to concern themselves with higher pursuits (rather than the reproduction of

²⁵⁶ See Ansell-Pearson (1994), pp.204-5. See also Owen (2002), p.121. On the basis of this, Thomas Fossen has argued that Nietzsche “confines the activity of self-overcoming to the aristocratic elite, to the exclusion of others.” Thomas Fossen (2008), p.301.

their existence).²⁵⁷ Needless to say, this entails economic exploitation. In addition to this, however, Nietzsche also puts forward the argument that the aristocracy of higher individuals need to make use of the masses in order to realise their creative projects:

Das Wesentliche an einer guten und gesunden Aristokratie ist aber, dass sie sich nicht als Funktion (sei es des Königthums, sei es des Gemeinwesens), sondern als dessen Sinn und höchste Rechtfertigung fühlt, — dass sie deshalb mit gutem Gewissen das Opfer einer Unzahl Menschen hinnimmt, welche um ihretwillen zu unvollständigen Menschen, zu Sklaven, zu Werkzeugen herabgedrückt und vermindert werden müssen. (JGB 258)

Great individuals such as Caesar and Napoleon needed armies of conscripted men in order to undertake their pan-European exercises in state-building; moreover, they needed to be perfectly at ease with losses. Indeed, the *Pathos der Distanz* can be seen as a feeling of moral licence facilitating precisely this kind dispassionate instrumentalisation of subaltern individuals. However, Nietzsche also emphasises that even these higher individuals must sacrifice themselves (“[sich selber] opfern”) for the sake of further elevating humankind (as embodied in its highest exemplars, that is). In this sense, then, Nietzsche vacillates regarding the degree to which his higher individuals should feel themselves to be a *function*.²⁵⁸ Moreover, as in UB, we should not overlook the fact that the *Übermenschen* give something indispensable back to the masses, and that it is in the latter’s own interests (according to Nietzsche) to work to generate such individuals. If an economically productive and well-managed society lacks higher exemplars, Nietzsche stresses that

[...] die Unkosten Aller summieren sich zu einem Gesamt-Verlust: der Mensch wird geringer: — so daß man nicht mehr weiß, wozu überhaupt

²⁵⁷ See also NL 2[13] 12.73.

²⁵⁸ See GD Streifzüge 38 6.139, where Nietzsche insists upon the importance “[d]ass 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.” See also NL 25[105] 11.38.

dieser ungeheure Prozeß gedient hat. Ein wozu? ein neues “Wozu!” — das ist es, was die Menschheit nöthig hat... (NL 10[17] 12.463)

As Herman Siemens has underscored, Nietzsche therefore criticises the purely economic model of exploitation (i.e. increased exploitation equals increased output or value). For Nietzsche, humanity conceived as a perfectly operating machine has no higher *purpose*, and thus represents a net *decrease* in value (a “Gesammt Verlust”). Thus, the *Übermensch* bestows a purpose on this exploitative apparatus and thereby endows the toilsome lives of the masses with existential significance – he is “rechtfertigend[..]” (ibid.). In this way, then, the *Übermensch* can be understood as a means to an end that serves the very purposes of those whom they ostensibly exploit.²⁵⁹

Nietzsche’s apology for exploitation should also not mislead us into thinking that the slavery he has in mind is simple chattel slavery; indeed, he often employs a far more expansive conception of *Sklaverei*, which merely involves the existence of “der Mensch als Werkzeug” (NL 25[238] 11.74).²⁶⁰ This encompasses various professions that we would not ordinarily consider exemplary of enslavement. For instance, he takes the scholar of philosophy, the monk, and the governmental official to epitomise slavery: “In Wahrheit giebt es immer Sklaverei — ob ihr es wollt oder nicht! Z.B. der preußische Beamte. Der Gelehrte. Der Mönch” (NL 25[225] 11.72).²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ See Siemens (2008), pp.253-6. Compare §3.3.5. of this thesis.

²⁶⁰ For an analysis of Nietzsche’s understanding of enslavement as merely treating the other as a means, see Fossen (2008) (esp. pp.307ff.).

²⁶¹ On the scholar of philosophy as slave, see JGB 207: “Wenn man ihn [den objectiven Geist] so lange mit dem Philosophen verwechselt hat, mit dem cäsarischen Züchter und Gewaltmenschen der Cultur: so hat man ihm viel zu hohe Ehren gegeben und das Wesentlichste an ihm übersehen, — er ist ein Werkzeug, ein Stück Sklave, wenn gewiss auch die sublimste Art des Sklaven, an sich aber Nichts, — presque rien!”

On this broader conception, it is hard to see how slavery could be wholly abolished. As David Owen (2002) has noted, the same criticism that Oscar Wilde implicitly invokes against Aristotle can likewise be directed against Nietzsche’s advocacy of slavery (pp.121f.). Wilde admits that the Greeks were “quite right” in saying that “civilisation requires slaves. [...] Unless there are slaves to do the ugly, horrible, uninteresting work, culture and contemplation become almost impossible [...]”; however, post-industrialisation, Wilde points out that this function can now be fulfilled by machines. See Oscar Wilde, “The Soul

Consonant with Nietzsche's account of the will to power, we should observe that the struggle of a healthy collective to establish exploitative relations is not merely internal to society (or the individual self). Rather, this impetus must also be directed *externally*, towards the instrumentalisation of others outside of the given social organisation:

Es gehört zum Begriff des Lebendigen, daß es wachsen muß, — daß es seine Macht erweitert und folglich fremde Kräfte in sich hineinnehmen muß. [...] Wenigstens dürfte ein Volk mit ebensoviel gutem Sinn sein Eroberungsbedürfnis, sein Machtgelüst, sei es mit Waffen, sei es durch Handel, Verkehr und Colonisation als Recht bezeichnen, — Wachstums-Recht etwa. Eine Gesellschaft, die endgültig und ihrem Instinkt nach den Krieg und die Eroberung abweist, ist im Niedergang [...]. (NL 14[192] 13.378)

Again, Nietzsche's argument for the necessity of this struggle for growth and "Eroberung" is grounded in his understanding of societies *as will to power organisations*. We would do well to remark, however, that this conquest is not necessarily achieved by means of military force, but can equally be accomplished through the use of so-called soft power (i.e. through economic and cultural influence).²⁶² Indeed, Nietzsche is well aware that although one can often effectively demonstrate one's power over another by wielding one's martial might, this is not a particularly efficient means of incorporating that other (insofar as it makes them hostile towards us).²⁶³

of Man under Socialism", in *The Collected Works of Oscar Wilde* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 2007), pp.1039-66 (p.1050). (For a similar argument, see also Ansell-Pearson [1994], p.214.) While this criticism holds for the texts in which Nietzsche indexes something akin to chattel slavery, it does not hold for the other texts in which Nietzsche uses the aforementioned expansive definition. Someone, after all, would surely have to service the machines which underpin Wilde's utopian vision. Owen (2002) also argues that Nietzsche drops his pro-slavery position after JGB (p.122); however, given that we find support for this position in both FW 377, GD Streifzüge 38 6.139f. and GD Streifzüge 40 6.142f., this is an untenable position. See also NL 11[60] 13.30: "Wenn man ein Ziel will, muß man die Mittel wollen: wenn man Sklaven will, — und man braucht sie! — muß man sie nicht zu Herren erziehen".

²⁶² Compare also GM II 11 5.310-3 and GD Alten 3 6.157.

²⁶³ On this topic, see NL 16[26] 10.507f.: "Jedes Lebendige greift so weit um sich mit seiner Kraft, als es kann und unterwirft sich das Schwächere: so hat es seinen Genuß an sich. Die

Just as in Nietzsche's model of the well-functioning power organisation, this exploitative command structure is supported by certain virtues; to be sure, Nietzsche makes the very general remark that we ought to conceive of "Moral nämlich als Lehre von den Herrschafts-Verhältnissen verstanden, unter denen das Phänomen 'Leben' entsteht" (JGB 19). But how does this apply to the realm of the social in particular? As we have just witnessed, soft-power is integral to Nietzsche's account of how slavery is maintained within a society – namely, through the use of *morality* and *moral education*: "Die Moralen und Religionen sind das Haupt-Mittel, mit dem man aus dem Menschen gestalten kann, was Einem beliebt" (NL 34[176] 11.478). For example, through the "Veredlung der Gehorsamkeit" (JGB 61), morality conditions the lower rungs to *obey*, to be good instruments for the commanding classes (indeed, this is one of the main uses Nietzsche identifies in Christianity).²⁶⁴ But compliance is also established through morality by a more direct route – namely, insofar as moral doctrine represents a means of codifying the behaviour of the masses through their conscience. In this manner, it functions "als ein Band, das Herrscher und Unterthanen gemeinsam bindet und die Gewissen der Letzteren, ihr Verborgenes und Innerlichstes, das sich gerne dem Gehorsam entziehen möchte, den Ersteren verräth und überantwortet" (JGB 61).

Moral command of this sort has the further benefit of enabling the minority of "Geistigen" to maintain a healthy prophylactic distance from the infectious values of rabble.²⁶⁵ Indeed, the positively charged notion of "das Pathos der Distanz" also often signifies precisely this sense of seclusion.²⁶⁶ Crucially, Nietzsche's affirmation

zunehmende 'Vermenschlichung' in dieser Tendenz besteht darin, daß immer feiner empfunden wird, wie schwer der Andere wirklich einzuverleiben ist: wie die grobe Schädigung zwar unsere Macht über ihn zeigt, zugleich aber seinen Willen uns noch mehr entfremdet — also ihn weniger unterwerfbar macht."

²⁶⁴ See NL 10[188] 12.568 and NL 35[9] 11.511. See also Appel (1999), p.134.

²⁶⁵ In AC 57, Nietzsche also outlines how this can be achieved by the commanders by commanding vicariously, through executives (such as monarchs).

²⁶⁶ See also GM III 14 5.371: "— das Höhere soll sich nicht zum Werkzeug des Niedrigeren herabwürdigen, das Pathos der Distanz soll in alle Ewigkeit auch die Aufgaben aus einander halten! Ihr Recht, dazusein, das Vorrecht der Glocke mit vollem Klange vor der misstönigen, zersprungenen, ist ja ein tausendfach grösseres: sie allein sind die Bürgen der Zukunft, sie

of this pathos presents a further problem for the agonistic democrat reading, which construes Nietzsche as radically endorsing inclusion. On Nietzsche's account, Religion also functions in a manner akin to Plato's "noble lie", giving the lower ranks a "Genügsamkeit mit ihrer Lage und Art" (JGB 61).²⁶⁷ This is in stark contrast to the side of Christianity that Nietzsche disdains for trying to level man by teaching "Die 'Gleichheit der Seelen vor Gott'" (AC 62) or socialist rabble-rousers, who "das Genügsamkeits-Gefühl des Arbeiters mit seinem kleinen Sein untergraben, — die ihn neidisch machen, die ihn Rache lehren" (AC 57).

Such comments once again betray that Nietzsche's struggle to incorporate Christianity and its derivatives does not aspire to remainderless sublimation. To be sure, he struggles to instrumentalise *as much of them as possible* for the higher aim of generating superior individuals; yet, there are always aspects of them that he appears to deem incompatible with this goal and which he accordingly spurns – indeed, in subjecting these aspects to radical critique, he apparently strives for their exclusion or *Ausscheidung*. To the extent that his critical engagement with Christianity and its derivatives combines measured and unmeasured struggle as a means to establishing a generative (social) synthesis, it can therefore be taken as a performative instantiation of his own notion of organisational struggle.

One of the final grounds on which Nietzsche deems an aristocratic social organisation to be exigent is that it provides a basis for *breeding* ("Zucht und Züchtung") in its creation of a stable moral order.²⁶⁸ It functions as a "Veranstaltung zum Zweck der Züchtung" (JGB 262), where breeding represents one of the most effective ways of increasing the net force of humanity. Indeed, opposing himself to the Christian notion of taming, he asserts the following:

allein sind verpflichtet für die Menschen-Zukunft." For more on Nietzsche's praise of a separation of the higher from the lower orders, see his discussion of "Schutzmaassregeln" in GD Verbesserer 3 6.100.

²⁶⁷ To be sure, Nietzsche thinks that even Christianity and Buddhism teach the lowest individuals "[zu stellen] sich durch Frömmigkeit in eine höhere Schein-Ordnung der Dinge [...] und damit das Genügen an der wirklichen Ordnung, innerhalb deren sie hart genug leben, — und gerade diese Härte thut Noth! — bei sich festzuhalten" (JGB 61).

²⁶⁸ See e.g. JGB 188 and 203.

Die Zählung ist, wie ich sie verstehe, ein Mittel der ungeheuren Kraft-Aufspeicherung der Menschheit, so daß die Geschlechter auf der Arbeit ihrer Vorfahren fortbauen können [...]. (NL 15[65] 13.450)

Owing to the entrenched nature of our drives, the project of generating higher individuals is, as demonstrated above, not achievable within the span of a single lifetime – it requires a *transgenerational* breeding programme. A programme of this sort in turn requires, according to Nietzsche, the stringent and tenacious authority that apparently only an aristocratic moral and legal order can provide.²⁶⁹ In Section 4.2.2., we also saw that Nietzsche holds democracy to be characterised by a “Vielwollerei” (presumably on account of its short-term and coalition governments), from which we can surmise that it would be incapable of bringing such a long-term project to fruition. It should come as no surprise that

[...] nichts scheint mir [Nietzsche] wesentlicher zu studiren, als die Gesetze der Züchtung, um nicht die größte Menge von Kraft wieder zu verlieren, durch unzweckmäßige Verbindungen und Lebensweisen. (NL 34[176] 11.480)

Certainly, there has been quite some dispute over the precise nature of this transgenerational breeding programme. The debate concerns whether the laws of which Nietzsche speaks primarily ensure a biological-eugenic or a cultural-

²⁶⁹ See JGB 262: “Nun sehe man einmal ein aristokratisches Gemeinwesen, etwa eine alte griechische Polis oder Venedig, als eine, sei es freiwillige, sei es unfreiwillige Veranstaltung zum Zweck der Züchtung an: es sind da Menschen bei einander und auf sich angewiesen, welche ihre Art durchsetzen wollen [...] [D]ie Art hat sich als Art nöthig, als Etwas, das sich gerade vermöge seiner Härte, Gleichförmigkeit, Einfachheit der Form überhaupt durchsetzen und dauerhaft machen kann [...]. [J]ede aristokratische Moral ist unduldsam, in der Erziehung der Jugend, in der Verfügung über die Weiber, in den Ehesitten, im Verhältnisse von Alt und Jung, in den Strafgesetzen (welche allein die Abartenden in’s Auge fassen)”. Continuing this line of thought in AC 58, Nietzsche also commends durable and intransigent religious-legal orders, such as that of the Roman imperium, as a condition for the flourishing of life. Here he affirms the fact that “wir [lernten] eben eine religiöse Gesetzgebung kennen, deren Zweck war, die oberste Bedingung dafür, dass das Leben gedeiht, eine grosse Organisation der Gesellschaft zu ‘verewigen’”. On the necessity of legal order for the expansion of life, see Herman Siemens, “The Problem of Law and Life in Nietzsche’s Thought”, *The New Centennial Review*, 10(3) (2010), 189-216.

educational form of cultivation.²⁷⁰ The terms *Zucht* and *Züchtung* seem to play on just this ambiguity – both, in different contexts, being capable of signifying either zoological breeding or cultural cultivation.²⁷¹ Since, as we now know, Nietzsche does not make a clear-cut distinction between biologically and culturally ingrained behavioural impulses (i.e. drives), it is no wonder that we find an analogous duality to his breeding project. In the previous two citations, for example, it is evident that Nietzsche understands these laws as regulating *both* breeding partnerships (“Verbindungen”) *and* more culturally oriented means of cultivation (e.g. “Erziehung” and “Lebensweise”).²⁷² We can therefore deduce from this that he believes we can, and indeed *should*, struggle against deeply embedded, harmful drives insofar as we are able to prevent their being passed on to future generations (*pace* Connolly).

Hitherto, most of my reading may seem to have been in accord with that of the radical aristocrats, and against that of the agonistic democrats – that is, to the extent that I have argued that Nietzsche’s advocacy of exploitation both follows from his conception of the will to power and coherently underpins his perfectionist project. Nonetheless, against the radical aristocrats, we have observed that Nietzsche’s conception of slavery, and the means by which it is established, is radically underdetermined, to the point that it certainly does not amount to anything remotely like a coherently proto-fascist political agenda. Moreover, as we now continue to further interrogate the radical aristocratic reading of Nietzsche as a proponent of specifically *amoral* exploitation, we will find that this reading decisively diverges from his picture of the will to power as a form of reciprocity.

²⁷⁰ For a more biologically oriented account of *Zucht* and *Züchtung*, see Richardson (2004), esp. pp.190-200. For an account that is centred on cultural means of cultivation, see Ottmann (1987) (pp.358ff.) or Schank (2000).

²⁷¹ See Ottmann (1987), p.358; Schank (2000). See also entries for “Zucht” and “Züchtung” in DWB. See also Detwiler (1990), pp.111-3.

²⁷² On Nietzsche’s advocacy of using marriage laws as a means to selective breeding, see also NL 4[6] 12.179. See also JGB 61, where Nietzsche describes “glückliche Ehesitten” as a precondition of higher individuals. See also Richardson (2004), p.198.

According to Nietzsche, the lower castes are relentlessly struggling upwards, with an eye to occupying the social position of their commanders. Indeed, he appears to praise the fact that religious education can give the classes of the “Beherrschten” both the “Geistigkeit” and practice in self-overcoming required in order to rise up and eventually seize power (JGB 61).²⁷³ What is more, Nietzsche frequently valorises a form of social stratification marked by *constant* tension and struggle – a “*beständigen Übung im Gehorchen und Befehlen, Nieder- und Fernhalten*” (JGB 257; my italics).²⁷⁴ Just as in Roux’s vision of the body, the tension generated by the parts concurrently striving for dominance is vital to the continued strength of the whole. But what we also discovered in our exposition of healthy will to power organisations was that insofar as any commanding organisation depends upon its subordinates, it must also partly obey their demands and exercise certain *Tugenden* towards them – that is, their struggle to exploit must be *measured*. I do not wish to deny the presence of texts in which Nietzsche endorses amoralism, but merely to draw attention to the fact that he also presents exploitative rule in a way that better coheres with his account of the will to power. And to be sure, we find that this thought *is* affirmed in his later, socially oriented, writings:

[Die Mittelmässigkeit] ist selbst die erste Nothwendigkeit dafür, dass es Ausnahmen geben darf: eine hohe Cultur ist durch sie bedingt. Wenn der Ausnahme-Mensch gerade die Mittelmässigen mit zarteren Fingern

²⁷³ JGB 61: “Inzwischen giebt die Religion auch einem Theile der Beherrschten Anleitung und Gelegenheit, sich auf einmaliges Herrschen und Befehlen vorzubereiten, jenen langsam heraufkommenden Klassen und Ständen nämlich, in denen, durch glückliche Ehesitten, die Kraft und Lust des Willens, der Wille zur Selbstbeherrschung, immer im Steigen ist: — ihnen bietet die Religion Anstöße und Versuchungen genug, die Wege zur höheren Geistigkeit zu gehen, die Gefühle der grossen Selbstüberwindung, des Schweigens und der Einsamkeit zu erproben: — Asketismus und Puritanismus sind fast unentbehrliche Erziehungs- und Veredelungsmittel, wenn eine Rasse über ihre Herkunft aus dem Pöbel Herr werden will und sich zur einmaligen Herrschaft emporarbeitet.” In this way, Nietzsche’s aristocratism is in no way at odds with his calls for self-overcoming – being oppressed does not necessarily prevent one from engaging in such activity (as Mark Warren [1991] has argued, for example).

²⁷⁴ See Tongeren (1989), pp.152f.

handhabt, als sich und seines Gleichen, so ist dies nicht bloss Höflichkeit des Herzens, — es ist einfach seine Pflicht... (AC 57)

This passage, which is usually suppressed by radical aristocratic readers, is revealing, even if Nietzsche does not expand upon it in great detail. Though we have to cast our eye back to the middle period, we find a text describing this dynamic quite lucidly, and showing that this idea is not a mere anomaly, but that it persists throughout the corpus:

Vom Rechte des Schwächeren. — Wenn sich Jemand unter Bedingungen einem Mächtigeren unterwirft, zum Beispiel eine belagerte Stadt, so ist die Gegenbedingung die, dass man sich vernichten, die Stadt verbrennen und so dem Mächtigen eine grosse Einbusse machen kann. Deshalb entsteht hier eine Art Gleichstellung, auf Grund welcher Rechte festgesetzt werden können. Der Feind hat seinen Vortheil an der Erhaltung. — Insofern giebt es auch Rechte zwischen Slaven und Herren, das heisst genau in dem Maasse, in welchem der Besitz des Slaven seinem Herrn nützlich und wichtig ist. (WS 93)²⁷⁵

If we read AC 57 in the context of WS 93, it becomes plain that Nietzsche is not proposing that superior individuals *should* grant their subordinates rights in accordance with some objective or transcendent law. Nor is it saying that subordinates can claim equal rights. Rather, it is simply stating that exploiters must grant the exploited certain moral obligations (i.e. rights) by virtue of their dependence on the latter and their need to prevent a suicidal rebellion (or, we might infer, simply their decay and death through neglect). There is unfortunately not space to fully develop this point. However, I would contend that these texts sufficiently demonstrate that Nietzsche's model of healthy social exploitation is *not* adequately captured by the unidirectional, amoral interpretation of Nietzschean slavery put forward by the radical aristocrats. Rather, Nietzsche's model is better described as being defined by a condition of moral reciprocity, which is grounded in the

²⁷⁵ See also M 112, and Paul Patton, "Nietzsche on Rights, Power and the Feeling of Power", in Herman Siemens and Vasti Roodt (eds.), *Nietzsche, Power and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche's Legacy for Political Thought* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), pp.471-89.

interdependence of hierarchically organised powers; moreover, as I have maintained, it is this characterisation that is more properly consistent with his conception of the will to power.

In proposing that we read Nietzsche's notion of exploitative struggle as restrained, however, we should not overlook the unambiguously *unmeasured* species of struggle that is also intrinsic to his notion of healthy social order. For example, while Nietzsche promotes an expansionist foreign policy (see NL 14[192] 13.378, cited above), the incorporation of foreign cultures must be selective insofar as societies must exclude those cultures that they are not strong enough to incorporate and which may therefore cause them harm (recalling UB). Thus, Nietzsche approves of the German struggle to block Jewish immigration from the East on account of the relative strength of these Jews: "[...] also gebietet der Instinkt eines Volkes, dessen Art noch schwach und unbestimmt ist, so dass sie leicht verwischt, leicht durch eine stärkere Rasse ausgelöscht werden könnte" (JGB 251).

Yet in some of his admittedly more extreme moments, we also bear witness to Nietzsche condoning the *eradication* of certain members of society. Like Spencer, he criticises Christianity for preserving degenerate parts of society: "[S]ie erhielten zu viel von dem, was zu Grunde gehn sollte" (JGB 62); indeed, against positivistic socialists, he does not view it as desirable to eradicate disease and self-destructive forms of vice from society – for Nietzsche, these are means of facilitating the demise of potentially detrimental elements of society: "Der Abfall, Verfall, Ausschluß ist nichts, was an sich zu verurtheilen wäre: er ist eine nothwendige Consequenz des Lebens, des Wachsthums an Leben" (NL 14[75]13.255). But this is not just a matter of passively allowing the degenerate to perish; indeed, Nietzsche often endorses a concerningly more active approach. Sometimes this involves pre-emptively preventing reproduction, but elsewhere his prescriptions have a more aggressively genocidal overtone; thus, he acclaims

Jene neue Partei des Lebens, welche die grösste aller Aufgaben, die Höherzuchtung der Menschheit in die Hände nimmt, eingerechnet die

schonungslose Vernichtung alles Entartenden und Parasitischen [...].
(EH GT 4 6.313)²⁷⁶

Again, Nietzsche invokes a naturalistic argument in order to justify such policies:

Das Leben selbst erkennt keine Solidarität, kein “gleiches Recht” zwischen gesunden und entartenden Theilen eines Organismus an: letztere *muß man ausschneiden* — oder das Ganze geht zu Grunde. — Mitleiden mit den *décadents*, gleiche Rechte auch für die Mißrathenen — das wäre die tiefste Unmoralität, das wäre die Widernatur selbst als Moral! (NL 23[1] 13.600; my italics)

Those who are of no use whatsoever to the commanding parties have no claim to *any* rights from their superiors whatsoever (unlike those who can be exploited), not even to the right to life. Accordingly, Nietzsche condones a wholly unrestrained, amoral struggle. Notwithstanding the fact that Nietzsche grounds this negative eugenic project in his conception of the world as will to power, such genocidal social behaviour does not seem to be entailed by the logic of the will to power as I have construed it. Thus, we might retort that deportation or exile would be equally (if not more) consonant with the affirmation of *Ausscheidung* demanded by his account of the will to power.

Although I have tried to argue against the radical aristocrats that Nietzsche’s later model of exploitation should be read as *measured*, the sheer quantity of texts applauding the struggle to secure the substantive inequality, exploitation, exclusion and even destruction of large swathes of society unequivocally vitiates any agonistic

²⁷⁶ See also NL 11[414] 13.192: “Die Schwachen und Mißrathenen sollen zu Grunde gehn: erster Satz der Gesellschaft. Und man soll ihnen dazu noch helfen.” On Nietzsche’s endorsement of preventing reproduction in certain cases, see e.g. NL 23[1] 13.599: “Die Gesellschaft, als Großmandatar des Lebens, hat jedes verfehlt Leben vor dem Leben selber zu verantworten, — sie hat es auch zu büßen: folglich soll sie es verhindern. Die Gesellschaft soll in zahlreichen Fällen der Zeugung vorbeugen: sie darf hierzu, ohne Rücksicht auf Herkunft, Rang und Geist, die härtesten Zwangs-Maaßregeln, Freiheits-Entziehungen, unter Umständen Castrationen in Bereitschaft halten. — Das Bibel-Verbot ‘du sollst nicht tödten!’ ist eine Naivetät im Vergleich zum Ernst des Lebens-Verbots an die *décadents*: ‘ihr sollt nicht zeugen!’” See also GD Streifzüge 39 6.141; NL 16[35] 13.495; Richardson (2004), p.198.

interpretation of his later socio-political philosophy.²⁷⁷ Indeed, the *zweckmäßig* organisation of society is figured as a function of these very processes. They represent the means by which society averts the extremes of excessive or insufficient internal tension. However, the question with which I would now like to close is: *How* does Nietzsche think we can move from our degenerate society to one that can legitimately be called healthy according to the criteria we have established throughout this subsection?

4.5.2. INITIATING SOCIAL SYNTHESIS

So far, we have outlined how Nietzsche believes a healthy society functions. But this does not tell us how the synthesis and revitalisation of our degenerately disgregated modern society can be initiated. As in his earlier philosophy, Nietzsche hopes to achieve this by uniting Europeans around a shared *Aufgabe* (what I called a “common purpose” in §3.3.5.): “Weiss Jemand ausser mir einen Weg aus dieser Sackgasse? Eine Aufgabe gross genug, die Völker wieder zu binden?” (EH WA 2 6.360).²⁷⁸ As should by now be abundantly clear, the *Aufgabe* Nietzsche has in mind is the transgenerational task of breeding higher individuals: “Mein Gedanke: es fehlen die Ziele, und diese müssen Einzelne sein!” (NL 7[6] 12.281); “[N]icht ‘Menschheit’, sondern Übermensch ist das Ziel!” (NL 26[232] 11.210). But in order to attain this end, Nietzsche informs us, we need to begin by breeding an aristocracy, since it is only a tenacious social group of this sort who will be able to accomplish this long-term task (as was shown in the previous subsection). He thus hopes for “die Entstehung von internationalen Geschlechts-Verbänden [...], welche sich die

²⁷⁷ See Detwiler (1990), p.108.

²⁷⁸ As Nietzsche says in Z: “Noch hat die Menschheit kein Ziel” (Z I Ziele 4.76).

Aufgabe setzten, eine Herren-Rasse heraufzuzüchten, die zukünftigen ‘Herren der Erde’” (NL 2[57] 12.87).²⁷⁹

In JGB 251, he calls “die Züchtung einer neuen über Europa regierenden Kaste” the “europäische Problem”, and it is indeed a problem. How does Nietzsche think we can go about this short-term task of cultivating a productive aristocracy? To be sure, in one note entitled “Die Starken der Zukunft”, he gives us some concrete ideas as to how we might set about propagating a future race of leaders:

Die Mittel wären die, welche die Geschichte lehrt: die Isolation durch umgekehrte Erhaltungs-Interessen als die durchschnittlichen heute sind; die Einübung in umgekehrte Werthschätzungen; die Distanz als Pathos; das freie Gewissen im heute Unterschätztesten und Verbotensten. (NL 9[153] 12.425)²⁸⁰

Recalling UB, there is again a need to ensure a certain *isolation* for some individuals in order to allow them a space for *experimentation*.²⁸¹ Indeed, he accents the demand for “eine Rasse mit eigener Lebenssphäre [...] ; ein Treibhaus für sonderbare und ausgesuchte Pflanzen” (ibid.). Within such a sequestered space – a melting-pot in which the principles of the will to power (hierarchy, conflict, exploitation, etc.) are affirmed – higher individuals can forge not only new moralities of *self-organisation*, but also those capable of vibrantly synthesising the community. Thus, Nietzsche describes how the laws of Manu, honed to breed higher individuals, were preceded

²⁷⁹ See also NL 37[8] 11.582: “[V]or Allem [muß] erst eine neue Art angezüchtet werden [...], in der dem nämlichen Willen, dem nämlichen Instinkte Dauer durch viele Geschlechter verbürgt wird: eine neue Herren-Art und –Kaste”.

²⁸⁰ See NL 37[8] 11.582, in which Nietzsche affirms the following: “Eine Umkehrung der Werthe für eine bestimmte starke Art von Menschen höchster Geistigkeit und Willenskraft vorzubereiten und zu diesem Zwecke bei ihnen eine Menge im Zaum gehaltener und verläumdeter Instinkte langsam und mit Vorsicht zu entfesseln”. NL 10[59] 12.491f., in which the importance of isolation is emphasised. NL 10[61] 12.493. See also Conway (1997), pp.30-2, and p.34.

²⁸¹ On the role of experimentation (and temptation) in Nietzsche’s political philosophy, see Conway (1997), pp.75-8. Conway claims that this experimentation is private in kind (such as is outlined in §4.4.2. of this chapter) and that this sets an example of health for others – thus, there is a kind of trickle-down effect from this private experimentation: “Born of excess, the philosopher’s ‘private’ experiments leak uncontrollably into the public sphere, where they are received as temptations and invitations” (p.77).

by a great period of experimentation. In this text, he thereby further encourages us moderns to create a similar experimental space able to act as a crucible for new social moralities.²⁸² However, do we not need an aristocracy – or at least precisely the kind of stable government we are currently lacking – in order to institutionalise this space? In other words, do we not require an aristocracy in place to breed an aristocracy? Is Nietzsche suggesting we bootstrap ourselves out of the crisis of disgregation? I will now argue that he offers the concepts of the *ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen* and the *Wille zur Macht* as means to overcoming this problem, which is to say, as means to kick-starting the process of organisational conflict.

To be sure, Nietzsche conceived of his own philosophy as being able to set the cogs of convalescence into motion and even initiate the task of *breeding* (*Züchten*) a new race of leaders:

Meine Philosophie bringt den siegreichen Gedanken, an welchem zuletzt jede andere Denkweise zu Grunde geht. Es ist der große züchtende Gedanke: die Rassen, welche ihn nicht ertragen, sind verurtheilt; die, welche ihn als größte Wohlthat empfinden, sind zur Herrschaft ausersehn. (NL 26[376] 11.250)²⁸³

On the one hand, the “Gedanke” to which Nietzsche is referring is that of the *ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen* – the idea that “Dieses Leben, wie du es jetzt lebst und gelebt hast, wirst du noch einmal und noch unzählige Male leben müssen” (FW 341). The thought represents a view of “das Dasein, so wie es ist, ohne Sinn und Ziel, aber unvermeidlich wiederkehrend, ohne ein Finale ins Nichts” (NL 5[71] 12.213). There is certainly textual evidence to suggest that Nietzsche envisaged the descriptive

²⁸² See AC 57 6.241: “Ein solches Gesetzbuch wie das des Manu entsteht, wie jedes gute Gesetzbuch: es resümiert die Erfahrung, Klugheit und Experimental-Moral von langen Jahrhunderten, es schliesst ab, es schafft Nichts mehr.” We should also remark Nietzsche’s criticisms of the laws of Manu in the *Nachlass*, as pointed out by Thomas Brobjer. See e.g. NL 14[203] 13.385f.; NL 14[216] 13.392f.; NL 15[45] 13.439f. See Thomas H. Brobjer, “Nietzsche’s Reading about Eastern Philosophy”, *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 28 (2004), 3-35 (pp.17-8).

²⁸³ See also NL 25[227] 11.73, where Nietzsche dubs the eternal return “den großen züchtenden Gedanken”.

thought of the eternal return as having direct practical force, particularly insofar as he thought it capable of forming society into a functional hierarchy. This is perhaps most strikingly the case in 1883, where he asserts that the thought can function as an “auswählendes Princip, im Dienste der Kraft (und Barbarei!!)” (NL 24[7] 10.646). The thought, according to Nietzsche, has a double effect. In the first place, it is conceived as a profoundly pessimistic idea, so intolerable that it forces the degenerate to acts of self-destruction:

Eine pessimistische Denkweise und Lehre ein ekstatischer Nihilismus kann unter Umständen gerade dem Philosophen unentbehrlich sein: als ein mächtiger Druck und Hammer, mit dem er entartende und absterbende Rassen zerbricht und aus dem Wege schafft, <um> für eine neue Ordnung des Lebens Bahn zu machen oder um dem, was entartet und absterben will, das Verlangen zum Ende einzugeben. (NL 35[82] 11.547)

On Nietzsche’s view, Christianity grants consolation by artificially imbuing existence with a transcendent purpose (*Zweck*), meaning (*Sinn*), and value (*Werth*) – namely, that of entering into heaven after the final judgement. Yet with the thought of the eternal return, “[w]ir leugnen Schluß-Ziele” (NL 5[71] 12.211).²⁸⁴ And indeed, in some notes, Nietzsche claims that we are forced into making this denial on account of our scientific integrity (we are “zwingt zu einem solchen Glauben” [ibid.]). Faced with the loss of the grand value endowed by the Christian worldview, the weak and sick experience the idea of the eternal return as a “Fluch” (ibid.). Consequently, these individuals are driven either to destroy themselves (“sich durchzustreichen” [NL 25[227] 11.73]) or each other in a “blindes Wüthen” against everything that is without meaning and purpose (“sinn- und ziellos”) (ibid.).²⁸⁵ Hence, the thought induces the unmeasured process of *Ausscheidung* – i.e. the

²⁸⁴ For an argument against the idea that Nietzsche defended the eternal return on scientific grounds, see Maudmarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.245ff.

²⁸⁵ On this issue, see Deleuze (1983), pp.68ff. See also NL 2[100] 12.110: “Der Hammer: eine Lehre, welche durch Entfesselung des todsüchtigsten Pessimismus eine Auslese der Lebensfähigsten bewirkt”.

Reinigung of the sickest individuals (those who most chronically infect the strong) from society in such a way that does not require an aristocratic order to institutionalise this process.²⁸⁶

Nonetheless, Nietzsche does not think that the crisis instigated by the eternal return only serves to cull out the weak, he also believes it to be capable of actively bringing the strong into relief:

Der Werth einer solchen Crisis ist, daß sie reinigt, daß sie die verwandten Elemente zusammendrängt und sich an einander verderben macht, daß sie den Menschen entgegengesetzter Denkweisen gemeinsame Aufgaben zuweist — auch unter ihnen die schwächeren, unsichereren ans Licht bringend und so zu einer Rangordnung der Kräfte, im Gesichtspunkte der Gesundheit, den Anstoß giebt: Befehlende als Befehlende erkennend, Gehorchende als Gehorchende. Natürlich abseits von allen bestehenden Gesellschaftsordnungen. (NL 5[71] 12.217)

What this text evinces is that Nietzsche believes that the eternal return will bring a *Rangordnung* of individuals into being: those who are able to affirm the thought are marked out as higher individuals and commanders, irrespective of their position in any existing social orders (“bestehende[.] Gesellschaftsordnungen”). Indeed, the exceptional individual does not merely *endure* the thought of the eternal return, he also “züchtigt damit” (NL 10[47] 10.378). As Deleuze has emphasised, the thought goads us to undertake only the highest and most complete actions – after all, how could we will any other kind of action for all eternity?²⁸⁷

Though he persistently calls the thought of the eternal return his “Hammer”, Nietzsche also declares that the thought of the world as will to power can just as effectively cull the degenerate members of society. Indeed, the principal note that Deleuze draws upon to highlight the self-destructive force of the thought of the eternal return (namely, NL 5[71] 12.211-7), is in actuality highlighting the effects of the thought of the world *as will to power*:

²⁸⁶ See also NL 27[23] 11.281, where Nietzsche describes the thought of the eternal return as enacting an *Ausscheidung* of “lebensfeindliche[.] Elemente” from society.

²⁸⁷ See Deleuze (1983), pp.68-9.

Es giebt nichts am Leben, was Werth hat, außer dem Grade der Macht — gesetzt eben, daß Leben selbst der Wille zur Macht ist. Die Moral behütete die Schlechtweggekommenen vor Nihilismus, indem sie Jedem einen unendlichen Werth einen metaphysischen Werth beimaß [...]. Gesetzt, daß der Glaube an diese Moral zu Grunde geht, so würden die Schlechtweggekommenen ihren Trost nicht mehr haben — und zu Grunde gehen. [...]

Das zu-Grunde-Gehen präsentirt sich als ein — Sich-zu-Grunde-richten, als ein instinktives Auslesen dessen, was zerstören muß. Symptome dieser Selbsterstörung der Schlechtweggekommenen: die Selbstvivisektion, die Vergiftung, Berausung, Romantik, vor allem die instinktive Nöthigung zu Handlungen, mit denen man die Mächtigen zu Todfeinden macht (— gleichsam sich seine Henker selbst züchtend) [...].

(NL 5[71] 12.215-6)

It is the realisation that the world is will to power, and that the basis of values lies in the power-seeking activity of organisations immanent to that world, that leads to the self-destruction of the weak, chiefly by robbing them of metaphysical consolation, which subsequently drives them to suicide. It is therefore not the thought of the eternal return alone that functions as a socially purifying or exclusionary force. What is also of note, is that in the cited text, the thought of the world as will to power is also framed as a cultivating thought: in provoking the weak to actively threaten the powerful (“die Mächtigen zu Todfeinden”), it “züchtet” these higher individuals to destroy them – i.e. to become their hangmen (*Henker*).

To return to the thought of the eternal return, however, how does Nietzsche think this idea gives the strong “gemeinsame Aufgabe”? What common tasks does it foist upon the masters? That is, how does it give them a unified will? In a preparatory *Nachlass* note for Z III, Nietzsche sketches an answer to this very question:

“[I]ch gab euch den schwersten Gedanken: vielleicht geht die Menschheit daran zu Grunde, vielleicht erhebt sie sich, dadurch daß die überwundenen lebensfeindlichen Elemente ausscheiden.” “Nicht dem Leben zu zürnen, sondern euch!” — Bestimmung des höheren Menschen als des Schaffenden. Organisation der höheren Menschen,

Erziehung der zukünftigen Herrschenden als Thema von Zarathustra 3. Eure Übermacht muß ihrer selber froh werden im Herrschen und Gestalten. “Nicht nur der Mensch auch der Übermensch kehrt ewig wieder! (NL 27[23] 11.281)²⁸⁸

Nietzsche claims that it is by *creating* new goals and values that we can counteract the despair occasioned by the admission that we live in a world devoid of transcendent value. The thought thereby compels us to rediscover the joy of commanding, creating new goals (“Herrschen und Gestaltung”), and revaluing our values.²⁸⁹ It becomes exigent that we rediscover the freedom and pleasure of overcoming resistances and forming novel, stronger power organisations.²⁹⁰ With respect to our current inquiry, however, it is vital to observe that the creative act that most effectively augments one’s power, and which therefore brings the greatest degree of joy according to Nietzsche, is the creation of the *Übermensch*:

Um den Gedanken der Wiederkunft zu ertragen:
ist nöthig Freiheit von der Moral, [...] größte Erhöhung des Kraft-Bewußtseins des Menschen, als dessen, der den Übermenschen schafft. (NL 26[283] 11.225)

Moreover, one of the most painful thoughts accompanying that of the eternal return is the realisation that “[e]wig kehrt er wieder, der Mensch, dess du müde bist, der kleine Mensch” (Z III Genesende 2 4.274). The only way to counteract this abysmal thought, then, is to work towards the *Übermensch* and thereby grant oneself the uplifting faith that “auch der Übermensch kehrt ewig wieder!” (NL 27[23] 11.281).²⁹¹

The highest human (“der höchste Mensch”) is, on Nietzsche’s analysis, the person “der die Werthe bestimmt und den Willen von Jahrtausenden lenkt, dadurch

²⁸⁸ See Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche contra Rousseau* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.192.

²⁸⁹ See NL 26[284] 11.225: “Mittel ihn [der Gedanke der ewige Wiederkunft] zu ertragen / die Umwerthung aller Werthe [...]”

²⁹⁰ As Clark (1990), has expressed it: “Finding intrinsic value in life itself, that is, valuing the process of living as an end, becomes the only alternative to despair” (p.272).

²⁹¹ See Clark (1990), p.261; see also p.271.

daß er die höchsten Naturen lenkt” (NL 25[355] 11.106). Of course, there is no greater and more enduring project than that of breeding the future aristocracy and, with that, the *Übermensch*. If we follow through Nietzsche’s logic, and we want to maximally discharge our power and endow our life with significance, the greatest creative project in which we can engage is that of fashioning higher individuals.²⁹² Indeed, he conceives of the highest human as the fullest embodiment of thriving nature or will to power, discharging relatively tremendous amounts of force: “Der höchste Mensch als Abbild der Natur zu concipiren: ungeheurer Überfluß, ungeheure Vernunft im Einzelnen, als Ganzes sich verschwendend, gleichgültig dagegen” (NL 25[140] 11.51).²⁹³ As Heidegger expresses it, the *Übermensch* is “als höchste Subjekt der vollendeten Subjektivität das reine Machten des Willens zur Macht”.²⁹⁴ I would submit that it is this realisation – i.e. that the greatest work towards which we can strive is that of the *Übermensch* – that justifies the individual and collective struggle to establish a future oriented breeding programme. Since this involves a social and transgenerational breeding project, the only way to achieve this goal is by accepting it as a “gemeinsame Aufgabe”, by cooperating with one’s equals, obeying the directives of one’s superiors, and commanding inferior individuals in such a way as to serve the attainment of this higher end.

We should observe, however, that both the concept of the higher man and that of the *Übermensch* are radically underdetermined. Indeed, the affirmation of the

²⁹² This contradicts Phillipa Foot, who has argued that Nietzsche justifies the pursuit of the overman by appealing to an implicit aesthetic preference that we have for higher men. Thus, she states that “[Nietzsche] is appealing to our tendency to admire certain individuals whom we see as powerful and splendid [...]. [There is] a similarity between the way we attribute value (aesthetic value) to art objects and the value that Nietzsche attributes to a certain kind of man, both resting on a set of common reactions”. See Philippa Foot, “Nietzsche: The Revaluation of Values,” in Robert C. Solomon (ed.), *Nietzsche: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973), pp.156-68 (p.163). This said, there is some evidence for Foot’s claim, for example, where Nietzsche points out that whether one prefers to cultivate the herd individual at the expense of the exceptional individual “ist im Grunde eine Frage des Geschmacks und der Asthetik” (NL 11[325] 13.138). Quoted in Leiter (2015), p.117.

²⁹³ Müller-Lauter (1999), pp.87ff.

²⁹⁴ Heidegger (1961), vol.2, p.304, quoted in Müller-Lauter (1999), p.80.

Übermensch seems to very minimally signify the *growth* or *overcoming* of humanity itself. As Heidegger has observed, “das Wesen des Über-menschen [besteht] im Hinausgehen ‘über’ den bisherigen Menschen”.²⁹⁵ Comparably, Bataille also remarks the openness that defines Nietzsche’s various descriptions of higher individuality: “Il [Nietzsche] ne limitait rien, se bornait à décrire aussi librement qu’il pouvait un champ de possibilités”.²⁹⁶ The affirmation of this thin conception of the *Übermensch* as a social goal is tantamount to an affirmation of the will to power as a flourishing dynamism lacking an essential telos dictating the direction of growth.²⁹⁷ The task of breeding higher humans is therefore a *processual* task, *not* a teleological one, indeed, it could never be attained in any final manner.²⁹⁸

Note that the logic of the will to power gives us a completely independent prudential reason for engaging in this collective, transgenerational project – we do not necessarily have to assent to the thought of the eternal return in order to view this task as a worthwhile undertaking. This is convenient since one of the issues with the thought of the eternal return is that, for the majority of us, it is not psychologically compelling. Ivan Soll has competently pointed out that if there is no psychological continuity between my repeated selves, there is no real reason why this repetition should present me with any cause to worry.²⁹⁹ Indeed, the eternal

²⁹⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Was heisst denken?* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1997), p.26.

²⁹⁶ Bataille (1937), p.186.

²⁹⁷ Werner Stegmaier has similarly argued that the teaching of the *Übermensch* is an *Anti-Lehrer* intended to undermine any single concept of *Mensch* that threatens to become reified: “Als Anti-Lehre verstanden ist der Gedanke des Übermenschen die Überwindung des Begriffs des Menschen überhaupt.” See Werner Stegmaier, “Anti-Lehren: Szene und Lehre in Nietzsches *Also sprach Zarathustra*”, in Volker Gerhardt (ed.), *Friedrich Nietzsche: Also Sprach Zarathustra (Klassiker Auslegung Bd. 14)* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), pp.209-11.

²⁹⁸ For a contrary interpretation of the *Übermensch* – that is, as an oft *attained* and therefore *attainable* ideal, see Conway (1997), p.23. To be sure, NL 10[17] 11.462-3 does seem to suggest that *Übermenschen* are merely the higher humans produced by a given society.

²⁹⁹ Ivan Soll, “Reflections on Recurrence: A Re-examination of Nietzsche’s Doctrine, die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen”, in Robert C. Solomon (ed.), *Nietzsche: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973), pp.322-42 (pp.339-40). Clark (1990) rejects this criticism, arguing that it is based on a misreading of the idea, which she argues should rather be imagined “in an uncritical or preanalytical manner, suspending all doubts concerning its truth or conceivability” (p.270). Nonetheless, this requires our actively

return may strike us as a damp squib. Hence, I have endeavoured to bring into relief how Nietzsche thinks the notion of the world as will to power, which is far more compelling, can independently fulfil the key organising functions of the eternal return.

When Nietzsche talks of the need for “einer Lehre, welche die Menschen aussieht... welche die Schwachen zu Entschlüssen treibt und ebenso die Starken”, he could equally be referring to the teaching of the will to power or that of the eternal return (NL 11[149] 13.71). Of course, to the extent that both represent radically immanent worldviews that eschew any transcendent realm of meaning, the acknowledgement of the world as will to power and the thought of the eternal return go hand in hand. The world that should be affirmed by he who passes the test of the eternal return *is the world as will to power*, and therefore just as Nietzsche wants us to affirm the eternal return, he presses for us to affirm the world as will to power.³⁰⁰ The affirmation of the world as will to power forces us to make a decision as to the future of humanity (insofar as it foregrounds our current weakness), it robs the weak of consolation (insofar as it undermines eschatology), it gives us a metric by which to revalue our values, and it presents us with a vision of flourishing life as conflict, creative activity and overcoming in such a way as to impel us to engage in the struggle to organise ourselves, our fellowman and our descendants.³⁰¹

engaging with the thought in a *charitable* manner, and so on this reading, it completely loses its *compelling* (*zwingend*) status. Clark’s version of the eternal return is not likely to drive someone to suicide, since they can so easily turn away from it, or criticise its validity; nor would it be so hard to bear that we need to create higher goals in the face of it. Thus, on Clark’s reading, the eternal return is emptied of its cultivating, disciplining force.

³⁰⁰ See NL 38[12] 12.610: “Diese Welt: ein Ungeheuer von Kraft, ohne Anfang, ohne Ende, eine feste, eiserne Größe von Kraft, [...] sich selber bejahend noch in dieser Gleichheit seiner Bahnen und Jahre, sich selber segnend als das, was ewig wiederkommen muß, als ein Werden, das kein Sattwerden, keinen Überdruß, keine Müdigkeit kennt —: diese meine dionysische Welt des Ewig-sich-selber-Schaffens, des Ewig-sich-selber-Zerstörens, diese Geheimniß-Welt der doppelten Wollüste [...]. Diese Welt ist der Wille zur Macht — und nichts außerdem! Und auch ihr selber seid dieser Wille zur Macht — und nichts außerdem!” See also JGB 56.

³⁰¹ See NL 34[247] 11.504, where after giving an account of the world as will to power (against mechanistic theories of the existence), he states that “— die verschiedenen philosophischen Systeme sind als Erziehungsmethoden des Geistes zu betrachten: sie haben

Casting our minds back to Chapter 3, we should be able to remember that Nietzsche's early philosophy had a distinctly Platonic-Schopenhauerian structure, where it was insight into two metaphysically transcendent facts that acted as the fulcrum for his synthetic project. In the later writings, however, we can now see that a profound shift has taken place – namely, to the extent that it is now a purely *immanent* view of reality that acts as the basis of his synthetic remedy to disgregation. Discerning this, Ottmann has stated the following with reference to Nietzsche's notion of the eternal return:

[W]as bei Platon Zucht und Bildung im Blick auf die Idee, letztlich die Idee des Guten und die an sich seiende Welt ist, wird bei Nietzsche zu einem anderen Hinblick, zum Blick auf die Physis dieser zeitlichen Welt des Werdens und Vergehens, die für Platon nur der Schatten eines Schattens war.³⁰²

But whereas Ottmann suggests that it is acknowledgement of the notion of the “ewige Wiederkehr” that serves as Nietzsche's ordering principle, I have tried to bring to light how an affirmation of life *as will to power* is equally intrinsic to his later socially synthetic project. Indeed, Nietzsche's later social conception of organisational conflict does not just embody his vision of the world as will to power, but can also be *instigated* by that very vision. What we can further conclude from this is that, contrary to the agonistic-democrat reading, Nietzsche cogently presents his will to power thesis as a means to both justifying *and actively establishing* social relations that are inherently inegalitarian, exploitative and exclusionary. In light of this, it is simply unfeasible to extricate Nietzsche's ontology of resistance (properly understood) from undemocratically instrumentalising modes of governance.

immer eine besondere Kraft des Geistes am besten ausgebildet; mit ihrer einseitigen Forderung, die Dinge gerade so und nicht anders zu sehen.” See also NL 40[50] 11.653. NL 5[70] 12.211: “Der Wille zur Macht und seine Metamorphosen. / (was der bisherige Wille zur Moral war: eine Schule).

³⁰² Ottmann (1987), p.360: “Das Zuchtmittel ‘Idee’ wird ersetzt durch den Gedanken der ‘ewigen Wiederkehr’. Er wird das ‘Schergewicht’, das abhält vom Anodos zu den Ideen und von der Flucht in die Hinterwelt, Erziehung zur Lebens- und Diesseitsbejahung wird.”

4.6. CONCLUSION

My thesis in this chapter has been that the principal form of conflict prescribed by the later Nietzsche is one that *combines* measured and unmeasured struggle. As in UB, I have called this species of conflict *organisational* struggle and have explicated how Nietzsche conceives of it as a remedy to the problem of disgregation at both an individual and collective level. The first obstacle that faced this thesis, however, was that Nietzsche's earlier model of how functional organisation arises out of organisational conflict was preconditioned by the existence of, and our epistemological access to, certain metaphysical entities. These entities were the Platonic-Schopenhauerian *Ideas* – in particular, the Idea of our character and the Idea of the exemplary human being (towards whom nature incompetently strives). However, it was shown that Nietzsche thoroughly discredited these metaphysical presuppositions in the middle and later phases of his thought. We concluded that if disgregation was seen to persist as a problem for the later Nietzsche (which it was), and he wanted to prescribe organisational conflict as a remedy for this, he needed to give an account of how such conflict could engender functional coherence without recourse to his earlier metaphysical presuppositions. Through a reconstruction of his notion of the will to power, I expounded how he drew on Roux (among other natural scientists) to formulate a purely immanent model of how *zweckmäßige* organisations arise. The core of his argument was that existence is solely composed of actively (even consciously) organising forces, which relentlessly strive to overpower and incorporate those of weaker relative power. The *zweckmäßig* appearance of the parts is therefore purely the result of the way in which these parts have been contingently shaped in their reciprocal struggle with the superordinate organisation. The part-whole relation is therefore always the contingent result of a two-way struggle, and never wholly determined from above – for example, by a substantial essence or idea. As in the previous chapter, this was found to be inseparable from the repulsion, excretion or eradication of organisations that could not be exploited.

Turning to the normative aspect of his philosophy, I then examined Nietzsche's application of this new model to the problem of individual and collective disgregation. At each of these levels, we were confronted by a novel problem. First, at the individual level, the dominant interpretation (i.e. the sublimational reading) suggested that Nietzsche endorses the exploitation *but not the full negation* of our impulses. I refuted this claim by indexing how Nietzsche's account of self-organisation is congruent with his general theory of the will to power in that it posits unmeasured exclusion as indissociable from the measured process of exploitative incorporation. What Nietzsche is vehemently opposed to is the attempted destruction of drives *that are necessary for life*, as well as precipitously and indiscriminately striving to destroy drives *without having first sought ways in which to exploit them*. However, we then encountered another practical obstacle, signalled by Nietzsche himself – namely, that our drives are largely beyond our ken. I responded to this by suggesting that the struggle for subjective unity must therefore be fought at the level of our *values* since it is via these that we have the greatest practical access to our drives.

At the collective level, we then ran into a different obstacle, namely that neither of the two existing veins of interpretation agreed as to the socio-political ramifications of Nietzsche's ontology of power. Whereas the radical aristocrats argued that the will to power accords with Nietzsche's aristocratism, the agonistic-democrats claimed that there is a mismatch between the two. The latter then contended that the political model most faithful to Nietzsche's vision of the world as will to power is a form of democracy. Deepening the radical aristocratic reading, I argued against the agonistic-democrats that the emphasis on the struggle for exploitation, hierarchy and exclusion that we find in Nietzsche's socio-political thought *are* coherently grounded in his notion of the will to power. Nonetheless, the radical aristocratic reading of Nietzsche was found to have its limits. Primarily insofar as its interpretation of Nietzsche as propounding amoral exploitation was found to clash with his conception of will to power organisations as governed by reciprocal morality. On the other hand, a mutual and morally attuned struggle for

social exploitation gelled well with his conception of the will to power. Both the agonistic-democrats and the radical aristocrats therefore misrepresent Nietzsche's politics by failing to remark the fact that healthy organisation emerges from a *balance* of measured *and* unmeasured struggle. Both tendentiously focus on one side of this dichotomy at the expense of the other.

Nietzsche's incitements to unmeasured (exclusionary) struggle cannot be dismissed as unrepresentative moments of excess that are out of tune with the tenor of his wider philosophy. Indeed, unmeasured struggle permeates every level of Nietzsche's description of the activity of healthy will to power organisations, and to neglect or deny this is, by Nietzsche's very own standard, to be guilty of a disavowal of life that is equally as harmful as that of rejecting conflict or hierarchy. We should not mistake Nietzsche's criticisms of particular forms of unmeasured conflict for a general repudiation of eliminatory struggle. Indeed, Nietzsche draws the distinction between commendable and lamentable forms of destructive conflict very clearly in FW 370:

Das Verlangen nach Zerstörung, Wechsel, Werden kann der Ausdruck der übervollen, zukunftsschwangeren Kraft sein (mein terminus ist dafür, wie man weiss, das Wort "dionysisch"), aber es kann auch der Hass des Missrathenen, Entbehrenden, Schlechtweggekommenen sein, der zerstört, zerstören muss, weil ihn das Bestehende, ja alles Bestehn, alles Sein selbst empört und aufreizt.

In harmony with such comments, I have tried to distinguish healthy destructive activity (which is a necessary condition of growth) from that which we can consider pathological. The unmeasured conflict necessitated by Nietzsche's later philosophy is of a primarily behavioural or ideological kind – i.e., it is directed towards the complete suppression of certain forms of behaviour through an inversion of the values that promote those forms of behaviour. At a social level, however, he was seen to advocate the exclusion of certain members of society in a way that is admittedly hard to render palatable. This said, it was found to be in no way necessary for Nietzsche that this exclusionary process express itself in exterminatory eugenics:

it could take the form of selective immigration, positive eugenics or the simple neglect of degenerate parts of society. Though these may strike our ears as distasteful, they do not make Nietzsche a proto-Nazi. What further flies in the face of proto-fascistic readings is that at the level of the collective, the aggressive, exploitative aspect of organisational struggle does not necessarily translate into a militaristic politics; on the contrary, it can equally be fulfilled through soft-power and economic domination.

Finally, the broader trend that I have tried to foreground in this chapter is the shift Nietzsche makes away from what might be considered a broadly Platonic metaphysical approach to organisation towards an immanent, ontological one. Where Nietzsche's early synthetic project relied on the existence of, and our epistemological access to, certain *a priori* metaphysical truths, his later work is grounded in our insight into a purely immanent, *a posteriori*, or hypothetical conception of reality *qua* will to power. If we accept Nietzsche's conception of life as will to power, and we wish to thrive, then it becomes necessary that we engage in the organisational struggle to overcome ourselves as individuals and communities. Nonetheless, beyond the general aim of embodying the key features of a healthy will to power organisation, the *Zweck* towards which we should direct ourselves is not given by Nietzsche; it is rather figured as something we must continually struggle to determine for ourselves.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the preceding chapters, I have defended the thesis that Nietzsche's philosophy should be read as valorising *both* measured *and* unmeasured conflict. This position is one that I have developed in opposition to hard and soft readings of Nietzsche, which tendentiously portrayed him as a proponent of *either* measured *or* unmeasured conflict. I have first substantiated this claim by showing, in Chapters 1 and 2, how he valorises both *Vernichtungskampf* (unmeasured) and *Wettkampf* (measured) throughout his writings. On the other hand, in Chapters 3 and 4, I have shown how he promotes a struggle for *organisation*, which consists in the dual process of a measured struggle for the *Einverleibung* of that which is useful, and an unmeasured struggle for the exclusion of that which is not.

Due to the imbalance inherent to virtually all readings dealing with Nietzsche's thoughts on conflict, I primarily concerned myself with the exegetical task of reconstructing his position as faithfully as possible whilst also endeavouring to coherently account for both the measured and unmeasured trends in his writings. By way of conclusion, I will now enumerate the coherent set of claims that I have attributed to Nietzsche's mature philosophy of conflict, I will then raise some potential objections to these claims, and close by collating some of the most detrimental philosophical errors against which my reading of Nietzsche warns us.

1. NIETZSCHE'S COHERENT SET OF CLAIMS

While we have found myriad discrepancies in Nietzsche's writings (particularly with respect to his thoughts on war and violence), we have also uncovered an underlying

coherence to his descriptions of, and prescriptions regarding, the various forms of *Kampf* – particularly as we move into the mature phase of his thought. It is worthwhile briefly tallying this systematic set of philosophical claims:

1. Everything and everyone struggles for power augmentation – primarily by means of incorporating or *organising* that which is serviceable into an exploitative hierarchy;
2. This general impetus can express itself concretely in a range of different ways;
3. The most effective mode of exploitative struggle is attentive to the demands of the subordinate power, and measures its struggle to exploit accordingly;
4. At a social level, one such way exploitative relations can be established is through struggles to the death (i.e. war and violent conflict), which can act as a means to either enslaving the individuals or exploiting the resources that were previously protected by the eradicated party (the spoils of war). However, this is not the most effective means of establishing exploitative relations;
5. Though violence may be an ineradicable *Urfaktum* of life, and the genetic source of culture, it is within our human capacities to employ alternative means of establishing the exploitative relations we need to live, and as far as possible, we should do so;
6. While it may not be necessary for us to engage in *violently* unmeasured conflict, life *is* nonetheless conditioned by unmeasured struggle insofar as the organisation upon which any living unity rests is preconditioned by the active exclusion of that which is, or has become, harmful;
7. Notwithstanding, where two powers realise they are too equally matched to establish exploitative relations, they can, and should, engage in agonistically

measured conflict in order to strengthen themselves in the struggle to exploit parties *outside* of the agonistic contest.

As this list makes evident, claims (2)–(7) all cohere with the logic of the will to power (1). It further demonstrates that affirming the world as will to power does not entail affirming *either* measured or unmeasured conflict, but a synthesis of both under the higher goal of organisation. In suppressing one or the other of these two dynamics, the hard and the soft readers can, by Nietzsche's own standards, be charged with dubiously constructing a life-denying philosophy out of Nietzsche's writings. I have tried to initiate an aspect change whereby these two sides, rather than being understood as mutually exclusive, are seen as two ways of looking at single impetus toward organisation. Hopefully, this makes it difficult, if not impossible, for readers to return to identifying only one of these two aspects.

In trying to vindicate my attribution of these interlocking claims to Nietzsche, I have often not had space to critically assess them in their own right. For example, we might ask whether the agonistic appropriation of Nietzsche's thought, while not representative thereof, is perhaps a better normative philosophy given the challenges faced by contemporary society; indeed, is it, as Nietzsche argues and the agonists deny, truly impossible to cultivate agonal relations between unequals – that is, is it unrealistic to call on people to raise weaker individuals up to their level instead of subjugating them? Might people not want to have their present inferiors as equal competitors in the future, for example? Should we not sometimes decline the opportunity to exploit those who are weaker and *could* be exploited?

In Chapter 4, I endeavoured to underscore that we should not take Nietzsche's affirmation of *Einverleibung* and exclusion to entail an affirmation of selective immigration, chattel slavery, wars of enslavement, eugenics or even ethnic cleansing. Indeed, he forces us to search for new ways in which *Einverleibung* and *Ausscheidung* can be realised. Yet a criticism we might formulate in response to this is that there seems to be *so* much flexibility in how we might imagine these processes being fulfilled, that their affirmation makes little ethical demand upon us. For

example, we saw that Nietzsche indicates that anyone in gainful employment might be considered an exploited slave. Moreover, while I have also tried to give as cogent an account as possible as to why Nietzsche identifies a parallelism between the organism and society, I have not fully explored the many critiques of organic models of society that emerged in the twentieth-century, particularly in response to structural functionalism. Since there is not the space for a full treatment of all the possible objections and replies, I leave these comments as an indication that my attempting to comprehensively reconstruct Nietzsche's position should not be equated with my unquestioningly concurring with this position.

2. PHILOSOPHICAL OBSERVATIONS

According to Nietzsche, one of the ways in which humans most definitely *differ* from lower organisms is insofar as they possess consciousness (“Bewußtsein” or “Geist”), which far from being evidence of their superiority, he views as proof of the “Unvollkommenheit des Organismus, als ein Versuchen, Tasten, Fehlgreifen, als eine Mühsal” (AC 14). Indeed, seeing “through a glass darkly”, so to speak, it would appear that we are condemned to misjudge the state of affairs that characterises both ourselves and the outside world. But throughout this thesis, we have identified various ways in which we are prone to fallacious descriptions of the world that specifically impact upon how we practically manage conflict in our lives. Moreover, these errors are usually both harmful and preventable. With respect to ourselves, one of the most obvious examples is our tendency to over-estimate our power relative to others (a foible specific to organic organisations, according to Nietzsche¹), which as we saw in Chapter 2, can lead us into violent, self-detrimental struggles in a manner reminiscent of Rousseau's critical analysis of *amour-propre*.

¹ See e.g. NL 35[59] 11.537: “Der Übergang aus der Welt des Anorganischen in die des Organischen ist der aus festen Wahrnehmungen der Kraftwerthe und Machtverhältnisse in die der unsicheren, unbestimmten.”

However, our analysis of Nietzsche, and the critical literature dealing with his thought, has also uncovered a range of subtle ways that our arbitrarily favouring one possible conceptual description of conflict over others can lead us to take particularly bad ethical stances towards certain modes of opposition. The identification of these pitfalls is, I believe, one of the principal philosophical contributions of both Nietzsche's thoughts on conflict, and our study of these thoughts. It is accordingly worthwhile enumerating some of these. First, in Chapter 1, we discerned that the description of physically destructive conflict in terms of the cathartic release of essentially destructive energy sabotaged the project of qualitatively transforming this mode of conflict. While I focussed on the way in which this blocked the agonistic project, this goes equally for any attempts that might be made to modulate physically destructive conflict into measured exploitative conflict, or into modes of exclusionary struggle that are not physically destructive. Thus, as suggested, we might opt to incarcerate or exile (i.e. ostracise), rather than physically eradicate, problematic members or groups of society; or we might even choose completely non-physical modes of negation – for example, rather than eradicating troublesome individuals and social groups, we might focus on merely eradicating the values and drives that make those individuals or social groups problematic (as a truly “reformatory” prison system aims to do). The idea that physically destructive impulses grow unstoppably stronger until they inevitably erupt is a dangerous assumption, one that Nietzsche inherited from Schopenhauer and Burckhardt, though eventually outgrew and abandoned.

In Chapter 2, with respect to the secondary literature, I brought into relief how the tendency to equate the agon with destructive conflict neutralised the agonal dimension of Nietzsche's transformative project before it had even begun. Namely, since it failed to conceptually distinguish the form of conflict Nietzsche wants to be *subjected* to transformation from the form of conflict that he hopes will *result* from this transformation. Second, holding productive agonal relations to be founded on the counterbalancing of powers alone was seen to lead commentators to neglect the foundational importance of cultivating *self*-limitation. Finally, the description of the

agon as based solely in a subjective shift of attitude (towards respect) was seen to blind us to the fact that establishing certain *social institutions* is a precondition of agonal relations.

In Chapters 3 and 4, we then witnessed how the error of thinking that organisational struggle is enabled by identifying a metaphysical telos within ourselves or nature only serves to frustrate the process of organisation. The goals towards which both humanity and the human individual strive must be forged *by humans themselves*, and in such a way that they remain provisional and malleable. Prematurely fixed conceptions of one's ideal self or one's ideal society can, on Nietzsche's account, lead us to exclude digressional inclinations and avenues of development that may prove highly advantageous to our evolution.

In Chapter 4, I then clarified how, according to Nietzsche, our picture of the natural world, and of our values, has a serious impact on our normative orientation towards conflict. To see the natural world as governed by pure mechanism and universal natural law was criticised by Nietzsche as unfounded, whilst also serving to vindicate universal *moral* law. Indeed, we have a tendency to misconceive of our values as being of transcendent origin, and thus we completely overlook the fact that many of these values are the vestiges of a prudential rear-guard ethical policy created by weak power organisations. These two related errors (*viz.* concerning the structure of nature and the origin of our values), lead us, in the first place, to neglect the struggle to organise our values. This is because the apparent transcendent origin of our values makes them seem beyond our practical reach. But in addition to this, since these entrenched values are herd-values, which are explicitly opposed to social conflict, the errors buttressing these values further blind us to the necessity of cultivating healthy social struggle.

In the closing chapter, we then saw how Nietzsche exposes our predisposition to misidentify that which presents us with difficulty as that which is useless and to be excluded – how “[man] verwechselt das Unbrauchbare und das Schwerzuerwerbende” (NL 11[134] 9.492). We are thus often led, in our hasty reactivity, to strive for the full negation of that which could be of positive value for

us. But the inability to correctly identify that which is serviceable does not only occasion the unnecessary destruction of the potentially useful; for Nietzsche, this error also leads us to excessively consume that which *cannot* be used, which we saw was an underlying cause of the anarchy associated with the historical sense. Nietzsche thus alerts us to the need to carefully screen phenomena according to their employability in order to establish the most prudential conflictual relations with them.

Finally, we then located two more such errors in Chapter 4 by reading Nietzsche against his one-sided commentators. First, describing exploitation as intrinsically unmeasured led these commentators to ignore the possibility and task of finding “softer”, more symbiotic forms of exploitation (which, incidentally, can be found in Nietzsche’s writings themselves). Contrariwise, viewing measured modes of contest as divorceable from unmeasured, exclusionary ones, caused agonistic commentators to overlook the fact that exclusion may be ineradicable and, consequently, that it is vital that we actively search for forms of exclusion that are as “soft” as possible.

This wide range of cognitive biases to which we are prone when it comes to thinking about conflict are therefore not comparable to the life-preserving errors of which Nietzsche often speaks (e.g. the “Unwahrheit als Lebensbedingung” he refers to in JGB 4). They are intellectual predispositions that lead us into modes of conflict that are harmful either for ourselves or the social whole, or that cause us to shirk modes of conflict that are beneficial. Though we can often impute these errors to Nietzsche himself, in his strongest and most coherent moments he shows us that we make these at our peril.

If we wish to optimise our conflictual relations with ourselves, others, and the world in general, then it is exigent that we carefully scrutinise our understanding of the nature and value of conflict. Such an enterprise can help us harness our impulses and become more effective individuals, or it can prompt us to work on establishing the agonal institutions we need to stimulate cultural flourishing, or again, it can teach us the worth of acting virtuously towards those who may be

subordinate to us. Indeed, I have endeavoured to illuminate the multifarious ways in which refining our understanding of struggle enables us to cultivate modes of contest that can be profoundly beneficial to our lives, not just as individuals or specific social groups but also as communities and even as an entire species.

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SUMMARY IN ENGLISH

NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY OF CONFLICT AND THE LOGIC OF ORGANISATIONAL STRUGGLE

Since as far back antiquity, philosophers have been inquiring into the nature of conflict. Their persistent interest has produced a rich variety of theoretical perspectives on the topic. Within this multiplicity, however, we can identify a number of recurrent ideas. Among these, perhaps the most prominent is the belief that conflict represents an *undesirable* part of life, one that stands opposed to the ideals of harmony, co-operation and consensus. Those who deprecate struggle in this way can then be split into two groups. On the one hand, there are those for whom conflict and its irksome effects are a *contingent* part of human life. As such, they allege that struggle can therefore be eradicated, or at least minimised, and they duly give us an account of how we might go about achieving this. Plato is undoubtedly the standard bearer of this philosophical position. In the *Republic*, he provides his readers with a detailed blueprint describing how we can substitute discord with harmony, both at the level of the self and that of society. Following in Plato's wake, we then find a slew of philosophers similarly denigrating conflict and professing to give us the means to its eradication. For instance, Kant sketches how we might go about establishing a social condition of "perpetual peace", and,

continuing this line of inquiry, Rawls tries to elaborate on the political means by which such a condition might be concretely achieved. Correspondingly, thinkers such as Spinoza and Descartes have tried to show how we can minimise the painful and often paralysing inner struggle of our passions through the proper exercise of our rational faculties. Nonetheless, among those who criticise conflict, there exists another group of philosophers who don't share Plato's optimism. Thinkers such as Schopenhauer and the later Freud, for example, pessimistically conceive of both social and psychological conflict as an incurable human affliction. In spite of our best efforts, they tell us, we are condemned to destructive war and painful psychological struggle.

In opposition to this widespread tendency to demonise conflict, there then stands a group of thinkers who affirm conflict as a potentially beneficial force. The bellwether of this faction was undoubtedly Heraclitus, who famously praised war as "the father of all things". This group can also be split in two depending on whether they think of war and more violent forms of political oppression as contingent or necessary. First, then, there are those who think of war as an ineluctable part of human life yet nonetheless affirm it as socially rejuvenating force. They claim that belligerence brings healthy hierarchical order to society. Many have situated Heraclitus in this corner of the debate, though others, such as the historian Jacob Burckhardt, also unambiguously propound this view. In the other corner, there are then those who view war and struggles for political oppression to be quite contingent and, simultaneously, undesirable. Yet unlike Plato and his descendants, this group does not favour harmony; rather, they valorise more moderate forms of struggle that they hold to be socially beneficial, such as democratic dispute, for example. They then petition for the *transformation* of the more harmful forms of discord into these productive modes of political contestation. In

more recent times, agonistic democratic theorists such as Bonnie Honig, Jean-François Lyotard and Chantal Mouffe have all defended some variant of this idea. William Connolly, another agonistic democrat, has analogously claimed that we need to cultivate more moderate forms of conflict within ourselves, at a psychological level. Connolly hopes that this approach will replace harmfully repressive struggles that futilely aim at inner harmony.

What this brief survey reveals is that the principal fault lines in the debate form over two questions: Is conflict beneficial or harmful? And what is the modal status of conflict? That is, is it an indelible, or contingent, part of human existence?

One thinker whom the agonistic democrats often invoke in support of their position is the nineteenth-Century German thinker Friedrich Nietzsche. As they point out, he affirmed conflict in the context of both society and the self. Yet within Nietzsche studies itself, commentators remain deeply divided regarding his attitude towards conflict, and it is far from certain that he would have concurred with the agonistic democrats' answers to the two fundamental questions just mentioned. One cluster of commentators proposes what is often called the *soft* reading, and their antagonists defend the so-called *hard* reading. The soft Nietzsche is read as overwhelmingly advocating *measured*, *agonal* struggle. This species of conflict is exemplified by the non-violent artistic, athletic and political contests (or *agons*) that pervaded ancient Greek culture. Proponents of this reading then often conjecture that this type of struggle is epitomised by modern democratic contention. By contrast, the hard readers claim that Nietzsche almost exclusively esteemed and incited *unmeasured* struggle as a means to cultural renaissance. Many have accordingly held the hard Nietzsche to be at least partly responsible for the atrocities committed by the Nazis in the 1930s and 40s. The hard readers

further divide into two subgroups depending of the specific type of unmeasured struggle they think Nietzsche incited. First there are those who allege that Nietzsche prescribed war as a remedy for modernity's ills – I call these his *militaristic* readers. Alongside this group, there are those who read him as promoting a murderous aristocratic struggle of an elite minority to enslave and exploit the masses. This is what I refer to as the *radical aristocratic* interpretation.

Frustratingly, both sides are able to cite texts from Nietzsche's corpus that seem to corroborate their tendentious readings. What is more, both sides tend to read the texts that ostensibly support their opponents as further evidence of their *own* reading. In this way, Nietzsche's soft readers often aver that when he invokes the vocabulary of war, he is in actuality using this language *metaphorically* – namely, to refer to the measured *spiritual* struggle for self-overcoming and the *ideological* struggle for cultural renewal. Conversely, the hard readers often interpret Nietzsche's praise of the Hellenic agon as an *embracing* endorsement of the ancient Greeks' love of conflict – that is, *including* their proclivity for war.

Rather than elucidating Nietzsche's philosophy of conflict, an overview of the critical literature therefore renders it many ways more opaque. The principal objective of this thesis is therefore to address this impasse. Some may be inclined to view this alleged contradiction in Nietzsche's thought as evidence of his being a shoddy thinker, and as further reason not to take him seriously as a philosopher. As I contend, however, such a prejudgment would be misguided. A sustained close reading of Nietzsche's writings reveals a mature philosophy of conflict that is both systematic and coherent. In order to demonstrate this coherence, we of course need to address the aforementioned antagonism in the critical literature. We need to navigate a path between the readings of Nietzsche as an exclusive proponent of measured conflict and those that construe him as an exclusive

proponent of unmeasured struggle. Does Nietzsche exclusively recommend measured or unmeasured conflict? Or are both of the exclusive readings in need of correction?

With a view to resolving this *aporia*, this thesis attempts a critical analysis of Nietzsche's views regarding the nature and value of conflict. I perform a systematic study of his vocabulary of conflict spanning the entire breadth of his corpus. A cursory survey of his writings reveals that Nietzsche thematised his thoughts on conflict under four main clusters of terms. First, we find a cluster of German words that ostensibly refers to murderously violent conflict: *Vernichtungskampf* (struggle-to-the-death), *Krieg* (war), *Mörder* (murder), and *Zweikampf* (duel) (among others). We can then discern another cluster that is closely related to the forms of non-violent contest prolific among the ancient Greeks: *Wettkampf* (contest), *Agon* (agon), *Wettspiel* and *Wettbewerb* (competition), and *Wettstreit* (contention) (among others). Thirdly, he uses a separate vocabulary of conflict (*Kampf*) to describe struggles directed at the *organisation* of complex systems – that is, struggles aimed at the *Einverleibung* (incorporation), *Assimilation* (assimilation) and *Herrschaft* (domination) of certain entities. This form of struggle is then married to another which is directed towards the *Unterdrückung* (repression), *Zurückstoßen* (repulsion), *Ausscheidung* (excretion) and even *Zerstörung* (destruction) of certain entities. In the respective chapters, I dissect each of these different aspects of Nietzsche's vocabulary of conflict and determine whether there is any underlying coherence in his usage.

On the basis of this groundwork, I contend that both the soft and hard readings are one sided and in need of modification. Indeed, the thesis that this dissertation defends is that *Nietzsche promotes both measured and unmeasured struggle in a manner that is entirely coherent*. I also argue that

commentators have neglected the most significant form of conflict in Nietzsche's thought. This form is characterised by a *combination* of measured *and* unmeasured conflict, and Nietzsche thinks of it as necessary for any form of life – individual or social – to exist and extend itself. We might conceive of this species of struggle as analogous to the biological processes of nutrition and digestion. Through these, an organism simultaneously engages in a measured struggle to incorporate useful material from its environment *and* in an unmeasured manner to exclude material that presents itself as redundant or harmful. This dualistic struggle is what I term *organisational* conflict on account of the fact that both incorporation and exclusion form part of a single overarching impetus to achieve healthy organisation.

My analysis illuminates a number of specific shortcomings of the soft and hard readings. We see that the soft reading, which presents Nietzsche as wholly bent on the *transformation* of destructive into culturally productive conflict, misses the fact that there are phases where Nietzsche conceives of violent struggle as ineradicable and culturally beneficial. We also find that Nietzsche is highly critical of *political* agonism, thereby casting doubt on the soft, agonistic democrat appropriations of his thought. Our study of organisational conflict also reveals that Nietzsche valorises a form of struggle that promotes inequality and exclusion in a way that is quite at odds with the soft reading, which is marked by a democratic ethos of egalitarianism and inclusivity. Nonetheless, we see that the hard militaristic reading also has its shortcomings insofar as it wilfully overlooks the non-violent nature of Nietzsche's celebration of the agon. We also witness how the radical aristocratic reading misinterprets Nietzsche's advocacy of exploitation as an endorsement of murderously immoral enslavement. In fact, Nietzsche considers exploitation of this sort to be highly imprudent and unhealthy. The

ideal exploitative relation is rather one in which the commander cares for the commanded insofar as the former has a vested interest in the preservation and strength of the latter.

My hope is that this study will have repercussions for those who precipitously reject Nietzsche for glorifying violence, just as it does for those who unjustly appropriate his thought in the name of a democratic political agenda. In addition to this, by reconstructing and critically assessing Nietzsche's thoughts concerning struggle, my aim is also to throw light on some of the broader philosophical questions concerning the nature and value of conflict.

In Chapter 1, I examine Nietzsche's thoughts regarding struggles of eradication (*Vernichtungskämpfe*) and, more specifically, war. I refute the exclusively agonistic reading by demonstrating that, throughout his writings, Nietzsche gives numerous arguments as to why we ought to value mortal forms of combat. I further contend that many of these arguments, particularly in his early writings, are underpinned by a description of destructive conflict that is seriously problematic for his agonistic readers, all of whom take Nietzsche to be pursuing the *transformation* of destructive into constructive, agonistic conflict *without remainders*. Though there are certainly texts in which he recommends transformation, I call attention to passages where he also conceives of violently destructive struggle as *untransformable*. On this logic, war is portrayed as ineluctable because humans possess an irresistible drive for specifically murderous strife. My solution to this apparent contradiction is to suggest that this problematical conception of destructive conflict is for the most part confined to his early writings. As he moves away from Schopenhauer, from whom he inherits this idea, and towards the natural sciences in the 1880s, he reconceives of destructive conflict as the *contingent*

expression of a general impulse to *overpower* others – one that is not necessarily murderous and can therefore be given an outlet in non-violent modes of conflict.

In Chapter 2, I analyse the mode of conflict that Nietzsche often opposes to destructive struggle – namely, *agonal* contest. I refute the hard, exclusively unmeasured readings and argue that Nietzsche consistently advocates measured agonal relations. In order to determine what this affirmation of agonal contest involves, however, we first need to resolve three interpretive disputes. First, it is unclear whether Nietzsche understands agonal contest as a specifically non-violent form of conflict or whether it includes murderous forms of struggle such as war. We establish, however, that he unequivocally conceives of agonal conflict as non-destructive. We further discover that he views agon as a non-*exploitative* kind of struggle. Agonal contestants fight for fame and personal glory, not instrumental command of their opponents. Second, commentators dispute the *means* Nietzsche proposes for concretely instituting agonal measure in society. How can one stop people from pursuing victory by unmeasured means? For example, how can one prevent political adversaries from resorting to violence in the struggle for power? Some allege that Nietzsche's agonism is founded on the cultivation of *self-restraint*, while others theorise that measure results from balancing equal opponents against one another (we might think of the separation of political powers in the US as exemplary of this). My analysis, however, reveals that *both* self-restraint *and* equality are in fact fundamental sources of agonal measure. I additionally underline the much-neglected importance of religious, educational and legal institutions in Nietzsche's account. On his view, these serve to instil an ethos of self-moderation. Third, there is disagreement as to whether Nietzsche promotes the agon in an

inclusive, non-class specific manner or whether his endorsement is confined to an elite minority of aristocratic equals. I contend that, according to Nietzsche, agonal contest can (and should) take place between any individuals of approximately equal *ability*, irrespective of their class. Nonetheless, he also distinguishes a higher form of agon that is fought over eternal fame, and which is strongly associated with the aristocratic classes.

Having established that Nietzsche only promotes agonally measured conflict under rarely occurring conditions of equality, I then show in Chapters 3 and 4 how he advocates a quite unique form of measured conflict under conditions of *inequality*. This third type of conflict is what I have already described as the exploitative struggle for *organisation*. Organisational struggle is measured insofar as it strives for the *preservation* of that which has been overpowered (albeit in a position of servitude); however, we find that it is conceptually distinct from agonally measured conflict to the extent that a) it is directed at exploitation; b) it occurs under conditions of inequality; and c) it is conditioned by unmeasured exclusionary struggle (recall the analogy we drew with nutrition and digestion, which necessitate excretion).

We further observe how organisational conflict figures far more prominently than either murderous or agonal conflict in Nietzsche's search for a panacea to the ills plaguing modernity. Nietzsche diagnoses both modern individuals and societies as lacking the harmony that enables a flourishing life. The plurality of forces which constitute these forms of life are at present pulling in contrary directions and mutually frustrating one another. This condition leaves both the modern individual and society paralysed and impotent. We observe that Nietzsche by far and away favours the formation of instrumental hierarchies as an antidote to this affliction and claims that these are established by means of organisational struggle.

Psychologically speaking, this means struggling to reign in certain drives (i.e. impulses or desires) so that they obediently serve one's higher goals. However, contrary to existing readings of Nietzsche, which take him to be staunchly opposed to psychological repression, I foreground how he urges his readers to eradicate intractable impulses. Socially speaking, organisational struggle manifests itself as a push to exploit weaker individuals. Yet, contrary to Nietzsche's radical aristocratic readers who understand this exploitation as a murderous form of chattel slavery, Nietzsche's conception of healthy exploitation is inherently *measured*. Either the exploiter wishes to preserve the exploited and therefore attends to their wellbeing, or the subordinate party *voluntarily* serves their superiors on account of the benefits this grants them. At the same time though, Nietzsche also emphasises the need for a society to exclude individuals that are inimical to its vitality. I conclude, however, that this should by no means be equated with an affirmation of genocide (as some have surmised) since we can easily imagine it being realised by less abhorrent means such as, for example, the creation of a truly reformatory penal system.

Although I highlight the similarity between the early and the later Nietzsche's proposed remedies to disintegration, I also emphasise a major point of divergence. In Chapter 3, we see that Nietzsche's early notion of organisational struggle is founded on two key metaphysical presuppositions. Yet, in Chapter 4, we find that these are wholly absent from his later theory of organisation. The early Nietzsche buys into Schopenhauer's conviction that the organisation of any entity is grounded in the unity of its *essence*. Prior to the late 1870s, Nietzsche maintains that we need to identify the true unchanging essence of our self (i.e. our *character*) in order to organise ourselves. Once we know our true calling in life, which is dictated by our essential character, we have a criterion against which we can determine

whether behavioural impulses are potentially beneficial or harmful. Otherwise put, we can deduce whether we should cultivate or eradicate an impulse. For the early Nietzsche, ascertaining and acknowledging the essential purpose of society – namely, to create geniuses – serves a similar function. It gives us the criterion by which we can distinguish the values and social structures that we should promote from those that we ought to abolish. As of the late 1870s, though, Nietzsche goes on to reject the very essences that ground his early theory of organisation. According to the later Nietzsche, there are no human essences – the self is just a contingent plurality of drives – nor can we speak of society as having any essential purpose.

The question we therefore have to ask in Chapter 4 is: how does the later Nietzsche reconceptualise organisational struggle without the metaphysical fundamentals of his earlier philosophy? I reconstruct how he uses his readings in the natural sciences to develop a non-metaphysical account of organisation. This involves a detailed exegesis of his theory of the world as will to power (*Wille zur Macht*), according to which existence is framed as a constellation of forces vying to augment their power. According to this theory, organisation results from certain forces within the self or society taking control and unifying the subordinate forces into a functioning unit. As we see at the end of Chapter 4, for the later Nietzsche, it is insight into the nature of the world as will to power – rather than some kind of metaphysical essence – that sets the cogs of organisation into motion.

By way of conclusion, I summarise how Nietzsche's mature thoughts on conflict form a coherent whole. We find that Nietzsche prescribes the various species of measured and unmeasured conflict under quite compatible sets of conditions. With this it becomes evident that the antagonism between the soft (measured) and hard (unmeasured) readings presents us with a false

dichotomy. After enumerating some of the most harmful defects associated with our conventional conception of conflict, I close by gesturing towards how we might, in light of our findings, reformulate the concept in order to facilitate individual and collective flourishing.

SUMMARY IN DUTCH

NIETZSCHE'S FILOSOFIE VAN CONFLICT EN DE LOGICA VAN ORGANISATORISCHE STRIJD

Al sinds de Oudheid hebben filosofen de aard van conflicten onderzocht. Hun voortdurende interesse heeft een rijke variëteit aan theoretische perspectieven op het onderwerp opgeleverd. In deze veelvoud kunnen we echter een aantal terugkerende ideeën identificeren. Meest prominent daaronder is wel de overtuiging dat conflict een *onwenselijk* deel van het leven is, een deel dat tegenover de idealen van harmonie, samenwerking en consensus staat. Degenen die strijd op deze wijze negatief waarderen kunnen in twee groepen worden verdeeld. Aan de ene kant zijn er degenen voor wie conflict en zijn hinderlijke effecten een *contingent* deel van het menselijk leven zijn. Zodoende beweren zij dat strijd daarom kan worden uitgeroeid, of tenminste geminimaliseerd, en zij bieden ons dan ook een verhaal over hoe we dat zouden kunnen bereiken. Plato is ongetwijfeld het boegbeeld van deze filosofische positie. In de *Staat* geeft hij zijn lezers een gedetailleerde blauwdruk die beschrijft hoe we onenigheid kunnen vervangen door harmonie, zowel op het niveau van het zelf als op het niveau van de samenleving. In het spoor van Plato vinden we een reeks filosofen die net zo afgeven op conflict en beweren ons de middelen in handen te geven om een einde aan alle conflict te maken. Kant, bijvoorbeeld, schetst hoe we een sociale toestand van 'eeuwige vrede' tot stand zouden kunnen brengen, en Rawls, die deze lijn van onderzoek voortzet, probeert de politieke instrumenten uit te werken met behulp waarvan zo'n toestand daadwerkelijk bereikt kan worden.

In dezelfde lijn hebben denkers als Spinoza en Descartes geprobeerd om te laten zien hoe we de pijnlijke en vaak verlamme innerlijke strijd van onze passies kunnen minimaliseren door een juiste werking van onze rationele vermogens. Toch is er onder de critici van conflict een andere groep van filosofen die Plato's optimisme niet deelt. Denkers als Schopenhauer en de late Freud, bijvoorbeeld, zien zowel sociaal als psychologisch conflict pessimistisch als een ongeneeslijke menselijke aandoening. Ondanks onze beste inspanningen, zeggen zij ons, zijn we veroordeeld tot destructieve oorlog en pijnlijke psychologische strijd.

Tegenover deze wijdverbreide tendens om conflict te demoniseren staat een groep denkers die conflict positief waarden als een mogelijk gunstige kracht. Aan de oorsprong hiervan staat ongetwijfeld Heraclitus die zoals bekend oorlog prees als 'de vader van alles'. Deze groep kan ook worden verdeeld in twee partijen afhankelijk van of ze oorlog en meer gewelddadige vormen van politieke onderdrukking beschouwen als contingent of noodzakelijk. Ten eerste zijn er dan degenen die oorlog beschouwen als een onontkoombaar deel van het menselijk leven maar het desondanks positief waarden als een sociaal vernieuwende kracht. Ze stellen dat oorlogszucht een samenleving een gezonde hiërarchische ordening bezorgt. Velen hebben Heraclitus aan deze kant van het debat geplaatst, hoewel ook anderen, zoals de historicus Jacob Burckhardt, deze visie onomwonden verdedigen. Aan de andere kant staan dan degenen die oorlog en strijd om politieke onderdrukking als contingent beschouwen en, tegelijkertijd, onwenselijk. Maar anders dan Plato en zijn navolgers geeft deze groep niet de voorkeur aan harmonie; ze hechten eerder waarde aan meer gematigde vormen van strijd die ze als sociaal gunstig beschouwen, zoals bijvoorbeeld het democratisch debat. Ze vragen dan ook om de *transformatie* van de meer schadelijke vormen van onenigheid in deze produktieve vormen van politieke twist. Meer recent hebben agonistische democratische theoretici zoals Bonnie Honig, Jean-François Lyotard en Chantal Mouffe een variant van dit idee verdedigd. William Connolly, een andere agonistische democraat, heeft op analoge wijze gesteld dat we meer gematigde vormen van conflict in onszelf moeten cultiveren, op psychologisch niveau.

Connolly hoopt dat deze benadering de schadelijke onderdrukkende strijd die vergeefs streeft naar innerlijke harmonie zal vervangen.

Dit beknopte overzicht laat zien dat de belangrijke scheidslijnen in het debat zich vormen langs twee vragen: Is conflict gunstig of schadelijk? Wat is de modale status van conflict, dat wil zeggen, is het een onuitwisbaar, of een contingent deel van het menselijk bestaan?

Een denker die de agonistische democraten vaak aanhalen om hun positie te ondersteunen is de 19^e eeuwse Duitse denker Friedrich Nietzsche. Ze wijzen erop dat hij conflict zowel in de context van de samenleving als van het zelf positief heeft gewaardeerd. Maar binnen het domein van de Nietzsche studies blijven commentatoren sterk verdeeld over zijn houding ten aanzien van conflict, en het is maar helemaal de vraag of hij het eens zou zijn geweest met de antwoorden die de agonistische democraten geven op de twee zojuist genoemde fundamentele vragen. Eén cluster commentatoren stelt de zogenaamde *zachte* lezing voor, en hun antagonisten verdedigen de zogenaamde *harde* lezing. De zachte Nietzsche wordt gelezen als iemand die in hoge mate *gematigde*, *agonale* strijd voorstaat. Voorbeelden van dit soort conflict zijn de niet-gewelddadige artistieke, atletische en politieke wedstrijden (of *agons*) die een belangrijk deel uitmaakten van de antieke Griekse cultuur. Voorstanders van deze lezing veronderstellen vaak dat dit soort strijd zijn hoogtepunt vindt in moderne democratisch debat. De harde lezing daarentegen stelt dat Nietzsche vrijwel uitsluitend *ongematigde* strijd beschouwde als een middel tot culturele renaissance. Daarom hebben velen de harde Nietzsche verantwoordelijk gehouden voor de wreedheden die de Nazi's begingen in de dertiger en veertiger jaren van de vorige eeuw. De voorstanders van de harde lezing vallen op hun beurt uiteen in twee subgroepen afhankelijk van het specifieke type ongematigde strijd waartoe Nietzsche volgens hen aanzette. Ten eerste zijn er diegenen die beweren dat Nietzsche oorlog voorschreef als een remedie voor de kwalen van de moderniteit – ik noem die zijn *militaristische* lezers. Naast deze groep zijn er degenen die hem lezen alsof hij een moorddadige aristocratische strijd

bevorderde van een elitaire minderheid die de massa tot slaaf wil maken en uitbuiten. Dat noem ik de *radicaal aristocratische* interpretatie.

Het is frustrerend dat beide kampen teksten uit Nietzsche's corpus kunnen aanhalen die hun tendentieuze lezing lijken te bevestigen. Sterker nog, beide kampen zien de teksten die op het eerste gezicht hun tegenstanders lijken te steunen als verder bewijs voor hun eigen lezing. In deze zin beweren Nietzsche's zachte lezers vaak dat wanneer hij het vocabulaire van de oorlog gebruikt, hij deze taal eigenlijk *metaforisch* gebruikt – namelijk, om te verwijzen naar de gematigde *spirituele* strijd om het zelf te overwinnen, en naar de *ideologische* strijd om culturele vernieuwing. Omgekeerd interpreteren de harde lezers Nietzsche's lofprijzing van de Griekse *agon* als een alomvattend ondersteunen van de oude Griekse liefde voor conflict – dat wil zeggen, *inclusief* hun geneigdheid tot oorlog.

In plaats van Nietzsche's filosofie van conflict te verhelderen, maakt een overzicht van de kritische literatuur deze filosofie in menig opzicht duisterder. Het belangrijkste doel van dit proefschrift is dan ook om de confrontatie met deze impasse aan te gaan. Sommigen zullen geneigd zijn om deze zogenaamde contradictie in Nietzsche's denken te zien als bewijs voor het feit dat hij een rommelige denker is, en als een extra reden om hem niet serieus te nemen als filosoof. Ik betoog echter dat zo'n vooroordeel misplaatst zou zijn. Een volgehouden close reading van Nietzsche's geschriften onthult een uitgewerkte filosofie van conflict die èn systematisch is èn coherent. Om deze coherentie aan te tonen moeten we natuurlijk de confrontatie aangaan met het bovengenoemde antagonisme in de kritische literatuur. We moeten navigeren tussen de lezingen van Nietzsche als een verdediger van louter en alleen het gematigde conflict, en de lezingen die hem neerzetten als een verdediger van uitsluitend ongematigd conflict. Raadt Nietzsche louter en alleen gematigd of ongematigd conflict aan? Of zijn beide exclusieve lezingen aan herziening toe?

Om deze *aporia* op te lossen probeert dit proefschrift een kritische analyse te geven van Nietzsche's visie op de aard en waarde van conflict. Ik voer een systematische studie uit van zijn vocabulaire van conflict die zijn gehele oeuvre omvat. Een snel

overzicht van zijn geschriften toont dat Nietzsche zijn gedachten over conflict naar voren bracht in vier clusters van termen. Ten eerste vinden we een cluster Duitse woorden die duidelijk verwijzen naar moorddadig gewelddadig conflict: onder andere *Vernichtungskampf* (strijd tot de dood), *Krieg* (oorlog), *Mörder* (moord), en *Zweikampf* (duel). We kunnen daarnaast een ander cluster onderscheiden dat nauw gerelateerd is aan de vormen van niet-gewelddadige wedijver algemeen verspreid onder de oude Grieken: onder andere *Wettkampf* (wedstrijd), *Agon* (agon), *Wettspiel* en *Wettbewerb* (competitie), en *Wettstreit* (wedijver). Ten derde gebruikt hij een apart vocabulaire van conflict (*Kampf*) om strijd te beschrijven die gericht is op de *organisatie* van complexe systemen – dat wil zeggen, strijd gericht op de *Einverleibung* (incorporatie), *Assimilation* (assimilatie) en *Herrschaft* (dominantie) van bepaalde entiteiten. Deze vorm van strijd wordt dan gekoppeld aan een andere die gericht is op de *Unterdrückung* (onderdrukking), *Zurückstoßen* (terugdringen), *Ausscheidung* (excretie) en zelfs *Zerstörung* (vernietiging) van bepaalde entiteiten. In de respectievelijke hoofdstukken ontleed ik elk van deze aspecten van Nietzsche's vocabulaire van conflict en bepaal ik of er een onderliggende coherentie is in zijn gebruik ervan.

Op basis van dit voorbereidende werk beweer ik dat zowel de zachte als de harde lezingen eenzijdig zijn en aanpassing behoeven. De stelling die dit proefschrift verdedigt is: *Nietzsche bevordert zowel gematigde als ongematigde strijd op een volstrekt coherente wijze*. Ik betoog ook dat commentatoren de meest significante vorm van conflict in Nietzsche's denken hebben veronachtzaamd. Deze vorm wordt gekenmerkt door een *combinatie* van gematigd *en* ongematigd conflict, en Nietzsche beschouwt dit als noodzakelijk voor iedere vorm van leven – individueel en sociaal – om te bestaan en zich uit te breiden. We zouden dit type strijd kunnen zien als analoog aan de biologische processen van voeding en spijsvertering. Hierdoor gaat een organisme tegelijkertijd een gematigde strijd aan om nuttig materiaal uit zijn omgeving te incorporeren *en* een ongematigde strijd om materiaal dat overbodig of schadelijk blijkt af te scheiden. Deze dubbele strijd is wat ik *organisatorisch* conflict

noem omdat zowel incorporatie als afscheiding deel uitmaken van één overkoepelende drang om een gezonde organisatie te bereiken.

Mijn analyse verheldert een aantal specifieke tekortkomingen van de zachte en harde lezingen. We zien dat de zachte lezing, die Nietzsche neerzet als geheel gewijd aan de *transformatie* van destructief in cultureel productief conflict, voorbijgaat aan het feit dat er fases zijn waarin Nietzsche gewelddadige strijd ziet als onuitroeibaar en cultureel gunstig. We vinden ook dat Nietzsche zeer kritisch is op *politiek* agonisme, waarbij hij twijfel zaait over de zachte, agonistisch democratische toeëigening van zijn denken. Onze studie van organisatorisch conflict onthult bovendien dat Nietzsche een vorm van strijd positief waardeert die ongelijkheid en uitsluiting bevordert op een manier die volledig in strijd is met de zachte lezing, die wordt gekenmerkt door een democratisch ethos van gelijkheidsdenken en inclusiviteit. Desalniettemin zien we dat de harde militaristische lezing ook zijn tekortkomingen heeft voor zover deze bewust de niet-gewelddadige aard van Nietzsche's verering van de *agon* negeert. We zijn er ook getuige van hoe de radicaal aristocratische lezing Nietzsche's verdediging van uitbuiting verkeerd interpreteert als steun voor moorddadige immorele slavernij. Eigenlijk beschouwt Nietzsche dit soort uitbuiting als hoogst onverstandig en ongezond. De ideale relatie van uitbuiting is er eerder één waarin de bevelhebber zorgt voor zijn ondergeschikten omdat hij belang heeft bij hun behoud en kracht. Het is mijn hoop dat deze studie gevolgen zal hebben voor diegenen die Nietzsche overhaast verwerpen omdat hij geweld zou verheerlijken, en ook voor diegenen die zich ten onrechte zijn denken toe eigenen uit naam van een democratische politieke agenda. Bovendien is mijn doel om, door de reconstructie en kritische evaluatie van Nietzsche's denken over strijd, licht te werpen op een aantal bredere filosofische vragen ten aanzien van de aard en waarde van conflict.

In hoofdstuk 1 onderzoek ik Nietzsche's denken omtrent vernietigingsstrijd (*Vernichtungskämpfe*), en meer in het bijzonder oorlog. Ik weerleg de louter agonistische lezing door aan te tonen dat Nietzsche in zijn werk talrijke argumenten geeft hoe we dodelijke vormen van strijd moeten waarderen. Ik stel verder dat veel

van deze argumenten, vooral in zijn vroege werken, worden ondersteund door een beschrijving van destructief conflict die uitermate problematisch is voor zijn agonistische lezers, die Nietzsche allemaal zien als iemand die de *volledige transformatie* van destructief in constructief agonistisch conflict nastreeft. Hoewel er inderdaad teksten zijn waarin hij transformatie aanbeveelt, vraag ik aandacht voor passages waar hij gewelddadige destructieve strijd beschouwt als *niet te transformeren*. In deze lijn van argumentatie wordt oorlog gezien als onvermijdelijk omdat mensen een onweerstaanbare drang hebben voor met name moorddadig conflict. Mijn oplossing voor deze ogenschijnlijke tegenstelling is de suggestie dat deze problematische conceptie van destructief conflict voor het grootste deel beperkt is tot zijn vroege werken. Zodra hij afstand neemt van Schopenhauer van wie hij dit idee overneemt, en in de jaren 1880 in de richting van de natuurwetenschappen beweegt, gaat hij destructief conflict beschouwen als de *contingente* expressie van een algemene impuls anderen de *overmeesteren* – een impuls die niet noodzakelijkerwijs moorddadig is en daarom ook een uitlaatklep kan krijgen in niet-gewelddadige vormen van conflict.

In hoofdstuk 2 analyseer ik de vorm van conflict die Nietzsche vaak tegenover destructieve strijd zet – namelijk *agonale* wedijver. Ik weerleg de harde, louter ongematigde lezingen en betoog dat Nietzsche op consistente wijze gematigde agonale relaties voorstaat. Om te bepalen wat dit omarmen van agonale wedijver behelst, moeten we echter eerst drie discussies over interpretatie oplossen. Ten eerste is het onduidelijk of Nietzsche agonale wedijver ziet als een specifiek niet-gewelddadige vorm van conflict of dat het moorddadige vormen van strijd zoals oorlog omvat. Wij stellen echter vast dat hij agonaal conflict zonder meer als niet-destructief ziet. We ontdekken verder dat hij *agon* ziet als een *niet-uitbuitende* soort strijd. Agonale strijders vechten om roem en persoonlijke glorie die geen middel is om hun tegenstanders te overheersen.

Ten tweede betwisten commentatoren de *middelen* die Nietzsche voorstelt om agonale maatvoering concreet de institutionaliseren in de samenleving. Hoe kan men mensen ervan weerhouden om de overwinning na te streven met onbegrensde

middelen? Hoe kan men bijvoorbeeld politieke tegenstanders ervan weerhouden om hun toevlucht te nemen tot geweld in de strijd om de macht? Sommigen beweren dat Nietzsche's agonisme berust op het cultiveren van *zelf*-beheersing, anderen bedenken dat maatvoering het resultaat is van een balans tussen gelijkwaardige tegenstanders (we kunnen hierbij denken aan de scheiding van politieke machten in de Verenigde Staten). Mijn analyse laat echter zien dat *zowel* zelfbeheersing *als* gelijkheid feitelijk fundamentele bronnen van agonale matiging zijn. Ik benadruk verder het vaak veronachtzaamde belang van religieuze, educatieve en juridische instituties in Nietzsche's betoog. Volgens deze opvatting dienen zij om een ethos van zelf-moderatie aan te brengen.

Ten derde is er onenigheid over de vraag of Nietzsche de *agon* voorstaat op een inclusieve, niet klasse-specifieke wijze, of dat zijn steun beperkt is tot een elitaire minderheid van aristocratische gelijken. Ik stel dat, volgens Nietzsche, agonale wedijver kan (en moet) plaatsvinden tussen individuen van min of meer gelijke *vermogens*, ongeacht hun klasse. Desalniettemin onderscheidt hij ook een hogere vorm van *agon* die gestreden wordt omwille van eeuwige roem, en die sterk geassocieerd wordt met de aristocratische klassen.

Na te hebben vastgesteld dat Nietzsche agonaal gematigd conflict alleen voorstaat onder zeldzame condities van *gelijkheid*, laat ik in de hoofdstukken 3 en 4 zien hoe hij een vrij unieke vorm van gematigd conflict voorstaat onder condities van *ongelijkheid*. Dit derde type conflict is wat ik al heb beschreven als de strijd in de vorm van uitbuiting ten dienste van *organisatie*. Organisatorische strijd is gematigd in zoverre als het streeft naar het *behoud* van dat wat overmeesterd wordt (zij het in een positie van dienstbaarheid); we vinden echter dat het conceptueel is onderscheiden van agonaal gematigd conflict in de zin dat het a) gericht is op exploitatie; b) plaatsvindt onder condities van ongelijkheid; en c) geconditioneerd wordt door ongematigde strijd gericht op afscheiding (denk aan de eerder genoemde analogie met voeding en spijsvertering die afscheiding noodzakelijk maakt).

We constateren verder dat organisatorisch conflict veel prominenter optreedt dan hetzij moorddadig hetzij agonaal conflict in Nietzsche's zoektocht voor

een geneesmiddel voor de kwalen die de moderniteit plagen. Nietzsche stelt de diagnose dat moderne individuen en samenlevingen de harmonie missen die een bloeiend leven mogelijk maakt. De veelheid van krachten die deze vormen van leven constitueren trekken in tegenstelde richtingen en frustreren elkaar. Deze toestand laat zowel het moderne individu als de moderne samenleving verlamd en impotent achter. We zien dat Nietzsche verreweg de voorkeur geeft aan het vormen van instrumentele hiërarchieën als middel tegen deze kwaal, en dat hij beweert dat deze hiërarchieën door middel van organisatorische strijd tot stand worden gebracht. In psychologische termen betekent dit strijden om bepaalde driften (d.w.z. impulsen of verlangens) in te perken zodat ze gehoorzaam onze hogere doelen dienen. In tegenstelling echter tot sommige lezingen van Nietzsche, die hem zien als krachtig tegenstander van psychologische onderdrukking, stel ik voorop hoe hij zijn lezers aanspoort om onbeheersbare impulsen uit te roeien. In sociale termen toont organisatorische strijd zich als een drang om zwakkere individuen uit te buiten. Maar in tegenstelling tot Nietzsche's radicaal aristocratische lezers die deze uitbuiting zien als een moorddadige vorm van slavernij, is Nietzsche's opvatting van gezonde exploitatie inherent gematigd. Ofwel de uitbouter wil de uitgebuite partij behouden en zorgt daarom voor hun welbevinden, of de ondergeschikte partij dient de superieuren *vrijwillig* vanwege de gunsten die dit haar verleent. Tegelijkertijd benadrukt Nietzsche ook de noodzaak dat een samenleving individuen buitensluit die haar vitaliteit bedreigen. I concludeer echter dat dit geenszins gelijkgesteld moet worden met een acceptatie van genocide (zoals sommigen hebben beweerd) omdat we ons gemakkelijk kunnen voorstellen dat dit met minder afschuwelijke middelen gerealiseerd kan worden, zoals bijvoorbeeld het in het leven roepen van een strafstelsel dat werkelijk gericht is op resocialisatie.

Hoewel ik de aandacht richt op de overeenstemming tussen remedies voor desintegratie die de vroege resp. de late Nietzsche voorstellen, benadruk ik tevens een punt van verschil. In hoofdstuk 3 zien we dat Nietzsche's vroege notie van organisatorische strijd berust op twee cruciale metafysische aannames. Maar in hoofdstuk 4 vinden we dat deze volledig afwezig zijn van zijn latere theorie van

organisatie. De vroege Nietzsche werkt met Schopenhauer's overtuiging dat de organisatie van elk wezen gefundeerd is in de eenheid van zijn *essentie*. Vóór de late jaren 1870, houdt Nietzsche vol dat we de ware onveranderlijke essentie van ons zelf (d.w.z. ons *karakter*) moeten identificeren om onszelf te organiseren. Zodra we weten wat onze ware roeping in het leven is, die wordt gedictieerd door ons essentiële karakter, hebben we een criterium waarmee we kunnen bepalen of gedragsimpulsen potentieel bevorderlijk of schadelijk zijn. Met andere woorden, we kunnen afleiden of we een impuls moeten cultiveren of uitroeien. Voor de vroege Nietzsche heeft het vaststellen en erkennen van het essentiële doel van de samenleving – namelijk het creëren van exemplaren van de genius – een overeenkomstige functie. Het geeft ons een criterium waarmee we de waarden en sociale structuren die we zouden moeten bevorderen kunnen onderscheiden van degenen die we zouden moeten afschaffen. Na de late jaren 1870, echter, gaat Nietzsche ertoe over om diezelfde essenties die zijn vroege theorie van organisatie funderen te verwerpen. Volgens de latere Nietzsche zijn er geen menselijke essenties – het zelf is slechts een contingente pluraliteit van driften – en kunnen we evenmin spreken van het essentiële doel van een samenleving.

De vraag die we daarom in hoofdstuk 4 moeten stellen is: hoe conceptualiseert de latere Nietzsche organisatorische strijd zonder de metafysische fundamente van zijn eerdere filosofie? Ik reconstrueer hoe hij zijn studies van de natuurwetenschappen benut om een niet-metafysisch betoog over organisatie te ontwikkelen. Dit behelst een gedetailleerde exegese van zijn theorie van wereld als wil tot macht (*Wille zur Macht*), die bestaan voorstelt als een constellatie van krachten die streven naar het vermeerderen van hun macht. Volgens deze theorie is organisatie het resultaat van bepaalde krachten in het zelf of in de samenleving die de controle aan zich trekken en de ondergeschikte krachten samenbrengen in een functionerende eenheid. Zoals we zien aan het einde van hoofdstuk 4 is het voor de latere Nietzsche het inzicht in de aard van de wereld als wil tot macht – in plaats van een of andere metafysische essentie – dat de raderen van de organisatie in beweging zet.

Als conclusie vat ik samen hoe Nietzsche's uiteindelijke gedachten over conflict een coherent geheel vormen. We vinden dat Nietzsche de verschillende soorten van gematigd en ongematigd conflict voorschrijft onder vrijwel compatibele voorwaarden. Daarmee wordt duidelijk dat het antagonisme tussen de zachte (gematigde) en harde (ongematigde) lezingen ons een valse tweedeling presenteert. Na een aantal van de meest schadelijke defecten te hebben opgesomd die ons conventionele concept van conflict met zich meebrengt, sluit ik af met een suggestie hoe we, op grond van onze resultaten, het concept van conflict kunnen herformuleren om individueel en collectief welzijn mogelijk te maken.

CURRICULUM VITAE

James Stephen Pearson was born on 8 August 1986 in High Wycombe, Berkshire, and grew up in the nearby town of Reading. He completed his undergraduate degree in Philosophy and English Literature at the University of Dundee in 2010, graduating with first-class honours. He wrote his undergraduate dissertation under the supervision of Dr Timothy Morris on Foucault and William Burroughs. He then completed his MA in Philosophy and Literature at the University of Warwick in 2011, graduating with distinction. At Warwick, he wrote his MA thesis under the supervision of Prof. Keith Ansell-Pearson on Nietzsche and Lyotard. He then obtained an AHRC grant in 2011 to write his PhD under Prof. Andrew Bowie at Royal Holloway, University of London. In 2012, after winning an NWO grant, he then transferred to Leiden University to perform his doctoral studies under the supervision of Dr Herman Siemens and Prof. em. Paul van Tongeren. During this time, he also made a six-month research visit to the University of Oxford, where he worked on Wittgenstein under the direction of Prof. Stephen Mulhall. Since 2012, James has been an active member of the Nietzsche Research Group (previously at Radboud University, now at Leiden University), the Nietzsche Wörterbuch Project, and the Centre for Political Philosophy at Leiden University. His current research is in aesthetics and focuses on the social value of creativity.

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