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

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# 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).<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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).

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<sup>1</sup> 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”.

<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> Both maintain that Nietzsche recommends the *instrumentalisation*, but not the repression or eradication of bothersome impulses. Kaufmann also attempts to

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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

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<sup>5</sup> 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."

<sup>6</sup> See Connolly (1988), ch.6, and (1991); Hatab (1995) and (2002).

<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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.).<sup>9</sup>

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*).<sup>10</sup> 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).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> 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).

<sup>9</sup> 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).

<sup>10</sup> 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).

<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> 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).<sup>14</sup> It is the concoction of *these* that is the problem for Nietzsche:

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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”.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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; Zuchttrasse”.

<sup>14</sup> 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)<sup>15</sup>

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).<sup>16</sup> 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).<sup>17</sup>

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

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‘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.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> See also NL 34[63] 11.441.

<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> Proper hierarchical organisation allows for the successful performance of actions, which in turn elicits a pleasurable feeling of power. This

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<sup>18</sup> 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]).<sup>19</sup> (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)

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<sup>19</sup> 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).<sup>20</sup> 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 Sattheit, der endlichen Einheit, als “Sabbat der Sabbate” (JGB 200).<sup>21</sup>

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

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<sup>20</sup> 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”.

<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup> 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)<sup>23</sup>

This is of course highly reminiscent of Aristotle’s distinction between the two types of *akrasia* (literally meaning “lack of command”): weakness (*astheneia*) and

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<sup>22</sup> 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...”

<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> This caprice manifests itself as an inability to inhibit one’s actions (“man verliert die Widerstands-Kraft gegen die Reize”).<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup> 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.<sup>27</sup> But Christian morality also leads to an

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<sup>24</sup> 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.

<sup>25</sup> See also NL 17[6] 13.527.

<sup>26</sup> See Brusotti (2012), pp.113ff.

<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> In the third essay of GM, he

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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)”.

<sup>28</sup> 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*.

<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> 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”.<sup>31</sup> 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

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‘Guten’ auch ein Rückgangssymptom läge, insgleichen eine Gefahr, eine Verführung, ein Gift, ein Narcoticum, durch das etwa die Gegenwart auf Kosten der Zukunft lebte”.

<sup>30</sup> 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”.

<sup>31</sup> See also GD Sokrates 9 6.71f.

far greater state of exhausted incapacity than when they began the course of treatment.<sup>32</sup> 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*.<sup>33</sup> As Alexander Nehamas has highlighted, “[t]he ascetic ideal does not rest content with ordering the lives of those who may actually need it”;<sup>34</sup> 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).<sup>35</sup> 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).

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<sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> 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”.

<sup>34</sup> 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).

<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup> 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

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<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> The moralities Nietzsche has in mind are those promulgating “Gleichheit der Rechte”, “Würde und Pflicht und Nächstenliebe” (JGB 44<sup>38</sup>), as well as those which specifically support the

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<sup>37</sup> Compare also NL 11[130] 9.488 and NL 11[182] 9.511-2, which very clearly prefigure this thought.

<sup>38</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup>

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.<sup>40</sup>

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. [...]

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Unglauben an große Menschen und an Elite-Gesellschaft: ‘Jeder ist jedem gleich’ ‘Im Grunde sind wir allesamt eigennütziges Vieh und Pöbel’”.

<sup>39</sup> 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.

<sup>40</sup> 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 Heerdenthier, 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 vergangliche 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 [...]”<sup>41</sup> 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

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<sup>41</sup> 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]).<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup> 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

<sup>42</sup> On this topic, see also NL 37[8] 11.581, where Nietzsche castigates the hope “aller Art Hirten und Leithammel zu erschlagen”.

<sup>43</sup> 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).<sup>44</sup>

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.<sup>45</sup> 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

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<sup>44</sup> 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.

<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup> 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 “Kleinstaaterie” 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

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<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup>

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.<sup>48</sup> Gerd Schank has claimed that far from

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<sup>47</sup> 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.

<sup>48</sup> 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.”<sup>49</sup> 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).<sup>50</sup>

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).<sup>51</sup> 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).<sup>52</sup> 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

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<sup>49</sup> Schank (2000), p.440; my italics. Schank also cites Ottmann (1987, p.251) in support of his claim.

<sup>50</sup> 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*.

<sup>51</sup> See also NL 14[83] 13.262-3, where Nietzsche associates *Willens-Disgregation* with *Décadence*.

<sup>52</sup> See also JGB 242.

Ansprüche ist *möglich*, es ist kein Zweifel!” (my italics).<sup>53</sup> 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)<sup>54</sup>; 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).<sup>55</sup>

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

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<sup>53</sup> See also GM I 12 5.278: “Denn so steht es: die Verkleinerung und Ausgleichung des europäischen Menschen birgt unsre grösste Gefahr”.

<sup>54</sup> On the need to consciously cultivate higher men, see also NL 9[153]12.425.

<sup>55</sup> 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 komplizirt, 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.<sup>56</sup> 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

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<sup>56</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup> 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.<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, and more importantly with respect to our current

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<sup>57</sup> 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.

<sup>58</sup> 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).

<sup>59</sup> See KTO, pp.3-4.

<sup>60</sup> 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.”<sup>61</sup>

Roux hypothesises that this internal conflict occurs at four different levels: among (intra-cellular) molecules; among cells; among tissues; and among organs.<sup>62</sup> 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.<sup>63</sup>

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

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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.”

<sup>61</sup> KTO, p.1, p.2.

<sup>62</sup> 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.”

<sup>63</sup> 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”.<sup>64</sup> 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.<sup>65</sup>

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).<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup> Between molecules of a similar function, responding to similar stimuli, this is an eliminative struggle, and,

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<sup>64</sup> KTO, p.68.

<sup>65</sup> 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.”

<sup>66</sup> KTO, pp.79-80.

<sup>67</sup> 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).<sup>68</sup>

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.<sup>69</sup> 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”.<sup>70</sup>

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

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<sup>68</sup> 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.”

<sup>69</sup> See KTO, p.82; see also p.86 on the *Gleichgewicht* of molecule types.

<sup>70</sup> KTO, p.86.

adverse effect that an excess of fatty tissue has on the heart<sup>71</sup>). 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.<sup>72</sup> 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.<sup>73</sup> On this account, the struggle over space, nutrition and trophic stimuli must therefore proceed in such a way that an equilibrium (“Gleichgewicht”) is maintained.<sup>74</sup>

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

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<sup>71</sup> KTO, p.97.

<sup>72</sup> 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).

<sup>73</sup> 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.”

<sup>74</sup> 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.<sup>75</sup> This is what Roux calls “Selbstregulierung”.<sup>76</sup> 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).<sup>77</sup> 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.<sup>78</sup> 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

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<sup>75</sup> 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”.

<sup>76</sup> See e.g. KTO, p.112.

<sup>77</sup> KTO, p.106.

<sup>78</sup> 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.<sup>79</sup>

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

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<sup>79</sup> 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.<sup>80</sup> 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.<sup>81</sup> This is the very foundation of an organism’s “Dauerhaftigkeit” because *under*-compensation results in diminuation 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.<sup>82</sup> 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.<sup>83</sup>

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.”<sup>84</sup> Those parts of the body better able to remove (*beseitigen*) the detrimental byproducts of

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<sup>80</sup> 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).

<sup>81</sup> See KTO, pp.216-7.

<sup>82</sup> 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.

<sup>83</sup> 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.”

<sup>84</sup> 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)<sup>85</sup>

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.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Nietzsche transcribes this quotation in NL 7[86] 10.272.

<sup>86</sup> 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”<sup>87</sup>) 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.

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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.

<sup>87</sup> 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.<sup>88</sup> 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.<sup>89</sup> 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.<sup>90</sup> 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").<sup>91</sup> 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

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<sup>88</sup> See also Giuliano Campioni, Paolo d'Iorio, Maria Christina Fornari, Francesco Fronterotta, Andrea Orsucci, *Nietzsches persönliche Bibliothek* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), p.511.

<sup>89</sup> See e.g. NL 11[130] 9.487-8; NL 11[134] 9.490-1; NL 11[182] 9.509-12.

<sup>90</sup> Müller-Lauter (1999), p.165. See also (1978), pp.195f.

<sup>91</sup> 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?<sup>92</sup>

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”<sup>93</sup> and that “[d]ie Theile leben bloß für die eigene Erhaltung”.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> 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.

<sup>93</sup> KTO, p.214.

<sup>94</sup> 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”.<sup>95</sup>

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).<sup>96</sup> 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.<sup>97</sup> 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.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> KTO, p.238.

<sup>96</sup> “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.

<sup>97</sup> 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.

<sup>98</sup> 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.<sup>99</sup> 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”.<sup>100</sup> 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”.<sup>101</sup> 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.<sup>102</sup> For Rolph, like Mayer, the idea of

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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.

<sup>99</sup> BP, p.59.

<sup>100</sup> BP, p.59; see also p.61.

<sup>101</sup> BP, p.67.

<sup>102</sup> 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.”<sup>103</sup>

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.<sup>104</sup> Rolph (mistakenly) reads Darwin as suggesting that *this* is the primary motor of evolution.<sup>105</sup> 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),

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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) [...]”

<sup>103</sup> BP, p.92. Yet, Rolph does note that *Fortpflanzung* is recognised by Darwin as a fundamental goal of organisms.

<sup>104</sup> On this, see ch.1, fn.41.

<sup>105</sup> 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.”<sup>106</sup> 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.<sup>107</sup>

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

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<sup>106</sup> 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 Lebensmehring, und unabhängig von dem jedesmaligen Nahrungsangebot; er findet jederzeit, also auch in Ueberflusslage statt.”

<sup>107</sup> 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”).<sup>108</sup> (Elsewhere, he also reiterates Rolph’s argument that variation only arises under conditions of plenitude.)<sup>109</sup> 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*.<sup>110</sup> 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

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<sup>108</sup> 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...”

<sup>109</sup> 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.

<sup>110</sup> 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!<sup>111</sup>

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

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<sup>111</sup> 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.<sup>112</sup>

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.<sup>113</sup> And, as we saw in Chapter 1, this can take an infinitude of forms.<sup>114</sup> 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).<sup>115</sup>

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

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<sup>112</sup> 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!”

<sup>113</sup> 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).

<sup>114</sup> See ch.1, §1.4.2.

<sup>115</sup> 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).<sup>116</sup> 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*

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<sup>116</sup> 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).

<sup>116</sup> 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”.<sup>117</sup> The expression of power is always an act of striving to *increase*, not merely *replace*, one’s power in *relation* to another resisting power.<sup>118</sup> 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”.<sup>119</sup>

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.

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<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Müller-Lauter (1978), p.207.

<sup>118</sup> 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.

<sup>119</sup> 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.<sup>120</sup> 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*.<sup>121</sup> 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).<sup>122</sup> 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.<sup>123</sup> And continuing the idea that there exists an experiential or perceptual relation of symmetry between the

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<sup>120</sup> 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).

<sup>121</sup> See NL 14[79] 13.259: “[D]er Wille zur Macht nicht ein Sein, nicht ein Werden, sondern ein Pathos ist die elementarste Thatsache”.

<sup>122</sup> 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.”

<sup>123</sup> 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).<sup>124</sup>

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.<sup>125</sup> 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).<sup>126</sup>

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

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<sup>124</sup> 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.

<sup>125</sup> 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.”

<sup>126</sup> 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.<sup>127</sup> 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.<sup>128</sup> 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).<sup>129</sup>

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).<sup>130</sup> Any organised body

<sup>127</sup> 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!”

<sup>128</sup> 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.”

<sup>129</sup> 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).

<sup>130</sup> 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.<sup>131</sup>

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

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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.”

<sup>131</sup> 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”.<sup>132</sup>

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.<sup>133</sup> 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)?<sup>134</sup>

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*

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<sup>132</sup> This argument was already roughly outlined in §2.4.2.3., though it is worthwhile reiterating it here.

<sup>133</sup> 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.

<sup>134</sup> 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).<sup>135</sup> 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

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<sup>135</sup> 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?"<sup>136</sup> 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

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<sup>136</sup> 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).<sup>137</sup> 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.<sup>138</sup> 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

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<sup>137</sup> 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 [...].”

<sup>138</sup> 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.<sup>139</sup> 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”.<sup>140</sup>

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”).<sup>141</sup> The process by which

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<sup>139</sup> 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).

<sup>140</sup> 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.”

<sup>141</sup> 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)<sup>142</sup>

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).<sup>143</sup> 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”.<sup>144</sup> 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

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<sup>142</sup> 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.”

<sup>143</sup> 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.

<sup>144</sup> 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.<sup>145</sup> 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.

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<sup>145</sup> 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.<sup>146</sup> 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).<sup>147</sup> 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*)

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<sup>146</sup> 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."

<sup>147</sup> 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.<sup>148</sup> 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.<sup>149</sup> This is why “das Leben” tells Zarathustra that it is

<sup>148</sup> 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).

<sup>149</sup> 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.<sup>150</sup>

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;

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“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.”

<sup>150</sup> 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".<sup>151</sup> 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,

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<sup>151</sup> 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 [...].<sup>152</sup>

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”.<sup>153</sup> 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.”<sup>154</sup> 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.”<sup>155</sup>

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

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<sup>152</sup> Kaufmann (1974), p.227.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, p.220.

<sup>154</sup> Kaufmann (1974), p.226.

<sup>155</sup> 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".<sup>156</sup> 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

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<sup>156</sup> Kaufmann (1974), p.236.

interchangeably with *Trieb* – for example, *Affekt*,<sup>157</sup> *Gefühl*,<sup>158</sup> *Instinkt*,<sup>159</sup> *Begierde*,<sup>160</sup> and *Hang*.<sup>161</sup> 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.<sup>162</sup> 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".<sup>163</sup> John Richardson, taking an evolutionary biological tack, has then presented the case for interpreting drives as *genetically* ingrained behavioural dispositions.<sup>164</sup> Finally, Tom Stern has even urged that the lack of consistency in

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<sup>157</sup> 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".

<sup>158</sup> See e.g. NL 25[413] 11.120: "Der ganze innere Widerstreit der Gefühle, das Bewußtsein der übermächtigen Triebe".

<sup>159</sup> 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.

<sup>160</sup> 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'."

<sup>161</sup> NL 25[460] 11.135. See also FW 294.

<sup>162</sup> 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).

<sup>163</sup> 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).

<sup>164</sup> 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.<sup>165</sup>

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.<sup>166</sup> 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).<sup>167</sup> 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).<sup>168</sup> 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

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<sup>165</sup> 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).

<sup>166</sup> Indeed, in NL 7[198] 10.304, Nietzsche writes that "Triebe sind höhere Organe ..."

<sup>167</sup> 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".

<sup>168</sup> 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.”<sup>169</sup> 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.<sup>170</sup> 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]).<sup>171</sup> 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,

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<sup>169</sup> See Richardson (2004), p.35 and pp.81-2.

<sup>170</sup> 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!”

<sup>171</sup> 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”.<sup>172</sup> Indeed, Poellner continues, Nietzsche even states that they are often conceived as in some sense “conscious”.<sup>173</sup> 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.<sup>174</sup> 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.<sup>175</sup>

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).<sup>176</sup> According to Nietzsche, this command consists in the lower drive

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<sup>172</sup> See Poellner (1995), p.215.

<sup>173</sup> 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”.

<sup>174</sup> 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.

<sup>175</sup> 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).

<sup>176</sup> 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.<sup>177</sup> 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).<sup>178</sup> 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.<sup>179</sup> 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)<sup>180</sup>

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?

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<sup>177</sup> 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.”

<sup>178</sup> 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”.

<sup>179</sup> NL 25[411] 11.119: “Unterschied von niederen und höheren Funktionen: Rangordnung der Organe und Triebe, dargestellt durch Befehlende und Gehorchende.”

<sup>180</sup> 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”.<sup>181</sup> 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)<sup>182</sup>

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

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<sup>181</sup> 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.”

<sup>182</sup> 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)<sup>183</sup>

*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 drives<sup>184</sup>).

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).<sup>185</sup> Though

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<sup>183</sup> 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.”

<sup>184</sup> 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.

<sup>185</sup> 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.”<sup>186</sup> 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

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<sup>186</sup> See Adrian del Caro, *Grounding the Nietzsche Rhetoric of Earth* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), p.124. See also FW 292.



activity.<sup>187</sup> 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).”<sup>188</sup> 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.<sup>189</sup> 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

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<sup>187</sup> 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.”

<sup>188</sup> 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.

<sup>189</sup> 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).<sup>190</sup> 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).<sup>191</sup> 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”.<sup>192</sup> 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.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> 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.”

<sup>191</sup> 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...”

<sup>192</sup> Compare M 38.

<sup>193</sup> 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.<sup>194</sup> 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.).<sup>195</sup> 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

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(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.

<sup>194</sup> 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 [...]”

<sup>195</sup> 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.<sup>196</sup> 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.<sup>197</sup>

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).<sup>198</sup> 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

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<sup>196</sup> 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.”

<sup>197</sup> 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.”

<sup>198</sup> 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.<sup>199</sup> 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)<sup>200</sup>

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

<sup>199</sup> 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”.

<sup>200</sup> 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)<sup>201</sup>

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)<sup>202</sup>

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.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> 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.”

<sup>202</sup> 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.”

<sup>203</sup> 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.<sup>204</sup> 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).<sup>205</sup> 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

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the highest ordering principle in Nietzsche’s normative worldview. See e.g. Ansell-Pearson (2006), p.243.

<sup>204</sup> 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).

<sup>205</sup> See also JGB 270.

conditions.<sup>206</sup> 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.<sup>207</sup> 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

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<sup>206</sup> For a more comprehensive overview of Nietzsche’s account of noble values, see Tongeren (1989), pp.151-72.

<sup>207</sup> 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.<sup>208</sup> 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).<sup>209</sup> Moreover, one’s ruling

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<sup>208</sup> 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).

<sup>209</sup> 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 Krummen, 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.<sup>210</sup> 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).<sup>211</sup>

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).<sup>212</sup> In the second place, this experimentation requires a range of core virtues – for example, *courage*.<sup>213</sup> 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”).<sup>214</sup>

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

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<sup>210</sup> 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”.

<sup>211</sup> 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.

<sup>212</sup> 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.

<sup>213</sup> See e.g. EH Bücher 3 6.303, where Nietzsche calls his perfect reader “ein Unthier von Muth”.

<sup>214</sup> 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 (sammt dem, was ihm naheverwandt ist), nicht in der Absicht, es zu vernichten, sondern nur um seiner Tyrannei 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.<sup>215</sup>

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).<sup>216</sup> 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:

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<sup>215</sup> See also NL 10[2] 12.454, where Nietzsche describes this as his "Kampf gegen die Überherrschaft der Heerden-Instinkte".

<sup>216</sup> 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.<sup>217</sup> 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

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<sup>217</sup> 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.<sup>218</sup> 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).<sup>219</sup>

On this interpretation, creativity is enabled by breaking a certain *modality* to which our values lay claim.<sup>220</sup> 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.<sup>221</sup> But he also contests this universality by highlighting the detriment practical consequences furthered by such a belief – namely, insofar as

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<sup>218</sup> 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).

<sup>219</sup> See also NL 11[16] 10.381

<sup>220</sup> See Leiter (2015), p.60 for a review of Nietzsche’s attempt to undermine the universal claims of idealist morality.

<sup>221</sup> 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).<sup>222</sup> 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

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<sup>222</sup> 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.”<sup>223</sup> 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

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<sup>223</sup> 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.<sup>224</sup> 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

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<sup>224</sup> 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.”<sup>225</sup> 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

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<sup>225</sup> Hatab (1995), p.68. See also p.8.

schonender. Fast jede Partei begreift ihr Selbsterhaltungs-Interesse darin, dass die Gegenpartei nicht von Kräften kommt [...].<sup>226</sup>

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".<sup>227</sup> 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.<sup>228</sup>

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",<sup>229</sup> then generates "temporary aristocracy" insofar as it meritocratically grants power to the winning contestants.<sup>230</sup> 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.<sup>231</sup>

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".<sup>232</sup> 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

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<sup>226</sup> 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.

<sup>227</sup> Hatab (1995), p.69.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, p.122.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, p.63.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, p.123.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, p.125. For Hatab's exegesis of Nietzsche's aristocratism, see pp.39ff.

<sup>232</sup> Connolly (1988), p.161.

(according to Nietzsche's "ontology of resistance").<sup>233</sup> He maintains that "Nietzsche's aristocratic solution [...] recreates the very resentment it seeks to redress".<sup>234</sup> 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.<sup>235</sup> 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."<sup>236</sup> 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".<sup>237</sup> Like both Hatab and Connolly then, Warren intimates that for Nietzsche, it is an agonistic society founded on the principle of equal opportunity

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<sup>233</sup> See ch.2, §2.3.

<sup>234</sup> Connolly (1988), p.160.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., p.211, p.209.

<sup>236</sup> Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991), p.141, p.232.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., p.234.

that could most effectively “serve as a means to organizing individual power as agency”.<sup>238</sup>

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.<sup>239</sup> 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)<sup>240</sup>

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

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid., p.72. I am indebted to Detwiler’s (1990) succinct summary of Warren (pp.160-1).

<sup>239</sup> David Owen (2002), can also be said to occupy this vein of Nietzsche interpretation.

<sup>240</sup> 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”.<sup>241</sup> 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”.<sup>242</sup>

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’.<sup>243</sup> 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.<sup>244</sup>

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

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid., p.160.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., p.161.

<sup>243</sup> Appel (1999), p.31 (my italics).

<sup>244</sup> 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.<sup>245</sup> 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.<sup>246</sup> 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.<sup>247</sup> 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

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<sup>245</sup> See Detwiler (1990), p.53 and Appel (1999), pp.120-6.

<sup>246</sup> 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.).

<sup>247</sup> 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”.<sup>248</sup> 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),<sup>249</sup> 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).<sup>250</sup> 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.”<sup>251</sup>

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

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<sup>248</sup> See *ibid.*, p.242. See pp.239-42.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.248-54. This recalls one of Nietzsche’s arguments in favour of serving elite genius in UB (see §3.3.5.).

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.258-267.

<sup>251</sup> *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)<sup>252</sup>

Nietzsche maintains that engendering such higher individuals is the ultimate goal (and justification) of society.<sup>253</sup> These higher creative types are what he sometimes refers to as “eine Art Übermensch” (AC 4), the antithesis of the “letzter Mensch”.<sup>254</sup> 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

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<sup>252</sup> 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.”

<sup>253</sup> See also NL 10[17] 12.462f.

<sup>254</sup> 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)<sup>255</sup>

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

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<sup>255</sup> 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.<sup>256</sup> 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

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<sup>256</sup> 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).<sup>257</sup> 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*.<sup>258</sup> 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

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<sup>257</sup> See also NL 2[13] 12.73.

<sup>258</sup> 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.<sup>259</sup>

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).<sup>260</sup> 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).<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> See Siemens (2008), pp.253-6. Compare §3.3.5. of this thesis.

<sup>260</sup> For an analysis of Nietzsche’s understanding of enslavement as merely treating the other as a means, see Fossen (2008) (esp. pp.307ff.).

<sup>261</sup> 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).<sup>262</sup> 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).<sup>263</sup>

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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".

<sup>262</sup> Compare also GM II 11 5.310-3 and GD Alten 3 6.157.

<sup>263</sup> 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).<sup>264</sup> 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.<sup>265</sup> Indeed, the positively charged notion of "das Pathos der Distanz" also often signifies precisely this sense of seclusion.<sup>266</sup> Crucially, Nietzsche's affirmation

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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."

<sup>264</sup> See NL 10[188] 12.568 and NL 35[9] 11.511. See also Appel (1999), p.134.

<sup>265</sup> In AC 57, Nietzsche also outlines how this can be achieved by the commanders by commanding vicariously, through executives (such as monarchs).

<sup>266</sup> 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).<sup>267</sup> 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.<sup>268</sup> 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:

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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.

<sup>267</sup> 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).

<sup>268</sup> 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.<sup>269</sup> 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-

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<sup>269</sup> 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.<sup>270</sup> 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.<sup>271</sup> 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”).<sup>272</sup> 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.

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<sup>270</sup> 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).

<sup>271</sup> See Ottmann (1987), p.358; Schank (2000). See also entries for “Zucht” and “Züchtung” in DWB. See also Detwiler (1990), pp.111-3.

<sup>272</sup> 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).<sup>273</sup> 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).<sup>274</sup> 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

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<sup>273</sup> 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).

<sup>274</sup> 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)<sup>275</sup>

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

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<sup>275</sup> 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, Ausschuß 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)<sup>276</sup>

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

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<sup>276</sup> 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.<sup>277</sup> 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).<sup>278</sup> 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

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<sup>277</sup> See Detwiler (1990), p.108.

<sup>278</sup> 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).<sup>279</sup>

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)<sup>280</sup>

Recalling UB, there is again a need to ensure a certain *isolation* for some individuals in order to allow them a space for *experimentation*.<sup>281</sup> 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

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<sup>279</sup> 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”.

<sup>280</sup> 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.

<sup>281</sup> 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.<sup>282</sup> 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)<sup>283</sup>

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

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<sup>282</sup> 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).

<sup>283</sup> 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).<sup>284</sup> 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.).<sup>285</sup> Hence, the thought induces the unmeasured process of *Ausscheidung* – i.e. the

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<sup>284</sup> 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.

<sup>285</sup> 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.<sup>286</sup>

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?<sup>287</sup>

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*:

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<sup>286</sup> 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.

<sup>287</sup> 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)<sup>288</sup>

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.<sup>289</sup> It becomes exigent that we rediscover the freedom and pleasure of overcoming resistances and forming novel, stronger power organisations.<sup>290</sup> 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).<sup>291</sup>

The highest human (“der höchste Mensch”) is, on Nietzsche’s analysis, the person “der die Werthe bestimmt und den Willen von Jahrtausenden lenkt, dadurch

<sup>288</sup> See Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche contra Rousseau* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.192.

<sup>289</sup> See NL 26[284] 11.225: “Mittel ihn [der Gedanke der ewige Wiederkunft] zu ertragen / die Umwerthung aller Werthe [...]”

<sup>290</sup> 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).

<sup>291</sup> 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.<sup>292</sup> 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).<sup>293</sup> As Heidegger expresses it, the *Übermensch* is “als höchste Subjekt der vollendeten Subjektivität das reine Machten des Willens zur Macht”.<sup>294</sup> 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

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<sup>292</sup> 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.

<sup>293</sup> Müller-Lauter (1999), pp.87ff.

<sup>294</sup> 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”.<sup>295</sup> 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”.<sup>296</sup> 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.<sup>297</sup> 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.<sup>298</sup>

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.<sup>299</sup> Indeed, the eternal

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<sup>295</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Was heisst denken?* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1997), p.26.

<sup>296</sup> Bataille (1937), p.186.

<sup>297</sup> 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.

<sup>298</sup> 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.

<sup>299</sup> 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.<sup>300</sup> 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.<sup>301</sup>

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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.

<sup>300</sup> 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.

<sup>301</sup> 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.<sup>302</sup>

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.

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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).

<sup>302</sup> Ottmann (1987), p.360: “Das Zuchtmittel ‘Idee’ wird ersetzt durch den Gedanken der ‘ewigen Wiederkehr’. Er wird das ‘Schwergewicht’, 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.