The Role of Philosophy and Hierarchy in Friedrich Nietzsche's Political Thought

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ABSTRACT

I argue that Friedrich Nietzsche provides us with a political philosophy that deserves serious consideration as a uniquely anti-democratic position within the canon of modern political theory. Beyond recent attempts to democratise Nietzsche's thoughts on power and self-creation, I provide an analysis of Nietzsche's anti-democratic impulse that demonstrates how the elements of hierarchy and philosophy form the core of an anti-democratic and anti-universalist political project in Nietzsche's mature thought. Hitherto, many of Nietzsche's interpreters have assumed that his thought yields no unambiguous political philosophy because he fails to present his ideas in a systematic way. Yet it may be argued that Nietzsche's political thought does reveal a significant, if skeletal, structure that is built upon consistent ideas, however unsystematically presented.

The overall aim of this thesis is to determine the best way to characterize what is uniquely political in Nietzsche. I claim that the political in Nietzsche has to do with the relationship between politics as hierarchy and philosophy as independent value creation. I present my thesis in three parts. Firstly, I develop my argument within a critique of recent democratic interpretations of Nietzsche. Secondly, I illustrate the relationship between hierarchy and philosophy through an original exegesis of Nietzsche's texts. And finally, by engaging in a comparative analysis of Hannah Arendt's political theory, I offer an example of how Nietzsche's anti-democratic project may be employed as a tool in the ongoing consideration of important issues in political theory.

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★ I follow the translations listed below. For Nietzsche's works, I have consulted *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*, edited by G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980).

ABBREVIATIONS

PT	*Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's*, ed. and trans., D. Breazeale, New Jersey, Humanities Press International. (by page number)
TGS	"The Greek State" in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, ed., K. Ansell-Pearson, trans., Carol Diethe, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994. (by page number)
HOC	"Homer on Competition" in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, ed., K. Ansell-Pearson, trans., Carol Diethe, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994. (by page number)
TI AC	*Twilight of the Idols/ The Anti-Christ*, trans., R. J. Hollingdale, London, Penguin Books, 1990. (by section)
GM EH	*On the Genealogy of Morals* and *Ecce Homo*, trans., W. Kaufmann & R. J. Hollingdale, New York Vintage Books, 1989. (by section)
HAH	*Human, All Too Human*, trans., R. J. Hollingdale, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1986. (by section)
UM	*Untimely Meditations*, trans., R. J. Hollingdale, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1983. (by page number)
D	*Daybreak*, trans., R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge University Press, 1982. (by section)
GS	*The Gay Science*, trans., W. Kaufmann, New York, Vintage Books, 1974. (by section)
Z	*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans., R. J. Hollingdale, London, Penguin Books, 1969. (by section)
WP	*The Will to Power*, trans., W. Kaufmann, New York, Vintage Books, 1968. (by section)
BT	*The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. W. Kaufmann, New York, Vintage Books, 1967. (by section)
BGE	*Beyond Good and Evil*, trans., W. Kaufmann, New York, Vintage Books, 1966. (by section)
PTG	*Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, trans., Marianne Cowan, Washington, Regnery Publishing Inc., 1962. (by page number)

INTRODUCTION

The Anglo-American discourse on Nietzsche's relevance to political theory has developed gradually since the 1970s. Early efforts by theorists like Tracy Strong and Mark Warren began the project of re-thinking Nietzsche's status as a political thinker in terms of how the different elements of his thought might be used as democratic building blocks in the service of a radical or postmodern political vision.[1] But these early attempts were eventually opposed by other efforts to remind us of Nietzsche's anti-democratic sentiments.[2]

The controversy over Nietzsche's status as a political thinker continued to divide political theory interpretations of Nietzsche throughout the 1990s.[3] Therefore, what remains an ever-present point of contention in Nietzsche studies is the question of the suitability and plausibility of his philosophy within democratic and egalitarian structures of thought. Are his ideas available to us as democratic building blocks or is Nietzsche a fundamentally anti-democratic thinker?

Of course one might suggest innocently that both of these characterizations are true. There is no *prima facie* reason why Nietzsche's ideas should not be used for democratic

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[1]Tracy Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975); Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1988).

[2]Bruce Detwiler, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

[3]Other books which present arguments for the "democratic" Nietzsche include the following: William Connolly, *Identity/Difference* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991); David Owen, *Nietzsche, Politics and Modernity* (London: Sage Publications, 1995); Dan Conway, *Nietzsche and the political* (London: Routledge, 1997). The following recent efforts attempt to remind us of the anti-democratic Nietzsche: Peter Berkowitz, *Nietzsche: the Ethics of an Immoralist* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); Fredrick Appel, *Nietzsche contra Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999). For a useful introduction to Nietzsche's reception in political theory see Keith Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

purposes and at the same time it seems rather obvious that he is an anti-democratic thinker. Nevertheless, the controversy dividing these positions reflects a deeper conflict over the relationship between politics and philosophy in Nietzsche. If Nietzsche's thoughts are available to us as democratic building blocks it is because these building blocks do not fit neatly together as an integrated and self-contained *Nietzschean* political philosophy.[4] On this view, Nietzsche's philosophy must be privileged over his politics because his "political" thought represents an *under-determined* vision. Thus, Mark Warren, in an early article, characterizes the relationship between philosophy and politics in Nietzsche as expressing a fundamental "political indeterminacy".[5]

An important aspect of this approach, the approach represented in Warren's characterization, is that it developed out of a less formal and less specific project to overcome the "embarrassingly political Nietzsche" that Walter Kaufmann's seminal post-war study first inaugurated.[6] Although the proto-fascist Nietzsche has been discredited, the effort to establish a democratic Nietzsche has been greatly aided by the desire to overcome the stigma of a proto-fascist Nietzsche whose philosophy needed to be bracketed out from his crude or "overt" politics. In turn, this approach was intensified and given greater legitimacy by the poststructuralist readings that sanctioned the creative appropriation of Nietzsche's ideas over and against traditional exegetical interpretations of his texts.[7]

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[4]In a review of political readings of Nietzsche Mark Warren re-asserts this position where he writes: "[N]ietzsche's challenges are just that: challenges that remain unfinished, at least from the perspective of political thought. However suggestive, they do not add up to a political philosophy. It will not do to rely on Nietzsche's own politics, since the implications of his thinking far outstrip what he takes to be political." Mark Warren, "Political Readings of Nietzsche" *Political Theory* vol. 26, no. 1 (1998): 92.

[5]Mark Warren, "Nietzsche and Political Philosophy" *Political Theory* vol. 13, no. 2 (1985): 187.

[6]Walter Sokel, "Political Uses and Abuses of Nietzsche in Walter Kaufmann's Image of Nietzsche" *Nietzsche-Studien* 12 (1983): 441. Cf. Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (New York: Meridian Books, 1966).

[7]See David Allison (ed), *The New Nietzsche* (Cambridge Mass: The MIT Press, 1995). See also the works of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze for the most influential

The following remarks by Keith Ansell-Pearson, in an article that documents these developments, illustrates clearly the changing approach to the relationship between philosophy and politics in Nietzsche studies:

> An impasse on the question of Nietzsche's status as a political thinker was reached by commentators adopting the practice of reading his neo-conservative politics back into his philosophy of power in an effort to discredit the philosophical site on which he had constructed his political edifice. Yet for anyone aware of the pivotal role that Nietzsche's writings have come to play in contemporary debates in critical theory, poststructuralism and deconstruction, his status as a political thinker poses an enigma in need of explanation and enlightenment.[8]

In this summary Ansell-Pearson ushers in a period of interpretation that establishes an appropriation-based approach to the political in Nietzsche. And this emerging approach is justified, in part, on the claim that Nietzsche's texts are uniquely open to appropriation because Nietzsche's philosophy is presented in a very unsystematic way.

However, in the wake of this emerging discourse, I argue that the appropriation-based approach ironically narrows the field of Nietzsche studies in political theory by pigeonholing Nietzsche as a thinker who has no political philosophy of his own. What is significant about this pigeonholing is that it often amounts to reading a democratic Nietzsche back into Nietzsche in the same way that, as Ansell-Pearson puts it, commentators have read Nietzsche's neo-conservative politics "back into his philosophy of power". And, in this way, an impasse may be acknowledged on both sides of the argument concerning the relationship between politics and philosophy in Nietzsche's thought.

In an effort to move beyond this impasse I suggest that *constructing* an anti-democratic Nietzschean philosophy is a much needed contribution. Therefore, I take up the challenge of piecing together an anti-democratic Nietzsche. The reason for embarking on such a project is to help uncover the limitations of the democratic Nietzsche and, at the same

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poststructuralist readings of Nietzsche.

[8]Keith Ansell-Pearson, "Nietzsche: A Radical Challenge to Political Theory" *Radical Philosophy* 54 (1990): 10.

time, extend the relevance of Nietzsche's political thought to new areas of analysis.

In a polemical article on Nietzsche's relevance to political theory, Martha Nussbaum argues that Nietzsche almost completely fails to rate as a political theorist according to the aims and requirements of political thought that most Enlightenment and contemporary thinkers conform to.[9] What is clear in Nussbaum's attack is that she is frustrated by the limitations of Nietzsche as a democratic thinker. In a similar but less polemical vein Diana Coole has suggested that recent attempts to define Nietzsche's relevance to contemporary politics are circumscribed narrowly by the inability to assimilate his ideas within a truly intersubjective framework of political theorizing:

> Serious attention to a Nietzschean politics always seems to collapse into an ethics which envisages at best a politics internal to the subject, rather than intersubjective processes. If Nietzsche is to inspire politics, it is thus important to derive some sense of transformative collective action from his work and not merely edifying values. There is, however, little evidence from recent interpretations that this can be done, and if we need a political response to our current situation, it might be preferable to look elsewhere.[10]

What these observations and frustrations may be interpreted to represent is the view that the attempt to force Nietzsche into a democratic framework of the political has significant limitations. Indeed, a more appropriate framework for the political in Nietzsche is likely to be an anti-democratic framework.

My approach to the political in Nietzsche is very much a product of this ongoing debate, the impasse that Ansell-Pearson identifies, and the frustrations expressed by Nussbaum and Coole. Although I agree that there are important limitations to the democratic Nietzsche, I believe that this need not limit Nietzsche's relevance to our democratic arguments. I accept the political indeterminacy of Nietzsche's philosophy, and that there is no "real" Nietzsche to be discovered in the text, but this need not prevent us from constructing an

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[9]Martha Nussbaum, "Is Nietzsche a Political Thinker?" *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* vol. 5, no. 1 (1997).

[10]Diana Coole, "The Politics of Reading Nietzsche" *Political Studies* 46 (1998): 363.

anti-democratic reading that pays close attention to the atypical elitist arguments Nietzsche does make. Indeed, once we have acknowledged the unique openness of Nietzsche's philosophy all that is required is to demonstrate the relevance of the positions we wish to construct.

In this way, I accept that my thesis must meet certain criteria as a contribution to Nietzsche studies in political theory. I agree with Mark Warren where he states that he "would prefer to see the appropriators of Nietzsche judged according to whether they have revealed anything interesting about Nietzsche, and whether they can use Nietzsche to reveal anything interesting about politics today."[11] Therefore, I accept that an anti-democratic reading of Nietzsche must move beyond the attempt simply to remind us of Nietzsche's crude, "neo-conservative", or "proto-fascist" politics.

I develop a thesis on the political in Nietzsche that cultivates an anti-democratic framework outlining a self-contained Nietzschean political philosophy. It is important to emphasize, however, that my reason for developing such a thesis is not simply to up the ante in a polemical contest with Nietzsche's democratic interpreters. Instead, I wish to explore further Nietzsche's relevance to democratic theorizing by presenting his thought as a unique anti-democratic model of autonomy. Therefore, in constructing a more sophisticated anti-democratic Nietzsche, I take from both sides of the debate as it has played itself out in the literature since the 1970s. Although I pay close attention to Nietzsche's texts, and therefore set out on a scholarly project, I do so ironically to the degree that I acknowledge the unique openness of Nietzsche's philosophy. In this way, my approach may be best described as a "creative" exegesis of Nietzsche's political philosophy that, nevertheless, makes certain claims about what Nietzsche's aims are.

This approach requires that I launch a critique of recent democratic interpretations of

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[11]Warren, "Political Readings of Nietzsche," p. 99.

Nietzsche. Although I describe many of these readings as "misrepresentations" of what is uniquely political in Nietzsche, I do so only to the degree that they appear to foreclose on the anti-democratic Nietzsche and inspire theorists to read a democratic Nietzsche back into his politically indeterminate philosophy of power. I do not deny that Nietzsche's ideas may be used as "democratic building blocks" but merely suggest that there is also an important and sophisticated conception of the political in Nietzsche that is both anti-democratic and of serious interest to us.

Obviously I do not set out to address the concerns of commentators like Nussbaum and Coole directly since I agree with them where they suggest that Nietzsche's relevance as a democratic thinker is limited. Instead, I argue that an anti-democratic Nietzsche offers us a comparative tool with which to improve our political theories of autonomy and universality. What is implicit in my approach is that Nietzsche's critique of democracy and modernity is as strong as it is because it informs a self-contained anti-democratic philosophy. Although I argue that Nietzsche's *Übermensch* ideal is obscure and enigmatic, and therefore incomprehensible to a significant degree, I elaborate a relationship between politics and philosophy in Nietzsche that offers us a political vision of the self-creating subject of power. I argue, furthermore, that this conception of autonomy has been ignored and obscured by recent attempts to force Nietzschean ideas into egalitarian and universalist structures of thought.

I define the political in Nietzsche as the relationship between politics as hierarchy and philosophy as independent value creation. I illustrate how the relationship between philosophy and hierarchy in Nietzsche offers us an interesting conception of autonomy that elides traditional democratic *and* aristocratic structures of universality and posits instead an anti-universalist ontology of power relations. Therefore, I argue that what is uniquely political in Nietzsche is the role of philosophy and hierarchy. In emphasizing the

significance of hierarchy in Nietzsche, I elaborate a vision of the political that takes seriously his notion of a rank-ordering of individuals. In this way, I try to account for what the will to power hypothesis means with respect to *willing* greater divisions between human beings.[12]

It is important to emphasize that I define "politics" in Nietzsche as "hierarchy" because of his apparent view that political values are synonymous with moral values. Therefore, since Nietzsche's will to power hypothesis establishes a hierarchy of moral psychologies, it stands to reason that "politics" for Nietzsche must be a matter of hierarchy as well. Another important point to emphasize is that I refer to "philosophy" incorporating several different descriptions throughout the thesis. For my purposes, Nietzsche's conception of philosophy may be described as "extra-moral autonomy", "political-philosophical autonomy", and/or "independent value-creation". Although I do not offer a lengthy explanation of philosophy as autonomy until part two, I do introduce the idea of philosophy as "autonomy" in the first chapter and continue to refer to it as such throughout the thesis.

Another important point that needs to be acknowledged is that I am not concerned with whether or not Nietzsche's political philosophy, as I construct it in this thesis, is practicable or not. I assume that as egalitarians and democrats we are not interested in seeing an anti-democratic and anti-universalist philosophy turned into a blueprint for social engineering on the scale that Nietzsche's project would certainly demand. Nevertheless, if we can get past the unsavoury nature of such a project, it may be possible to uncover a new vision of the relationship between politics and philosophy that might help us re-think some of the problems plaguing our more "acceptable" models of autonomy.

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[12]See Eric Parens, "From philosophy to politics: On Nietzsche's ironic metaphysics of will to power" *Man and World* 24 (1991): 178.

It is also necessary to introduce my ontological and epistemological positions on Nietzsche. Although my thesis is a political philosophy interpretation of Nietzsche, no thesis on Nietzsche can avoid saying something about his ontological and epistemological claims. And yet, I do not have the space to say all that I want to say about his political thought and at the same time explore the ambiguities of his ontological and epistemological stages of development. Thus, in an effort to establish as consistent and clear a position as possible, I rely on a selective interpretation of Gilles Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche to establish Nietzsche's ontology and I rely on elements of Maudemarie Clark's interpretation of Nietzsche's approach to truth to establish his epistemological development. It is important to stress the fact that neither Deleuze nor Clark provide me with the thesis I construct. The interpretations of Nietzsche's claims that are available in the work of Deleuze and Clark simply lend support to my thesis. Therefore, I introduce the significance of Deleuze and Clark in the first chapter and re-assert certain elements of their interpretations, periodically, throughout the thesis.

My thesis is presented in three parts. In the first part I introduce the role of philosophy and hierarchy within the context of the current debate on the democratic Nietzsche. In this section I establish my argument over and against democratic interpretations while at the same time employing many of the assumptions these arguments themselves rely on including certain anti-foundationalist claims about subjectivity and power that help support my overall claims and which may be originally attributed to Nietzsche anyway. I also develop my thesis in part one amidst Nietzsche's critique of democracy which I outline in the first chapter. The first part of the thesis however includes chapters one through four.[13]

[13]A version of chapter one was published as an article in the following journal: "Nietzsche and the democratic order of things" *De Philosophia* vol. 13, no. 2 (1998): pp 227-248 (referees: Will Kymlicka and André Gombay). Chapter two was presented as a panel paper at the Political Studies Association annual conference, April 2000 (discussant: Iain MacKenzie).

In the second part, which includes chapters five and six, I trace the development of Nietzsche's revaluation of philosophy from *The Birth of Tragedy* to the conclusion of his written life in 1888. In this section I develop a reading of Nietzsche's texts that illustrates the integrity of what I refer to as the uniquely political in Nietzsche. I define the uniquely political in Nietzsche as an anti-democratic and anti-universalist conception of political-philosophical autonomy that is an "active", as opposed to "contemplative", conception of the philosophical life. I focus on the role of philosophy in chapter five and in chapter six I illustrate how this emerging conception is structured according to Nietzsche's notion of hierarchy in his mature books.

The third part of the thesis is presented in chapters seven and eight.[14] In chapter seven I demonstrate the relevance of my thesis to democratic issues in political theory by articulating a framework of analysis that compares the integrated elements of my position alongside Hannah Arendt's effort to theorize a new conception of political action and judgment in terms of political "conscience". As an anti-democratic and anti-universalist approach to political-philosophical autonomy, I demonstrate how Nietzsche's political project challenges many of Arendt's ideas. I argue that this comparative analysis compels us to acknowledge that Nietzsche's unique political position offers an important re-configuration of the relationship between politics and philosophy that questions many of our assumptions and demands that we think more deeply about the philosophical principles we employ to ground many of our democratic arguments. In chapter eight I briefly summarize the central claims of the thesis and offer some afterthoughts on the performative model of the self that may be derived from Nietzsche's philosophy.

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[14]A version of this chapter was presented as a paper at the American Political Science Association annual conference, September 1999 and won a best paper nomination (discussant: Dana Villa).

PART I

CHAPTER ONE - NIETZSCHE, DEMOCRACY, AND THE ELEMENTS OF A NEW POLITICAL INTERPRETATION

Nietzsche claims that there are two fundamental expressions of life: a life-affirming or "noble" expression and a life-denying or "slave" expression. This dualism constitutes Nietzsche's hypothesis of power which I refer to as his ontology of the will to power. I argue that this dualism serves as the foundation for his conception of extra-moral (*übersittlich*) autonomy and that it precludes the possibility that extra-moral autonomy may be transmissible within "the democratic order of things" (BGE 261). By referring to "the democratic order of things" I do not intend to explore whether or not Nietzschean autonomy is compatible with any system of democracy. Instead, I am interested in what is problematic about interpreting Nietzsche as a democratic thinker where modern democratic conditions, broadly speaking, may be understood to exist.

In fleshing out these tensions I deal with two conflicting approaches to Nietzsche's philosophy. The first approach acknowledges the qualitative difference between noble and slave expressions of life. This is the approach that I defend and elaborate. The second approach is the one I attribute to Nietzsche's democratic interpreters who appear to have, whether explicitly or implicitly, advanced the position that it is entirely plausible to collapse slave will to power into noble will to power and theorize Nietzsche's conception of autonomy within a universalist framework of modern political values. Thus, I make two claims with regard to democratic conditions. Firstly, I argue that where Nietzsche considers his ontological hypothesis of power within a modern democratic context he never loses sight of the qualitative difference between noble and slave expressions of life. And secondly, I argue that on the basis of this first point it is misleading to make use of

Nietzsche's conception of extra-moral autonomy within a contemporary democratic context where making use of that conception requires denying, overlooking, or obscuring the qualitative difference between noble and slave will to power.

Nietzsche's typology of "noble", or "master", and "slave" represents his psychological and ontological hypothesis (in terms of an ontology of human types) that the "moral discrimination of values has originated either among the ruling group whose consciousness of its difference from the ruled group was accompanied by delight - or among the ruled, the slaves and dependents of every degree" (BGE 260). My argument in this chapter will draw substantially on Gilles Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche's typology which is articulated in terms of "active" and "reactive" force.[15] Although I am critical of Deleuze's interpretation later in chapter two for its inconsistencies, his general approach to noble and slave will to power as active and reactive force, respectively, may be helpful for several reasons. Firstly, it often makes more sense to think of Nietzsche's typology in terms of forces rather than types since, as Nietzsche himself claims, both psychologies may exist within a single person (BGE 260). In fact, Nietzsche describes the democratic order of things as the result of "the intermarriage of masters and slaves" (BGE 261). Thus, Deleuze's interpretation captures the idea of an intermarriage, or relation, of forces without reducing Nietzsche's position to one wherein each individual is to be understood at all times as constituting both active and reactive force. Nietzsche never reduces the difference between types to a unified and universally knowable conception of the self. The implication here is that Nietzsche's typology belies any claim affirming the fixed nature of being that others might attempt to read into his philosophy and yet at the same time he does posit an ontology of types based on his theory of active and reactive, or positive and

[15]Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: The Athlone Press, 1983), pp. 39-72. Active force represents noble instinct and reactive force represents slave instinct.

negative, moral psychology. The specific ontological nature of Nietzsche's typology lies in the relation of forces rather than in any unified and fixed conception of "being" behind "doing" (GM I, 13).

Deleuze's interpretation is also useful for the specific reason that his rendering of will to power as active and reactive force makes it possible to consider more efficiently the manifestation of said forces within a modern political framework broadly speaking. In other words, Deleuze offers a philosophical rendering of Nietzsche's psychological claims about noble and slave types and as a result his presentation of Nietzsche's typology may prove instrumental in making sense of Nietzsche amidst the more substantive concerns of political theory. Nevertheless, I refer to both "type" and "force" where appropriate and it should be recognized that I make use of Deleuze's interpretation to arrive at a characterization of the political in Nietzsche that Deleuze himself would not endorse. It is also important to point out that what I refer to as Nietzsche's ontological hypothesis, the hypothesis that life is will to power, is something I refer to consistently throughout the thesis to help illustrate the political in Nietzsche which I describe in terms of Nietzsche's unique approach to philosophy and hierarchy. Although a protracted discussion of the political is taken up in chapter two, I summarize what I mean by the political at the end of this chapter.

I begin by introducing the elements of the discussion in terms of how Nietzsche articulates his ontology under democratic conditions. In doing so I focus on the most important elements of the democratic conditions Nietzsche has something to say about, namely, equality and autonomy. In the first sections of the chapter I introduce Nietzsche's view of the democratic order of things, the hierarchical nature of the will to power hypothesis and his epistemological position. In the middle sections of the chapter I discuss various elements of Nietzsche's thought that lead to his visionary notion of the sovereign

individual who may be thought to exercise a unique philosophical autonomy in a future-based extra-moral period of mankind. In the penultimate section of the chapter I briefly discuss the claims of two of Nietzsche's democratic interpreters. I conclude the chapter with a summary introduction of my main argument concerning philosophy and hierarchy as the axiomatic elements of a new political interpretation of Nietzsche's thought.

It should be noted that I present the central aspects of Nietzsche's political thought in a cursory way here in chapter one for the purpose of introducing all the elements that will be discussed again in detail. Therefore, my claims in this chapter will be given greater textual support in later chapters. And this is especially true of chapters five, six, and seven where I concentrate on the development of Nietzsche's ideas from the early 1870s to the late 1880s as well as the applicability of those ideas to the work of Hannah Arendt and the issues addressed in her political theory.

Throughout part one of the thesis I integrate an introductory consideration of the central elements of the thesis within a focus on what is problematic in recent democratic interpretations of Nietzsche's thought. I also make an attempt to distinguish Nietzsche's position apart from various other philosophers in order to offer a better illustration of Nietzsche's uniqueness. In this way, part one is made up of a combination of elements that should be seen to offer both a critique of democratic interpretations of Nietzsche and at the same time an introduction to my characterization of Nietzsche as an atypical, anti-democratic political philosopher.

pathos and the non-equilibrium of forces

Amidst developing democratic conditions, Nietzsche identifies a tension between what he calls slave vanity (*Eitelkeit*) and a noble instinct "to ascribe value to oneself on one's own" (BGE 261). Rather than characterize this tension in terms of an equilibrium of

instincts he claims that slave vanity, or the propensity to accede in one's self-estimations to the opinion of others, prevails over any impulse to a spontaneously generated self-opinion. It seems that whatever noble instincts exist are effectively displaced, in terms of their immediate expression, by the influence of slave vanity. Nietzsche describes this vanity as an atavism insofar as it amounts to a "residue of the slave's craftiness" (BGE 261). Here, slave vanity serves as a prelude to Nietzsche's later thoughts in *On the Genealogy of Morals* where he describes how the slave type brought about the "most spiritual revenge" against the noble type (GM I, 7). The feeling of revenge, or *ressentiment,* represents the motivating instinct behind the slave revolt in morality: the weak, due to their inability to react in deed, resort to a kind of spiritual warfare wherein the spontaneous affirmation of their identity ceases to occur and they define themselves in direct opposition to the strong. Thus, Nietzsche understands the weak to have directed their view outward in a negative way rather than spontaneously and non-comparatively the way that the strong or noble type was able to (GM I, 10). On this view the slave type suffers from a negatively acquired self-opinion whereas the self-opinion of the noble type may be thought of as positively formed in its non-comparative and immediate affirmation.

From a position of acute social weakness values tend to reflect that which is most useful to basic survival and the alleviation of suffering. In this way, Nietzsche describes slave morality as the "morality of utility" (BGE 260). He explains that "those qualities are brought out and flooded with light which serve to ease existence for those who suffer: here pity, the complaisant and obliging hand, the warm heart, patience, industry, humility, and friendliness are honoured - for here these are the most useful qualities" (BGE 260). On Nietzsche's view such virtues are developed out of necessity, fear, and *ressentiment.* He concludes that "according to slave morality, those who are 'evil' thus inspire fear; according to master morality it is precisely those who are 'good' that inspire, and wish to

inspire, fear, while the 'bad' are felt to be contemptible" (BGE 260).

Nietzsche describes both the noble and slave expressions of life as will to power (BGE 259; GM III, 14). This means that one cannot speak of will to power without distinguishing what type of will to power is being expressed. An ontology of active and reactive forces exist in relational opposition to one another and this means that either active or reactive force enjoys hegemony over the other depending on the specific cultural conditions that order these forces. This "relationality" may be best described in terms of *hierarchy*. Thus, Gilles Deleuze writes:

> In Nietzsche the word *hierarchy* has two senses. It signifies, firstly, the difference between active and reactive forces, the superiority of active to reactive forces ... But hierarchy also designates the triumph of reactive forces, the contagion of reactive forces and the complex organisation which results - where the weak have conquered, where the strong are contaminated, where the slave who has not stopped being a slave prevails over the master who has stopped being one...[16]

Nietzsche claims that "[t]he will to power is not a being, not a becoming, but a *pathos*" (WP 635). As a pathos, or "feeling", the will to power may be said to take both an active and reactive form. The active pathos suggests the very real and immediate feeling of inequality between strata or rather between higher and lower types in terms of a hierarchically segregated society. A reactive pathos would suggest the opposite with respect to feeling, namely, the feeling of equality that is imagined and idealized in terms of a non-hierarchical myth of universal equality.

The interesting thing to realize is that a reactive pathos can still be hegemonic within a caste-ridden society, like that of the early Christian and Medieval societies or even the class-based societies of the 19th Century, but the difference between that type of hierarchy and the hierarchy of an active pathos is that the latter imposes a pathos of equality, the equality before God, onto the community and represses the nobler instincts in favour of the priestly or reactive instincts (cf. GM I, 15). In an opposite and very different way, the

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[16]Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 60.

structure of active hierarchy separates types from one another in a way that allows the lower orders of society to maintain their communities while in an opposite higher realm the active or noble instincts are expressed. The point is not that reactive hierarchy eliminates all differences which lead to inequalities amongst people but simply that any feeling of social or economic inequality within a reactive hierarchy will be countered by a fundamental doctrine of equality at the moral level which trumps earthly, circumstantial differences in an important spiritual sense. In this way, it may be accurate to say that for Nietzsche there is an active hierarchy of relations that expresses an active pathos with respect to equality and there is a reactive hierarchy of relations that expresses a reactive pathos with respect to equality.

In an active hierarchy the spontaneous affirmation of self which the noble individual is said to enjoy constitutes a view *from above* which enhances the distance between strata and emphasizes the *feeling of power* over the weak. In *The Gay Science* Nietzsche observes that:

> We lack the classical colouring of nobility because our feelings no longer know the slaves of classical antiquity. A Greek of noble descent found such tremendous intermediary stages and such distance between his own height and that ultimate baseness that he could scarcely see the slave clearly ... It is different with us, who are accustomed to the *doctrine* of human equality, though not to equality itself. (GS 18)

We can interpret Nietzsche, in this passage, to be contrasting the modern *feeling* that all individuals are or ought to be considered equal in some essential way to the ancient Greek *feeling* that equality exists *inter pares*.[17] More importantly, however, Nietzsche posits this typology of relations over time and makes an effort to articulate the difference between noble and slave under modern conditions.[18] And this is evident, as mentioned above, in his

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[17]See Fredrick Appel, *Nietzsche contra Democracy*, p. 7. Appel asserts the importance of Nietzsche as a critic of the "broad egalitarian consensus" which informs contemporary political theory in all its categories and manifestations.

[18]In the foregoing passage cited from *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche is obviously referring to the formal slave of Greek society specifically whereas elsewhere and most pervasively he refers to the slave as a

attempt to distinguish between slave vanity and its noble counterpart in *Beyond Good and Evil.*

Nietzsche's conception of vanity reflects an inverted rendering of the Hegelian formula for relations between master and slave. James Read addresses Nietzsche's controversial inversion of the analysis of vanity where he considers Nietzsche's fascination with distance, in his concept of the *pathos of distance*, alongside what has more traditionally been recognized as the conditions in which vanity occurs.[19] Read wonders, along Hegelian lines, whether or not the pathos of distance might simply be one more attempt on the part of a "'master' to draw his 'sense of self' from the slave's recognition of him as master".[20] Although Read dismisses such conjecture, he does question Nietzsche's apparent inversion of the Hegelian model:

> [V]anity is a notoriously self-defeating passion: it depends entirely on the recognition granted to one by those one considers inferior, yet the recognition accorded by an inferior can never be as satisfying as the recognition of an equal (This is a point made, in different ways, by both Rousseau and Hegel).[21]

Nietzsche posits vanity as a symptom of reactive force or rather as a symptom of the slave's negative mode of acquiring a self-opinion whereas, on the Hegelian view, vanity is the weakness of the master and it must be overcome in an attempt to reach an equality of recognition with the slave.

I suggest that Gilles Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche's model provides an answer to Read's concerns. Deleuze offers a valuable rendering of Nietzsche's position contrasting it with the traditional Hegelian outlook on the master/slave dialectic. He claims that on

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type.

[19]James Read, "Nietzsche: Power as Oppression" *Praxis International* 9, (1989): 72-87. Nietzsche describes the pathos of distance as the feeling of enhancement which grows "out of the ingrained difference between strata" (BGE 257).

[20]Read, "Nietzsche: Power as Oppression," p. 81.

[21]Ibid.

Nietzsche's account of the narrative it is a symptom of slave morality at work to actually conceive of relations between master and slave the way Hegel does.[22] On Deleuze's interpretation, Nietzsche's position is anti-dialectical insofar as he sees the difference between master and slave as one which may not be reduced to an historical synthesis of forces resulting in an equality of recognition or a recognition of universal equality between master and slave types. In part, this has to do with the fact that Nietzsche does not posit recognition as a universal desire. Instead, he posits will to power as a desire or instinct but will to power is an hypothesis of ontological dualism with its relational opposition between active and reactive, or positive and negative, force. Thus, master/slave relations are to be understood as the concrete expression of active and reactive difference with no further mention of a desire for recognition in the Hegelian sense.

The Hegelian view suggests that "difference" is always negatively defined insofar as no positive essence can be said to exist except as the result of a negative movement or relation.[23] The movement of the dialectic through history eventually comes to an end when the process of negative dialectics produces the reciprocal recognition of both types as equals. This is of course the only way that their otherwise negatively defined identities can be turned into a positive identity in terms of the recognition of universal equality.[24] Thus, Hegel's model assumes a contradiction, from the start, in the original expression of master/slave relations that needs to be brought to a specific teleological resolution at some future point in history. This future point is the point at which the reciprocal recognition of self-conscious moral subjects living in an ethical community may be actualized. For Hegel, this point is arrived at under the conditions of the modern state.

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[22]Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, pp. 8-10.

[23]G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), §50, p. 29.

[24]Ibid, §79, p. 51.

On Nietzsche's view existence is simply affirmed through the expression of active difference without further mention of any conceptual contradictions or historical resolutions. For Nietzsche master/slave relations are given immediate and non-contradictory expression as hierarchy and the expression of difference is not guided by the need for an historical resolution of active and reactive difference in terms of the recognition of universal equality. Thus, Deleuze states:

> Nietzsche's "yes" is opposed to the dialectical "no"; affirmation to dialectical negation; difference to dialectical contradiction; joy, enjoyment, to dialectical labour; lightness, dance, to dialectical responsibilities. The empirical feeling of difference, in short hierarchy, is the essential motor of the concept, deeper and more effective than all thought about contradiction.[25]

According to this framework, it is clear that the question of equality is something that Nietzsche is acutely concerned about and something for which he has developed an answer. For Nietzsche, equality is not possible in the sense that active and reactive difference can ever be reduced to the equality or equilibrium of forces. Nietzsche's ontology dictates the non-equilibrium of forces. Of course this does not mean that there can be no equality amongst similar types. Indeed, we know that Nietzsche is frustrated by the notion of democratic equality where he promotes the idea of equality *inter pares* over and against what he refers to as the modern doctrine of human equality.

Under democratic conditions, Nietzsche does suggest that the noble instinct to "'think well' of oneself will actually be encouraged and spread more and more now" (BGE 261). Yet, as mentioned above, the force of slave vanity is expected to displace this instinct to a great extent. It seems that slave vanity is akin to the negative/comparative perspective the weak adopted under the conditions of Nietzsche's original hierarchy and following from this idea, under democratic conditions, "[t]he vain person is delighted by *every* good opinion he hears of himself ... just as every bad opinion of him pains him: for he submits to

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[25]Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 9.

both, he *feels* subjected to them in accordance with that oldest instinct of submission that breaks out in him" (BGE 261).

Nietzsche explains that the noble type should find such slave vanity very difficult to understand. Of the noble type, Nietzsche suggests that, "[t]he problem for him is to imagine people who seek to create a good opinion of themselves which they do not have of themselves - and thus also do not 'deserve' - and who nevertheless end up *believing* this good opinion themselves" (BGE 261). And yet, as mentioned above, Nietzsche clearly thinks that the noble instinct will be effectively displaced or re-directed by the slave instinct under democratic conditions. Therefore, Nietzsche has identified two irreconcilable perspectives and expressions of life and we need to be able to understand how the reactive force of the slave enjoys hegemony over the active force of the noble without bringing about either a complete dissolution of the latter type's force or some kind of Hegelian recognition of equality between the two.

According to Gilles Deleuze an equilibrium of forces is never possible since Nietzsche's typology is conceived in terms of the qualitative difference between types. On Deleuze's interpretation reactive force does not come to enjoy hegemonic reign over active force in simple quantitative terms but, rather, achieves dominance by denying the qualitative difference of active force and thereby, in operating to effect a displacement of active force, renders such force effectively reactive or, as Deleuze puts it, "*becoming-reactive*".[26] In the context of Nietzsche's observations on the emerging democratic conditions he witnesses, it seems that active force is effectively separated from the affirmation of its difference by the continued subjection of the individual's self-opinion to the opinion of others. One's dependence on the opinion of others should not be taken to mean the prostration of one's opinion before the whim of another but something akin to the original outward and

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[26]Ibid, p. 64.

negative gaze of the slave type. One's virtues are developed in accordance with their usefulness to the preservation of the reactive community and, indeed, there is an Hegelian-like process of recognition that obtains as the hierarchy of reactive force over active force plays itself out. In this way, the forces of slave vanity bring about a recognition of universal equality that does not translate as a recognition of equality at the ontological level. There is no contradiction that needs to be worked out dialectically nor does this hierarchy reflect the historically achieved leveling of active force to that of reactive force. As Fredrick Appel puts it:

> All too often, superior types have been led away from their instincts into beliefs and practices that are objectively bad for them. Having been raised in modern herd society and inculcated in its erroneous post-Christian democratic values, superior men no longer experience and revel in their authentic corporeal instincts. Their rational part - "spirit" [*Geist*] - claims Zarathustra, often "tells lies about the soul" (Z, *Of the Spirit of Gravity*, 2).[27]

Thus, the utilitarian values of the community are merely symptomatic of reactive hierarchy.

Along these lines Nietzsche explains how the praise of one's virtues comes to depend on whether or not the consequences of such virtues are good for "us" rather than whether they are good for the individual who performs them. It often matters very little to "us" whether or not an individual displays extreme behaviour in exercising his virtues, even to the point of personal harm, so long as his actions are useful to society. Thus, Nietzsche observes that "the praise of virtues has always been far from 'selfless,' far from 'unegoistic'"(GS 21). Nietzsche traces the evolution of the morality of utility and explains how, despite superficial changes, it continues to represent a morality motivated by fear. He claims that "strong and dangerous drives" which may once have been encouraged because they helped to protect a community from its external enemies come to be "branded as immoral and abandoned to slander" once they are no longer effective in that capacity (BGE 201). Since, on Nietzsche's view, the so-called herd instinct, under democratic

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[27]Fredrick Appel, *Nietzsche contra Democracy*, p. 38.

conditions, is expressed as the doctrine of human equality, he concludes that "[h]ow much or how little is dangerous to the community, dangerous to equality, in an opinion, in a state or affect, in a will, in a talent - that now constitutes the moral perspective" (BGE 201).

Nietzsche's argument, if I may reason out a conclusion from Deleuze's rendering of it, is that the advent of democratic conditions does not bring about the eradication of the noble instinct but merely its increasing displacement. Therefore, active force or the noble instinct to "ascribe value to oneself on one's own" always exists as a potential force under the right circumstances. In conclusion, the doctrine of human equality as the hegemonic *feeling* underlying the democratic order of things neither translates for Nietzsche as the equilibrium of active and reactive forces nor as the simple disintegration of active force but, rather, as the pathos of reactive hierarchy.

Having established the nature of Nietzsche's ontological claims it is important to see how they follow from the emerging epistemological realizations of his mature books. The crucial link between Nietzsche's ontology and his epistemology is the meaning of what may be referred to as "falsification". Slave vanity, for Nietzsche, represents a "false" self-opinion and although we know that this has to do with his claims about will to power and *ressentiment* we need to be able to identify how he arrives at this judgment in cognitive terms. In other words, we need to know what Nietzsche considers to be "true" in order to fully understand what he means by describing something as "false".

epistemology and ontology

In *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche documents "How the 'Real World' at last Became a Myth" (TI IV). What he outlines in this section is the evolution of what may be referred to variously as metaphysical realism, the correspondence theory of truth, or the two world

theory. Therefore, in this section I want to introduce Nietzsche's changing attitude toward truth and how his eventual overcoming of the metaphysical correspondence theory of truth legitimizes his ontological claims.

Maudemarie Clark defines metaphysical realism as "the doctrine that reality is something-in-itself, that its nature is determinately constituted independently of us."[28] Nietzsche documents the first comprehensive appearance of metaphysical realism according to Plato's doctrine of the Forms wherein reality is "attainable to the wise, the pious, the virtuous man - he dwells in it, *he* is it (Oldest form of the idea, relatively sensible, simple, convincing. Transcription of the proposition 'I, Plato, *am* the truth.')" (TI IV). In this passage, for Nietzsche, the doctrine of metaphysical realism is linked to Plato's very own self-affirming ideal. In other words, the doctrine of metaphysical realism is understood, by Nietzsche, to represent Plato's will to power. And in this way we see how Nietzsche's ontological claims are associated with his attitude toward truth in an important way.

However, what needs to be revealed is how Nietzsche arrived at this position and what he ends up claiming with respect to "reality" if, as it appears in *Twilight of the Idols*, he ends up simply characterizing the doctrine of metaphysical realism itself in terms of his own ontological claims. What needs to be traced, therefore, is the development of Nietzsche's changing approach to truth. Yet I do not have the space in this thesis to offer a comprehensive account of Nietzsche's epistemological development. Therefore, I will summarize the position that best supports my thesis by referring to Maudemarie Clark's presentation of the key stages of Nietzsche's formulations with respect to metaphysical realism and metaphysical correspondence.

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[28]Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 40-41.

Clark describes Nietzsche's stages of scepticism in the following way:

> Nietzsche agrees with Kant that we cannot know things-in-themselves, and thus that, contrary to Descartes, the truth we are capable of discovering does not satisfy the metaphysical correspondence theory. Nietzsche is anti-Kantian, however, in that he denies the very conceivability of the thing-in-itself.[29]

According to Clark's two stage summary, Nietzsche struggles to work through his scepticism before he finds a way to get past the metaphysical correspondence theory of truth altogether. Clark goes on to explain how the first stage establishes a form of scepticism that allows Nietzsche to overcome the immature metaphysics of his first book *The Birth of Tragedy*. Yet during his early and middle periods, up to and including *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche fails to progress to the second, "anti-Kantian", stage which would allow him to move beyond foundationalism and representationalism altogether. In other words, Nietzsche cannot affirm the truth of the will to power until he finds a way of making it a truth claim that is not simply neo-Kantian. What it means to remain neo-Kantian is to remain within the conceptual framework of correspondence and representation by denying knowledge of objective reality but philosophizing as though there were such a reality.

But Clark claims, with respect to the first stage of his development, that "Nietzsche needed the Kantian belief in the conceivability of transcendent truth to have a basis for devaluing human truths as illusions."[30] Nietzsche would later document this Kantian stage in the following way:

> The real world, unattainable, undemonstrable, cannot be promised, but even when merely thought of a consolation, a duty, an imperative. (Fundamentally the same old sun, but shining through mist and scepticism; the idea grown sublime, pale, northerly, Königsbergian). (TI IV)

Therefore, at an early stage, Nietzsche launches his critique of metaphysical realism without having yet established a new and "valid" position on truth beyond the idea that it

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[29]Ibid, pp. 60-61.

[30]Ibid, pp. 92-93.

corresponds to something-in-itself determinately constituted independently of us. And in this way his own thought remains circumscribed within a limited foundational/anti-foundational framework until his mature period, beginning with *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.*

Nietzsche's struggle to reach this second, anti-Kantian, stage really takes off where he begins to question the nature of consciousness (GS 354).[31] What he establishes in his formulations about human consciousness is the idea that consciousness falsifies the "knowledge" of the senses and in this way he links "reality" to the sensual, physical world that is known as the world of appearances according to metaphysical correspondence. As Clark puts it:

> When Nietzsche then concludes that consciousness involves corruption and "falsification," the most natural interpretation is that consciousness falsifies precisely sense impressions, which can enter consciousness only in communicable, or "logicized" (universal), and therefore falsified, form.[32]

Now this would appear to commit Nietzsche to an empirical theory of knowledge grounded in human physiology and it also might appear to take him a step beyond the Kantian position since it allows him to deny the so-called "real" world and yet insist on "the illusory character of the empirical world."[33]

At this stage, however, Nietzsche is still not free of a foundational/anti-foundational framework of thought because he has yet to escape the problem of causality with respect to the sense organs that must now be thought of as the fixed objects of "being" or "reality", the "first cause", that is falsified by human consciousness. Clark states that Nietzsche admits this problem in the following passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* where he writes:

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[31]I discuss the development of Nietzsche's thoughts on "illusion" and "consciousness" at greater length in chapters 5 and 6.

[32]Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, pp. 120-121.

[33]Ibid, pp. 122-123.

> What? And others even say that the external world is the work of our organs? But then our body, as part of this external world would be the work of our organs! But then our organs themselves would be - the work of our organs! It seems to me that this is a complete *reductio ad absurdum*, assuming that the concept of a *causa sui* is something fundamentally absurd. Consequently, the external world is *not* the work of our organs - ? (BGE 15)

What his remarks reveal is that an empirical theory of knowledge *per se* does not overcome the problem of the two world theory by simply uniting an "external" world with an "internal" world *that is also* "external". The problem is a conceptual one that makes it difficult for us to make sense of something that is its own first cause. Therefore, the task Nietzsche still faces is how to overcome representationalism.[34]

Clark explains that Nietzsche does this where he posits the claim that all knowledge is perspectival (GM III, 12). Thus, she interprets "perspectivism" as Nietzsche's way of getting beyond the "falsification thesis".[35] The falsification thesis assumes that Nietzsche's claims about consciousness falsifying the knowledge of the senses commit him to the metaphysical correspondence theory of truth. Since I do not have the space to reproduce her full explanation of how perspectivism saves Nietzsche from metaphysical realism, I will summarize her interpretation as succinctly as possible.

Against many other attempts to explain perspectivism as a substantive epistemological claim that is central to Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole, Clark simply asserts that it is "a rhetorical device designed to help us overcome the devaluation of human knowledge involved in the falsification thesis."[36] On this view the key element of perspectivism, for Nietzsche, is that it helps him escape the problem of self-reference with respect to his will to power hypothesis. Indeed, without some way of characterizing his will to power hypothesis as a truth claim that neither represents subjective idealism nor metaphysical

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[34]Ibid, p. 125.

[35]Ibid, p. 127.

[36]Ibid, p. 158.

realism his ontology flounders somewhere between these two unacceptable poles.

Nietzsche's "perspectivism" is presented as follows:

> Henceforth, my dear philosophers, let us be on guard against the dangerous old conceptual fiction that posited a "pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject"; let us guard against the snares of such contradictory concepts as "pure reason," "absolute spirituality," "knowledge in itself": these always demand that we should think of an eye that is completely unthinkable, an eye turned in no particular direction, in which the active and interpreting forces, through which alone seeing becomes seeing *something*, are supposed to be lacking; these always demand of the eye an absurdity and a nonsense. There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective "knowing"; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity," be. But to eliminate the will altogether, to suspend each and every affect, supposing we were capable of this - what would that mean but to *castrate* the intellect? (GM III, 12)

Clark sees the first part of this passage as Nietzsche's attempt to describe metaphysical realism in terms of an inconceivable, non-perspectival perspective. Thus, the "pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject", "pure reason", "absolute spirituality", and "knowledge-in-itself" are all expressions of a non-perspectival metaphysical realism.[37]

In the next part of the passage Nietzsche describes knowledge as perspectival rather than non-perspectival and uses the metaphor of "seeing" from an embodied perspective as a way of arguing against the absurdity of a non-perspectival position with respect to knowing. And this allows him to separate human knowledge from the logic of the falsification thesis which claims that the truth must correspond to a thing-in-itself determinately constituted independently of us. Clark interprets this in the following way:

> Nietzsche uses the metaphor of perspective to encourage us to draw the parallel conclusion about knowledge, namely, that its "subjective" character (the fact that how things are interpreted always reflects something about the constitution, beliefs, and/or interests of the interpreter) places no limit on what we can know. Since things have no "objective" character - no intelligible character that is independent of how they can appear - the perspectival or "subjective" character of knowledge cannot deprive us of anything we could reasonably want or for which we could have any cognitive use.[38]

What the metaphor of perspective overcomes is the Kantian stage wherein objective knowledge or pure reason is deemed to be impossible but nevertheless a "reality" which

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[37]Ibid, pp. 129-132.

[38]Ibid, p. 134.

must be understood according to the falsification thesis. By denying the very idea of something-in-itself, therefore, perspectivism appears to overcome the falsification thesis by seeing "reality" as something constituted by us. However, this does not save Nietzsche from the charge that perspectivism may be reduced to a relativist theory of subjective idealism.

At this point, Clark claims that Nietzsche gets past the charge of subjective idealism by claiming that there is a certain "objectivity" to perspectivism as an epistemological position because perspectivism involves seeing things from various perspectives to a certain extent. Clark offers an excellent account of Nietzsche's manoeuvring here where she writes:

> If we recognize the perspectival character of knowledge, our only alternative is to think of objectivity as an openness to perspectives other than our own. Such openness need not imply that one's own perspective distorts matters. It might distort, of course, and being "objective" involves admitting that, thereby considering seriously the possibility that some other perspective is superior to one's own ... We can thus take Nietzsche's praise of seeing things from other perspectives as a claim that objectivity requires the ability to take seriously other perspectives without committing him to characterizing truth as omniperspectival or to accepting the falsification thesis.[39]

From these observations, Clark concludes that:

> [T]he perspectival character of knowing is perfectly compatible with some interpretations being true, and it introduces no paradoxes of self-reference. Perspectivism is, of course, a perspectival truth, but this does not imply that any competing claim is also true.[40]

What this means with respect to the truth status of Nietzsche's ontological hypothesis is that he is free to posit it in terms of a claim he believes to be superior to other ontological claims but it represents neither a purely self-referential truth claim nor a truth claim that is the product of the falsification thesis. This is made possible according to the truth of "perspectivism" as a cognitively superior position to the falsification thesis because the falsification thesis, in a cognitively inferior way, presumes the absurd possibility of a non-perspectival perspective.

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[39]Ibid, pp. 148-149.

[40]Ibid, p. 158.

Importantly, many commentators try to integrate perspectivism into Nietzsche's ontology in misleading ways. Clark states that:

> Some radical interpreters insist that the reason to accept Nietzsche's perspective is not cognitive superiority - its greater truth - but its superiority in serving a noncognitive end, for example, that it is more life-affirming or that it reflects the active rather than the reactive position (Deleuze).[41]

Unlike these commentators, Clark makes no effort to interpret perspectivism according to Nietzsche's ontological claims first and foremost. Instead, she sees it as a rhetorical device that helps Nietzsche buoy himself above the turbulent waters of self-reference and metaphysical realism. Perspectivism does not, in other words, follow from Nietzsche's ontology but, instead, it is a rhetorical move Nietzsche makes in order to make room, so to speak, for his ontological claims.

What this means with respect to my concerns is that I see Nietzsche's ontological hypothesis in terms of a claim that follows from his superior cognitive position of perspectivism. On this view, I claim that in *Twilight of the Idols*, where he lists the final stages of overcoming the falsification thesis, his conclusion represents his position that the will to power hypothesis, as it is represented in the meaning of the figure Zarathustra in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, exists as an ontological claim made possible by perspectivism. The device of perspectivism overcomes the falsification thesis on the basis of its cognitive superiority to the falsification thesis which supports the two world theory:

> We have abolished the real world: what world is left? the apparent world perhaps? ... But no! *with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world!* (Mid-day; moment of the shortest shadow; end of the longest error; zenith of mankind; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA.) (TI IV)

Once it has been established that Nietzsche sees his position as cognitively superior to the falsification thesis it is possible to present his claims about what is "false" and what is "true" straightforwardly, according to his ontology, and without further comment on what Nietzsche means by such terms.

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[41]Ibid, p. 151.

Returning, therefore, to Nietzsche's characterization of slave vanity as a "false" self-opinion, it is possible to say that the slave will to power "falsifies" simply because it operates according to the falsification thesis that insists on the absurd notion of a non-perspectival perspective. What Nietzsche establishes, therefore, is the validity of describing the slave will to truth, which is a product of the metaphysical correspondence theory, as a will to falsification. This framework of truth *is only then* described as "life-denying" as well but, importantly, it is not deemed "false" in the first place *because* it is life-denying.

Jacob Golomb captures the nature of Nietzsche's emerging philosophical attitude in the following analogy comparing the will to power to Husserl's phenomenological approach:

> Whereas Husserl, by means of his phenomenological analysis, strives to attain the scientific ideal of the apodictic and "pure" consciousness, Nietzsche regards his philosophical enterprise as an activity, which is not directed toward any scientific ideal. The scientific ideal, according to Nietzsche, is just another, and redundant "shadow" of the dead God. Philosophy, in Nietzsche's opinion, must assist us in attaining a specific pattern of life by exposing our personal power and helping us in overcoming its obstacles. *Nietzsche's ideal is not rational but existential.* He does not wish to achieve "pure knowledge", he does not believe there is such a thing, but to attain a way of life and a special moral pathos which I have called the pathos of positive power.[42]

What Golomb makes clear in this comparison is that, unlike Husserl, Nietzsche abandons a link to foundationalism altogether. Further, Golomb's "pathos of positive power" corresponds to the active pathos outlined above. What is interesting to consider therefore, given the pathos of active or positive power, is whether or not the existential framework of truth-seeking Nietzsche appears to develop translates for him as a new conception of "active" or "positive" philosophical autonomy. It is my claim that this is in fact what Nietzsche tries to piece together where he envisions his famous *Übermensch* ideal.[43]

Therefore, having introduced Nietzsche's ontological framework according to his mature epistemological position, I now turn to a four part presentation of various Nietzschean ideas that lead to his conception of the *Übermensch,* or "sovereign individual", as a future

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[42]Jacob Golomb, "Nietzsche's Phenomenology of Power" *Nietzsche-Studien* 15 (1986): 298.

[43]I discuss Nietzsche's ideal at greater length in chapters 4, 5, and 6.

type capable of a new philosophical autonomy. Following these middle sections of the chapter I conclude with a brief look at two democratic characterizations of Nietzsche's thought and a summary of my main claims about developing a new anti-democratic framework of the political in Nietzsche.

Hobbes, egoism, and *ressentiment*

In *The Gay Science,* Nietzsche illustrates the difference between active and reactive pathos where he considers the nature of our virtues and how they come to be formed. As introduced above, he is sceptical of the supposed unegoistic nature of praise. He goes on to remark that:

> [F]or educational purposes and to lead men to incorporate virtuous habits one emphasizes effects of virtue that make it appear as if virtue and private advantage were sisters; and some such relationship actually exists ... That is how education always proceeds: one tries to condition an individual by various attractions and advantages to adopt a way of thinking and behaving that, once it has become a habit, instinct, and passion, will dominate him *to his own ultimate disadvantage* but "for the general good." (GS 21)

In this passage Nietzsche may be interpreted as describing the psychology of the reactive recognition of universal equality. Where he identifies the habituation of passion or instinct under the morality of utility he distinguishes "the unreason in virtue that leads the individual to allow himself to be transformed into a mere function of the whole"(GS 21; Z, *Of Joys and Passions*). As a function of the whole the individual succumbs to a levelling equality.

Alternatively, in his criticism of slave vanity Nietzsche points to a different type of *selfishness* or rather a selfishness that is not to be associated with the simple praise of utilitarian values. Thus, in *The Gay Science,* he points to a critique which directs us toward the liberation of an active selfishness or "egoism" from the reactive pathos. Nietzsche suggests that "[t]he praise of virtue is the praise of something that is privately harmful- the praise of instincts that deprive a human being of his noblest selfishness and the strength for

the highest autonomy"(GS 21). This "highest autonomy" is associated with active hierarchy and thus may be described as a new conception of active or positive autonomy.

In an effort to make better sense of Nietzschean autonomy it may help to compare Nietzsche's critique of slave egoism alongside Hobbes's attempt to ground egoism in the Sovereign Will.[44] Hobbes's argument directs the movement of atomized and purely self-interested individuals into a commonwealth. This position is somewhat related to Nietzsche's insight that our virtues are symptomatic of the morality of utility (i.e. "the *unreason* in virtue that leads the individual to allow himself to be transformed into a mere function of the whole" GS 21, my emphasis). However, a crucial difference between Hobbes and Nietzsche is that the former seeks to identify the *reason* leading to community where the latter identifies the *unreason* leading to community. Hobbes is close to Nietzsche where they both maintain a disbelief in the possibility of unegoistic motivations but they have significantly different conceptions of egoism.

Hobbes's argument issues from an extreme egoism he attributes to his contractual subjects. Such egoism may be considered extreme due to the radically atomized character of the individual in the state of nature. Such individuals are expected to agree to the conditions of the Hobbesian social contract from an extremely asocial position. However, despite the asocial nature of relations, egoism in Hobbes is a universal condition. Nietzsche, on the other hand, understands "slave" egoism as having something to do with a particular community, within a larger community, from its archetypal beginning. In other words, for example, where Hobbes posits fear of violent death as an egoistic motivation in the state of nature Nietzsche posits the same motivation as a shared fear or a fear first felt in association with others as a community of "slaves". On Nietzsche's view this motivation is expressed no less egoistically than it is on Hobbes's view since it may be easily

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[44]Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 227.

categorized in terms of the simple desire for the preservation of life. Yet the difference, in Nietzsche's model, is that the slave type has at all times associated self-preservation with the preservation of the reactive community. In this way, the *ressentiment* of the reactive community is a communal egoism first felt within a larger community which included a noble caste that knew a qualitatively different form of egoism. Thus, where Nietzsche considers the nature of slave morality in its modern political form he is concerned with the nature of liberal institutions in terms of the effect that the so-called "doctrine of human equality", as an expression of slave egoism or *ressentiment,* will have on the noble instinct for a courageous and independent egoism.

ressentiment as falsification

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Nietzsche devotes a chapter to those he names "the tarantulas". The tarantulas, or "preachers of equality", are the inheritors of *ressentiment* and their primary motivation is revenge against all who are strong and powerful. Nietzsche's tarantulas cry "'will to equality' - that itself shall henceforth be the name of virtue; and we shall raise outcry against everything that has power!" (Z, *Of the Tarantulas)* What Nietzsche suggests is that the "will to equality" as a virtue is merely an instrument in the service of slave *ressentiment.* Equality, as an ideal value, is always deployed as a way of increasing the feeling of power on the part of the reactive type over the active type. Given this understanding of things it would be fair to say that the *noble* instinct represents a force that strives for an increase in its feeling of power without having to rely on the moral ideal of universal equality. However, the noble instinct in no way represents any less of an attempt to enhance the feeling of power *over* others (i.e. over the weak). Power, in Nietzsche, is always exploitative.[45] The pivotal aspects of power as

[45]I discuss this at the end of chapter 6.

exploitation in the changing manifestations of the will to power are the conditions which lead to either an active or reactive hierarchy. The hierarchy of reactive force over active force results in the "becoming-reactive" of active force and this is a hierarchy of relations of power that is given expression in the egalitarian ideals and principles of modern democratic society. In an opposite but related way the hierarchy of active force over reactive force would be given expression in the form of a hierarchy of relations separating out and dividing members of society along concrete anti-egalitarian and anti-democratic lines.

For Nietzsche it seems that active hierarchy is a more honest expression of hierarchy because in the active expression of will to power the noble type does not need to falsify his view of the "object" (i.e. the slave type) before him in expressing his strength and value judgments. In other words a mode of falsification is particular to the reactive instinct (cf GM II, 11). Therefore, what Nietzsche has to say about autonomy is comparable to what he has to say about equality where liberal institutions bring about "the leveling of mountain and valley exalted to a moral principle" (TI IX, 38). His argument is that freedom is not ultimately the goal but rather the moral means to the goal which is the enhancement of the reactive feeling of power.

"honesty" and the movement of Nietzsche's thought

The opposite of falsification is the instinct for honesty (*Redlichkeit*) and honesty is an important trait for Nietzsche (D preface, 4; Z, *Of the Higher Man*, 8; WP 404). But it is important to emphasize that Nietzsche never associates "honesty" with "perspectivism". Therefore, honesty must be seen as an approach or attitude that follows from Nietzsche's ontology rather than something that makes his ontology "valid" in the first place.

Nietzsche discredits the notion of universal freedom or autonomy just as he discredits

the notion of universal equality and he does so for virtually the same reasons. The qualitative difference between the expression of noble instinct and slave instinct precludes the possibility that there may be some universal notion or expression of autonomy. The ideal of universal autonomy is, like the ideal of universal human equality, a symptom of the reactive pathos. Moreover, the mode of falsification typical of the reactive type, with respect to the ideal of human equality, is just as applicable to the ideal of universal autonomy and therefore Nietzsche sees a certain honesty in the active instinct to freedom that he does not see in the reactive attitude. Thus, honesty is associated with the active pathos and this includes an honest attitude toward one's self-opinion, as implicated in the discussion of vanity above, as much as it includes an honest approach to one's true motives for positing value judgments. The idea is that for Nietzsche value-positing is an expression of the will to power and the active type is able to be honest about such a truth whereas the reactive type continues to rely on "falsifications" like the doctrines of universal freedom and equality.

The issue of honesty is central to Nietzsche's concerns and it may be helpful to make better sense of the difference between reactive falsification and active honesty. What we know is that the highest autonomy is something Nietzsche projects into the future and it appears to constitute a new set of relations of force insofar as the reactive influence in world history, to create the self-conscious moral subject, will be linked to an active instinct to express one's affirmation of life in an extra-moral fashion. Thus, Nietzsche imagines a process of self-creation in the context of an unrealized but anticipated *extra*-moral period of mankind (BGE 32; D 9, 18; GM II, 16). He describes this process of self-creation as the process of "how one becomes what one is" (GS 370; EH II, 9). In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche refers to the art of how one becomes what one is as the art of "*selfishness*" (EH II, 9). This re-introduces what has been hinted at earlier in *The Gay Science* where he mentions

the idea of a "noblest selfishness"(GS 21). It seems that the will to self-responsibility which is representative of the highest autonomy involves a noble selfishness insofar as a will to honesty is exercised over and against the moral falsifications of the reactive community.

On Nietzsche's view moral and religious "errors" are affirmed to create the illusion either that man does not suffer or that suffering has a higher, i.e. divine, meaning (GM III, 28). It is this approach to suffering that Nietzsche calls life-denying and nihilistic. The modern will to alleviate human suffering, and thus "improve" mankind, Nietzsche considers life-denying insofar as it represents the reactive instinct to falsify existence in an effort to increase the feeling of power of the reactive community.

The reactive pathos is heightened at the expense of the active instinct to affirm life and human suffering. Thus, Nietzsche rails against the ascetic priest and theologian. He sees the ascetic priest as one of the great falsifying figures in European history and the one whose perspective denies and seeks to destroy all other perspectives:

> Whoever has theologian blood in his veins has a wrong and dishonest attitude towards all things from the very first. The pathos that develops out of this is called *faith*: closing one's eyes with respect to oneself for good and all so as not to suffer from the sight of incurable falsity. Out of this erroneous perspective on all things one makes a morality, a virtue, a holiness for oneself, one that unites the good conscience with seeing *falsely* - one demands that no *other* kind of perspective shall be accorded any value after one has rendered one's own sacrosanct with the names 'God', 'redemption', 'eternity'. I have dug out the theologian instinct everywhere: it is the most widespread, peculiarly *subterranean* form of falsity that exists on earth. (AC 9)

Elsewhere, Nietzsche describes this will to falsification as "the will to ignorance, to the uncertain, to the untrue" (BGE 24). In *The Gay Science* Nietzsche declares that "the great majority of people lack an intellectual conscience" (GS 2). By this he means that they do not "consider it contemptible to believe this or that and to live accordingly, without first having given themselves an account of the final and most certain reasons pro and con, and without even troubling themselves about such reasons afterwards" (GS 2).

At this point Nietzsche separates himself out from the great majority of people on the basis of his own so-called intellectual conscience which he describes as a "desire for

certainty" (GS 2). He concludes his observations by declaring that the desire for certainty "separates the higher human beings from the lower" (GS 2). Thus, Nietzsche invokes the idea of hierarchy with respect to a will to honesty differentiating types of individuals. Later, in *Beyond Good and Evil,* Nietzsche describes the will to honesty as a quality of the strong as opposed to the weak and something which distinguishes a philosopher from both "the people" and the people's scholars:

> Perhaps hardness and cunning furnish more favorable conditions for the origin of the strong, independent spirit and philosopher than that gentle, fine, conciliatory good-naturedness and art of taking things lightly which people prize, and prize rightly, in a scholar. Assuming first of all that the concept "philosopher" is not restricted to the philosopher who writes books - or makes books of *his* philosophy. (BGE 39)

This marks a change in Nietzsche's attitude from an earlier incredulity at the willful ignorance of the many to a later classification of honesty and ignorance in terms of a corresponding judgement of honesty as courage and ignorance as cowardice. Even later, in *Ecce Homo,* Nietzsche states that:

> How much truth does a spirit *endure*, how much truth does it *dare*? More and more that became for me the real measure of value. Error (faith in the ideal) is not blindness, error is *cowardice*. (EH, preface, 3; cf. WP 1041)

This movement from the early Nietzsche who questions the innocence of truth to the later Nietzsche who explicitly proclaims a hierarchy of truth-seeking reflects the movement from an early contemplative attitude toward the nature of extra-moral truth-seeking to a later strategy for actually *producing* the type of truth-seeker who might exercise extra-moral autonomy. In this process *The Gay Science* represents a midpoint between periods and I discuss this evolution at greater length in chapters five and six.

In the earlier work *Daybreak* Nietzsche has yet to fully introduce the language of hierarchy within a consideration of the extra-moral conscience. In *Daybreak* Nietzsche simply refers to those "men of conscience" who do not wish to return to that which is outlived, namely, the moral framework of values. At this point he calls for a self-sublimation of morality and associates this with a life of experimentation in which the

actual truth-seeker, or philosophical type, becomes the experiment himself (D, preface, 4; cf. D 453). But it is not until much later in *Beyond Good and Evil* that we find the philosophical type consistently embedded in hierarchical comparisons. At this later stage the philosophical type is repeatedly distinguished in contrast to a lower type of man:

> What serves the higher type of men as nourishment or delectation must almost be poison for a very different and inferior type. The virtues of the common man might perhaps signify vices and weaknesses in a philosopher. (BGE 30)

Therefore, what emerges in the later period is the direct association of a will to truth with will to power.

The difference between the early Nietzsche and the later one is that the early Nietzsche is experimenting with inherited philosophical and moral prejudices and working to undermine their capacity to maintain a hold on his, and our, imagination whereas the later Nietzsche is developing an ontological hypothesis that will support and help bring about the kind of philosophical mode of existence or philosophical autonomy that would represent the self-overcoming of man into a higher species of truth-seeker. Hence, the early Nietzsche employs no obvious hierarchical framework but the philosophical adventurer of this period, the "free spirit", *becomes* the "active" philosopher of the future in *Beyond Good and Evil*. It is in *Beyond Good and Evil* that Nietzsche separates genuine philosophers from mere philosophical labourers and he does so in terms of the will to power:

> Those philosophical laborers after the model of Kant and Hegel have to determine and press into formulas, whether in the realm of *logic* or *political* (moral) thought or *art*, some great data of valuations - that is, former *positings* of values, creations of value which have become dominant and are for a time called "truths". It is for these investigators to make everything that has happened and been esteemed so far easy to look over, easy to think over, intelligible and manageable, to abbreviate everything long, even "time," and to *overcome* the entire past - an enormous and wonderful task in whose service every subtle pride, every tough will can certainly find satisfaction. *Genuine philosophers, however, are commanders and legislators:* they say, "*thus it shall be!*" They first determine the Whither and For What of man, and in so doing have at their disposal the preliminary labor of all philosophical laborers, all who have overcome the past. With a creative hand they reach for the future, and all that is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument, a hammer. Their "knowing" is *creating*, their creating is a legislation, their will to truth is - *will to power*. (BGE 211)

In this passage Nietzsche explicitly links the moral to the political and implicitly links the

extra-moral to active hierarchy and the life of philosophy as a legislating or commanding mode of existence. More importantly, it is in this passage that Nietzsche describes reactive philosophy as a process of justifying and rationalizing established moral values. With respect to democratic conditions and philosophy, Nietzsche describes the philosophical labourers of the day as "eloquent and prolifically scribbling slaves of the democratic taste and its 'modern ideas'"(BGE 44). He goes on to claim that:

> What they would like to strive for with all their powers is the universal green-pasture happiness of the herd, with security, lack of danger, comfort, and an easier life for everyone; the two songs and doctrines which they repeat most often are "equality of rights" and "sympathy for all that suffers" - and suffering itself they take for something that must be *abolished.* (BGE 44)

Thus, Nietzsche clearly associates a reactive will to truth and reactive philosophical mode with a reactive pathos and he attempts to introduce an active will to truth and an active philosophical mode within the future context of a re-configured active pathos and hierarchy. This active will to truth constitutes a new conception of philosophical autonomy and it may help to illustrate Nietzsche's specific formulations of this conception.

philosophical autonomy and the sovereign individual

In *On the Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche describes the extra-moral actor as a "sovereign individual": "like only to himself, liberated again from morality of custom, autonomous and supramoral (for 'autonomous' and 'moral' are mutually exclusive), in short, the man who has his own independent, protracted will and the right to make promises" (GM II, 2). On my reading of Nietzsche's conception of the highest autonomy the so-called "right to make promises" means that the extra-moral subject is distinguished apart from the reactive community by virtue of his ability to see his own unique actions and judgments as a radically individual aesthetic of existence. As a self-conscious extra-moral individual he has, so to speak, the "selfishness" to make promises to himself in a unique existential sense because he is driven by an active will to power that operates so as

to affirm suffering and the contingencies of life without experiencing or giving in to *ressentiment*. In this way, a will to self-responsibility is invoked and enacted but it is particular to a future-based active pathos. In other words, it is not the kind of forced responsibility that obtains under the rule of law or in the social contract as we understand these concepts. Indeed, this will to self-responsibility or the right to make promises is a self-mastery that as Nietzsche puts it, "gives him mastery over circumstances, over nature, and over all short-willed and unreliable creatures" (GM II, 2). Nietzsche does not mean direct control over circumstances and nature but rather a will to affirmation in the face of life's contingencies, the effects of one's actions, and the effects of others' actions that one might suffer from. Thus, the sovereign individual does not, in a sense, *need* the law and the social contract the way the reactive type does since his will to self-responsibility accepts and affirms the burden of suffering and demands that he renounce *ressentiment* toward life and others as a result. This places the sovereign individual in an extra-moral realm above the common morality of present-day democratic values and it means that he is "self-legislating".[46]

What is clear in this active hierarchy is that the moral and extra-moral are being ordered according to rank:

> None of these ponderous herd animals with their unquiet consciences (who undertake to advocate the cause of egoism as the cause of the general welfare) wants to know or even sense that "the general welfare" is no ideal, no goal, no remotely intelligible concept, but only an emetic - that what is fair for one *cannot* by any means for that reason alone also be fair for others; that the demand of one morality for all is detrimental for the higher men; in short, that there is an order of rank between man and man, hence also between morality and morality. (BGE 228)

What is also evident, however, is that the sovereign individual is conscious of his extra-moral perspective and this is something that the original noble type does not experience. In other words, Nietzsche has re-introduced a noble or aristocratic framework of castes, so to speak, where he ranks moralities according to the active pathos but the highest

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[46]I explore this difficult idea at greater length in chapters 4, 5, and 7.

autonomy is a philosophical autonomy based on an extra-moral self-consciousness that is future-based as opposed to something originally present in the master morality. What this means is that the particular self-consciousness of extra-moral autonomy is the potential product of the historical process of internalization or "bad conscience" as he describes it in *On the Genealogy or Morals* (GM II). Overcoming the bad conscience, yet maintaining a reflective nature, is a kind of "evolutionary" possibility for Nietzsche given the right cultural conditions for a re-configured hierarchy.

Therefore, it is important to point out that Nietzsche re-thinks the idea of conscience and self-consciousness with respect to a noble instinct at the level of extra-moral philosophical autonomy. As just mentioned, this represents an overcoming of the bad conscience which the slave revolt in morality originally introduced. Thus, what Nietzsche imagines, is the overcoming of a "reactive" conscience and the production of an "active" conscience by way of a revaluation of values. Where the reactive pathos created guilt and the bad conscience as the vehicle for their spiritual revenge against the strong, Nietzsche sees this conscience as something that has become incorporated into the species over time and he envisions its overcoming in terms of an advancement and further transfiguration into an extra-moral conscience:

> The proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and over fate, has in his [the sovereign individual's] case penetrated to the profoundest depths and becomes instinct, the dominating instinct. What will he [the sovereign individual] call this dominating instinct, supposing he feels the need to give it a name? The answer is beyond doubt: this sovereign man calls it his *conscience*. (GM II, 2)

With respect to philosophy therefore this extra-moral conscience represents the self-conscious awareness on the part of the philosophical type that the will to truth operating within a moral interpretation of the world has exhausted itself for that individual. What is hopeful for Nietzsche is that a self-consciousness of the will to truth as will to power will usher in a period in which the philosophical instinct may develop according to a re-

configured active pathos.

Nietzsche's politics of active hierarchy provides the setting for the philosopher of the future's adventures across an extra-moral landscape but this political philosophy is skeletal insofar as it fails to deliver a fully comprehensible account of how such a vision might become a reality. As Peter Berkowitz points out:

> Nietzsche's image of the philosopher of the future is a hypothetical and utopian extension of his ideas about knowledge, freedom, and mastery, a verbal formula that identifies the requirements and defines the task of the highest type but does little to show that the requirements can be met or the task accomplished.[47]

Indeed, Nietzsche offers no clear plan for rendering his anti-democratic philosophy practicable. Nevertheless, in identifying the skeletal nature of his political philosophy and its obvious limitations it is important not to lose sight of the fact that Nietzsche's philosophy does have a unique and self-contained political framework that follows from his radical critique of western religious and philosophical prejudices. Making better sense of this framework is essential to understanding what may be referred to as Nietzsche's unified political philosophy. Therefore, I argue that Nietzsche's critique of the western philosophical tradition, including its modern democratic strains, informs an anti-democratic political philosophy of the self-creating subject of power. Fredrick Appel describes Nietzsche's accomplishment in a similar vein:

> Nietzsche deserves his place in the canon of political philosophy not because he provides a detailed institutional account of the optimal type of polity, but rather because his sweeping denunciation of liberalism, democracy, socialism, feminism, and other offshoots of modernity leads him to formulate (albeit in a sketchy and unsystematic manner) an alternative, radically aristocratic model of politics that bears serious examination.[48]

I argue that in order to begin exploring this new way of thinking about Nietzsche's relevance to political theory we must consider in more depth the role of philosophy and hierarchy in his thought. At the same time, re-focussing a discussion of Nietzsche's

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[47]Berkowitz, *Nietzsche: the Ethics of an Immoralist*, p. 258.

[48]Appel, *Nietzsche contra Democracy*, p. 15.

relevance to political theory, according to the framework I have just introduced, requires a critique of the so-called "democratic Nietzsche" in order to establish its limitations with respect to identifying what is uniquely political in Nietzsche.

democratic interpretations

Mark Warren suggests that Nietzsche's hypothesis that exploitation is both necessary and desirable in society forms what ought to be considered an "ideology". As an ideology he suggests that Nietzsche's political sentiments ought to be characterized as "neo-aristocratic conservatism".[49] Warren hopes to liberate Nietzsche's philosophy from this ideology and reinvent it as postmodern political thought.[50] This is evident where Warren suggests that Nietzsche's political ideas "stem primarily from erroneous assumptions about the nature and limits of modern institutions, assumptions that impoverished his thinking about social structures, caused him to mistake their historical limitations for ontological ones."[51] Yet Warren's approach largely overlooks the pivotal nature of Nietzsche's ontological hypothesis to the rest of his thought. What authors like Warren fail to consider is the likelihood that Nietzsche's so-called ideology both complements and justifies his conception of philosophy as active and extra-moral and should not therefore be characterized as either extraneous to it or separate from it.

In this way, Warren's interpretation may be described as misleading where it obscures what is uniquely political in Nietzsche. Warren suggests that we all "desire subjectivity, the experience of being an effective subject in the world, the experience of transforming what

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[49]Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought*, p. 3.

[50]Ibid, p. ix.

[51]Ibid, p. 3.

one was into what one will be."[52] There are two confusing elements in this rendering of Nietzschean autonomy. Firstly, Nietzschean autonomy is given a universal application that fails to account for how the qualitative difference between active and reactive is to be resolved along such lines. And secondly, this description of "how one becomes what one is" seems to suggest that individuals may have self-knowledge based on the reflective capability to imagine agency in terms of some future capacity, role, or mode of being. Warren's suggestion is that individuals somehow guide their own transformation in terms of *willing* agency in a way that actualizes an imagined or desired mode of subjectivity.

In an attempt to address this second characterization of Warren's, it is important to make better sense of what Nietzsche means where he describes the process of self-creation as "becoming what one is". As mentioned above, the art of becoming what one is is described as "selfishness" (EH II, 9). And Nietzsche goes on to make the following qualifications:

> For let us assume that the task, the destiny, the fate of the task transcends the average very significantly: in that case, nothing could be more dangerous than catching sight of oneself *with* this task. To become what one is, one must not have the faintest notion *what* one is. From this point of view even the *blunders* of life have their own meaning and value - the occasional side roads and wrong roads, the delays, "modesties," seriousness wasted on tasks that are remote from *the* task. All this can express a great prudence, even the supreme prudence: where *nosce te ipsum* (know thyself) would be the recipe for ruin ... [t]he whole surface of consciousness - consciousness *is* a surface - must be kept clear of all great imperatives. Beware even of every great word, every great pose! So many dangers that the instinct comes too soon to "understand itself" -. Meanwhile the organizing "idea" that is destined to rule keeps growing deep down - it begins to command; slowly it leads us *back* from side roads and wrong roads; it prepares *single* qualities and fitnesses that will one day prove to be indispensable as means toward a whole - one by one, it trains all *subservient* capacities before giving any hint of the dominant task, "goal," "aim," or "meaning." (EH II, 9)

In this passage from *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche's description seems significantly removed from Warren's characterization of effective agency with its sense of what one *wants* to become. On Warren's view a certain idea of autonomy is possible because it is conceivable. According to Warren's characterization it would be accurate to say that the idea of

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[52]Ibid, p. 9.

autonomy in question is grounded in the realm of intentionality and therefore deemed possible as a universal measure of autonomy in the sense that it is communicable *in theory*.

Of course one might object to my criticisms here. It may seem that I have confused things in light of what was said above concerning the self-conscious extra-moral individual. Indeed, it could be argued that Nietzsche is being self-contradictory where he imagines an individual who is aware of his extra-moral autonomy but has no idea of it as a goal in terms of becoming what he is. At this point it must be admitted that there is something enigmatic about Nietzsche's vision of extra-moral autonomy or "becoming what one is". In later chapters I address the limitations of this enigmatic quality, as well as Nietzsche's rather obscure remarks on the nature of consciousness as a "surface", but at this point I argue simply that it is a question of hierarchy and individuality. Self-conscious extra-moral autonomy is something that an active hierarchy may produce and yet the process of self-creation wherein the extra-moral individual actualizes his strength in the form of independent value legislation is something which cannot be reduced to a universally communicable notion of autonomy grounded in the objective realm of "intentions". The growth of the individual into "what he is" is a matter of self-overcoming as Nietzsche puts it and this unfolds in an opposite way to the Socratic maxim "know thyself" since for Nietzsche "who we are" is ultimately determined by our will as will to power rather than in terms of our will as a knowable "first cause" (cf. BGE 16).[53] The difference between these two conceptions of the will is the difference between a will that is "becoming" *versus* a will that is a fixed "being" (BGE 16-19). Warren's interpretation, or at least the interpretation Warren appears to suggest, is that "what one is" maybe pursued by the fixed "will" as "first cause". However, Nietzsche's conception of willing does not allow for such a framework of autonomy or at least Nietzsche's framework denigrates this type of

[53]This is a very important point and I address it more fully in chapter 5.

conception as a slave conception.

Keith Ansell-Pearson describes Warren's interpretation of Nietzschean autonomy as "a universal need for self-expression and self-determination."[54] In doing so Ansell-Pearson appears to recognize the fact that it is problematic to universalize Nietzschean autonomy. However, it turns out that Ansell-Pearson is critical of Warren for *the way he seeks to universalize Nietzschean autonomy*. In other words, he criticizes Warren more for failing to theorize the rationale for such an ethical community than he criticizes him for attempting to universalize Nietzschean autonomy in the first place . Thus, Ansell-Pearson worries that Warren's interpretation might be reduced to a Hobbesian war of all against all.

In light of what I have written above on the obvious differences between Nietzsche and Hobbes this seems to be a misleading characterization as well. What makes it misleading is Ansell-Pearson's reduction of Nietzsche's ontological dualism to the pre-political universal egoism of the Hobbesian state of nature. The will to power hypothesis, unlike Hobbes's state of nature, is not a pre-political or pre-ethical supposition about man's original condition. As mentioned above, Nietzsche grounds his ontology within a community of hierarchically ranked moral psychologies and, therefore, the will to power could never be reduced to a war of all against all. The difference between noble and slave, or active and reactive force, makes such universality impossible at the ontological level of relations of force. Yet reducing the will to power to a Hobbesian model allows one to characterize Nietzsche's ontological hypothesis as politically under-determined *like* Hobbes's state of nature. In other words, the comparison allows Ansell-Pearson to think about Nietzschean autonomy along traditional contractarian lines. As Ansell-Pearson puts it himself:

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[54]Keith Ansell-Pearson, "Nietzsche on Autonomy and Morality: the Challenge to Political Theory," *Political Studies* 39 (1991): 284.

> [T]he fundamental puzzle of political theory is the problem of breeding a *political animal*, that is, a sovereign individual who can make promises and thus be bound by obligations and to social contracts on account of its possession of a free will.[55]

Here Ansell-Pearson removes the reactive type from the scenario altogether and interprets the sovereign individual's "right to make promises" as an opportunity to map Nietzschean autonomy onto a democratic system of equal political rights.

In attempting to theorize this move he transforms the notion of hierarchy or rank-order (*Rangordnung*) from a moral/political order of rank to a purely aesthetic order of rank amongst sovereign individuals:

> It could be argued that there is no reason why an aristocratic emphasis on aesthetic distinction, on the inequality of creative greatness, could not exist within the framework of a democratic constitution established on the basis of equal political rights. For Nietzsche it is essentially a question of an order of rank, of conceiving society in such a way that the emphasis on formal legal equality does not result in a culture where creativity and individuality become stifled.[56]

In this passage Ansell-Pearson is working within the framework of liberal democratic autonomy that Nietzsche explicitly rejects. It would be more appropriate to say that for Nietzsche life-affirming creativity and individuality is inextricably linked to the radical autonomy of extra-moral value legislation and since formal legal equality is symptomatic of the influence of the reactive pathos it amounts to the denial of a typological order of rank.

Therefore, the implications of the extra-moral nature of creativity are bracketed out by Ansell-Pearson. He attempts this disassociation on the grounds that "extra-moral" does not necessarily mean "extra-political" but such a characterization would be truly accurate only if Nietzsche's will to power hypothesis were unambiguously non-political or pre-political to begin with. In the next chapter I discuss the status of the political in Nietzsche at greater length and acknowledge that Ansell-Pearson's approach is an important Foucault-inspired approach to the political in Nietzsche but what I want to establish in this

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[55]Ibid, p. 277.

[56]Ibid, p. 281.

chapter is that Nietzsche clearly associates democratic values with the reactive pathos and such a view, within the framework of Nietzsche's power ontology, suggests that he has an anti-democratic politics which precludes the possibility that his notion of self-creation is assimilable within a "social contract" framework of autonomy. Political values are moral values for Nietzsche because they are part of the same general framework of values that inform the hegemonic pathos of a community. The aesthetic nature of Nietzsche's vision is not simply apolitical and amoral but tied to a uniquely anti-democratic and extra-moral framework.[57]

I argue that it is the idea of being extra-moral that distinguishes self-creation as a uniquely Nietzschean project and not simply the affirmation of a plurality of "aesthetic" or "social" identities. Nevertheless, Ansell-Pearson suggests that:

> The importance of this notion of the subject in terms of the *creation* of the self is that it shows that self-identity is always a social construct determined by relations of difference. It thus opens up genuine possibilities for thinking about forms of political community in which otherness can be affirmed and difference celebrated.[58]

Although this reading of Nietzsche has been extremely influential, as a result of the work of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, I suggest that it is unsustainable as a position directly attributable to Nietzsche insofar as what is uniquely political in Nietzsche does not support this approach to "difference". I take this argument up at greater length in the next chapter but for my immediate purposes it is enough simply to conclude that on Nietzsche's view it is a reactive pathos that attempts to bring about a levelling of active and reactive "difference". To argue for the celebration of "difference" under democratic conditions is not a truly Nietzschean venture because doing so implies a levelling of hierarchy and Nietzsche wants to promote hierarchy not reduce it or resist it. Ansell-Pearson's approach to difference is un-Nietzschean in this crucial sense.

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[57]Cf. Berkowitz, *Nietzsche: the Ethics of an Immoralist*, pp. 48-9.

[58]Ansell-Pearson, "Nietzsche on Autonomy and Morality", pp. 285-6.

the political

Interpreters that attempt to subvert Nietzsche's ontology in an effort to appropriate a new conception of autonomy for democratic theory consistently run up against the tension between what "extra-moral" entails on the one hand and what "autonomy" demands within a democratic framework on the other hand. This tension may be best brought out in terms of Nietzsche's opposition to Kant. As Richard White explains:

> Kant is the one who attempts to explicate and justify individual autonomy by offering a systematic reconstruction of ordinary morality which has autonomy as its basis ... Nietzsche, on the other hand, is *not* simply concerned to explain what autonomy is or to describe its essential features. As a "philosopher of the future," his writing is itself a sustained attempt to provoke and produce the autonomy of the individual, and so effect a complete *revaluation* of values.[59]

Since political values reflect moral values they constitute "ordinary morality", or present-day values, for Nietzsche. This means, with respect to democratic values, that Nietzsche is attempting a revaluation of all political values as we know them. Moreover, he views such a revaluation as an aesthetic mode of independent value creation. Nietzsche attributes this kind of value legislation to the philosopher of the future but he appears to conceive of this future philosophical type as the product of a re-configured active hierarchy and pathos. I argue that we should view a shift in the nature of force relations, from a reactive hierarchy to an active hierarchy, as something that might produce a value legislating subject of power who may, in turn, be described as a self-creating type living an extra-moral life beyond the ordinary morality of present-day values. Indeed, this is the way in which I seek to construct a more integrated political philosophy in Nietzsche.

However, it is important to acknowledge, with respect to Nietzsche's opposition to Kant, that for Nietzsche Kant's approach to aesthetics is just as symptomatic of a reactive

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[59]Richard White, "Nietzsche contra Kant and the Problem of Autonomy," *International Studies in Philosophy* XXII vol. 2 (1990): 9.

pathos as his categorical imperative.[60] On my view, for Nietzsche, the aesthetic, the moral, and the political, just as in the case of the philosophical, are all symptomatic of either an active or reactive pathos. In other words, these categories do not enjoy a status that may be bracketed out and separated from the will to power framework. Thus, in *The Gay Science,* Nietzsche mocks Kant's categorical imperative as an example of *reactive* selfishness:

> You admire the categorical imperative within you? This "firmness" of your so-called moral judgment? This "unconditional" feeling that "here everyone must judge as I do"? Rather admire your *selfishness* at this point. And the blindness, pettiness, and frugality of your selfishness. For it is selfish to experience one's own judgment as a universal law; and this selfishness is blind, petty, and frugal because it betrays that you have not yet discovered yourself nor created for yourself an ideal of your own, your very own - for that could never be somebody else's and much less that of all, all!(GS 335)

In the Kantian will to the universality of judgment, Nietzsche pinpoints the reactive instinct and against it he affirms the idea of judgment as individual value creation - the philosopher's autonomy.

In a related way he attacks Kant's aesthetic formula in *On the Genealogy of Morals*:

> Kant thought he was honouring art when among the predicates of beauty he emphasized and gave prominence to those which establish the honour of knowledge: impersonality and universality. This is not the place to inquire whether this was essentially a mistake; all I wish to underline is that Kant, like all philosophers, instead of envisaging the aesthetic problem from the point of view of the artist (the creator), considered art and the beautiful purely from that of the "spectator," and unconsciously introduced the "spectator" into the concept "beautiful." It would not have been so bad if this "spectator" had at least been sufficiently familiar to the philosophers of beauty - namely, as a great *personal* fact and experience, as an abundance of vivid authentic experiences, desires, surprises, and delights in the realm of the beautiful! But I fear that the reverse has always been the case; and so they have offered us, from the beginning, definitions in which, as in Kant's famous definition of the beautiful, a lack of any refined first-hand experience reposes in the shape of a fat worm of error. "That is beautiful," said Kant, "which gives us pleasure *without interest.*" Without interest!(GM III, 6)

What is revealed in Nietzsche's criticisms of Kant's aesthetic and practical philosophy alike is the problem of the difference between the active and reactive philosophical mode. Kant, as a mere philosophical labourer, operates in the service of the many and in the service of "ordinary morality". In doing so he fails to launch a total critique of all values and falls

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[60]I explore this at greater length in chapter 7 where it is more relevant to my discussion of Nietzsche and Arendt.

significantly short of attaining the level of commanding that defines the genuine philosopher (cf. BGE 9). Kant's critiques are judged by Nietzsche according to the reactive perspective of the philosopher Kant himself. This method of assessment is consistent, in its reversal of the non-perspectival approach Kant employed to determine *his* aesthetic and moral formulas, with Nietzsche's focus on the "personal fact" of the philosopher or rather his will to power.

In this way, Nietzsche compares Schopenhauer to Kant and reveals how the Kantian version of contemplation without interest is given a slightly different interpretation based on Schopenhauer's own individual "interestedness" (GM III, 6). This ironic and *ad hominem* strategy is deployed to illustrate the point that ascetic (reactive) ideals of art and morality are masks the philosopher employs in providing for himself the optimal conditions to *do* philosophy and *be* a philosopher. Thus, Nietzsche claims that "[e]very animal - therefore *la bête philosophe* (the philosophical animal), too - instinctively strives for an optimum of favourable conditions under which it can expend all its strength and achieve its maximal feeling of power" (GM III, 7). What Nietzsche laments is the fact that this is something the philosopher has yet to become fully conscious of.

Nietzsche's *ad hominem* strategy directs attention back to his own ideal and the conditions for its enhancement. As Maudemarie Clark puts it:

> The cosmological doctrine of the will to power is the kind of construction of the world Nietzsche claims philosophers have self-deceptively engaged in. The difference is that Nietzsche knows perfectly well it is not the truth and that he gives us the clues we need to figure out that it is actually a projection of his life-affirming (and self-affirming) ideal.[61]

Of course what Clark means by stating that Nietzsche "knows perfectly well it is not the truth" is that Nietzsche does not posit will to power as a *metaphysical* truth claim. By linking the will to power back to Nietzsche himself it becomes clear that he needs to project the hypothesis onto the world as an ideal in the form of a re-configured active

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[61]Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, p. 240.

hierarchy and pathos. He needs to do this because the will to truth has, for him, destroyed the ascetic framework in which philosophers have hitherto operated.[62] Given Nietzsche's position, therefore, I suggest that the political in his thought is the idea of active hierarchy or, rather, a hierarchy separating an extra-moral realm from the realm of ordinary morality which may produce the new value legislating philosopher of the future. On my reading of Nietzsche's political thought the political involves the relationship between hierarchy and philosophy in terms of transforming a present-day relationship of reactive hierarchy and reactive philosophy into a relationship of active hierarchy and active philosophy. Active hierarchy distinguishes the extra-moral from ordinary morality and active philosophy distinguishes extra-moral value legislation from philosophical labouring in the service of democratic values.

conclusion

It might be helpful to summarize Nietzsche's ontology in terms of the relationship between democracy and aristocracy. For Nietzsche, aristocracy and democracy do not represent binary opposites in the sense that aristocracy simply implies the absence of any impulse to democracy or *vice versa*. In the same way that the noble/slave relationship may not be reduced to a simple opposition, democracy and aristocracy represent a similar political relationality in Nietzsche's formulations. Mark Blitz summarizes this point succinctly in the following way:

> The fundamental distinction between aristocracy and democracy does not mean that they are opposites. It could not: Nietzsche's understanding of the difference in power, in instincts, in ability to grow from obstacles, problems, is always in terms of more or less, stronger or weaker, ascending and descending. In particular, there is something necessarily common about *all* political life: Nietzsche, we remember, speaks of the *necessary* dirt of all politics; there is

[62]Ibid, p. 242.

> something common even about aristocracies.[63]

What is "common about *all* political life" is the need for the moral communicability of ideals across society. This communicability is the communicability of ideals which serve to preserve the community as a whole. I described this above with reference to the morality of utility and the ever-increasing suppression of strong and dangerous drives as a community "turns inward" and strives to attain greater equality (BGE 201). The point here is that aristocracies, even though they may encourage strong and dangerous drives among their highest ranks, in order to protect the greater community from external threats and enemies, nevertheless embody the need for universally communicable moral ideals in the same way that democracies do. And this, in part, is what Nietzsche refers to as "herd instinct". Therefore, it is important to note that there is a "herd instinct" operating in the so-called master or noble morality of antiquity as well as the slave morality of the Christian period Nietzsche attacks in *On the Genealogy of Morals*.

Of course, this may seem to contradict what I have referred to as an ontological dualism since it appears that I am now claiming a universal framework for the self-preservation of all political communities. But, importantly, the impulse to self-preservation which all political communities have in common does not exhaust the will to power's meaning for Nietzsche. And this is crucial to understanding Nietzsche's goal. Where Nietzsche refers to the highest autonomy he is referring to an ideal which actually explodes this framework of democracy and aristocracy with respect to the universality of moral ideals. What he proposes is a framework of hierarchy that increases the distance between strata to the point where any residue of the universality of value is destroyed at the upper end of that hierarchy. Clearly, Nietzsche admires the life-affirming instincts of antiquity's noble types

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[63]Mark Blitz, "Nietzsche and Political Science: the Problem of Politics" *Symposium* vol.18, no. 1 (1974): 83.

as well as the basic structure of an aristocratic community but his anti-democratic framework for producing the highest autonomy is "new" in the specific sense that it produces a hierarchy of active will to power which posits a fundamental anti-universalism of independent value creation.

I acknowledge that "anti-universalism" is an obscure concept but it is the best way to describe extra-moral autonomy. The uniqueness of Nietzsche's political philosophy is thus marked by both an anti-democratic and an anti-universalist element. It is this political framework that will be discussed at many different points throughout the remaining chapters. However, I turn now to a critique of the poststructuralist position that has inspired many recent democratic interpretations of Nietzsche's thought.

CHAPTER TWO - FOUCAULT, DELEUZE AND POWER RELATIONS

At the most general level, what is political in Nietzsche might appear to fall within the broad category of the power conception of politics. As Andrew Mason puts it, "[a]ccording to the power conception, 'politics' should be defined in terms of power relations, and *any* phenomenon which is significantly structured by power is political."[64] But the idea that *any* phenomenon which is significantly structured by power is political is a contested definition of the political within the broad discourse on power itself:

> Those who defend a state conception of politics understand the role of the term differently. They think it important to mark off kinds of power relationships between people that are not political and kinds of relationships between people that are merely social. This is because the point of the term 'politics' on the state conception is to identify the specific process by which government decisions are made and influenced and converted into law or policy in the face of conflicting interests.[65]

For Nietzsche, it might appear accurate to say that his conception of power is not limited to a state conception. Indeed, the will to power ontology might be said to exceed the state conception because it includes the social as well as the political according to the terms Mason highlights.

However, since Nietzsche's ontology of the will to power follows directly from his theory of moral psychology the categories of the political and the social which inform the distinction between the state conception of power and what I refer to as the non-state conception of power (being the more inclusive conception) fail to account adequately for his unique approach to power. The political in Nietzsche's thought must be understood in terms of the "moral" since power relations are only ever explained in terms of competing moral psychologies. The political in Nietzsche may not be circumscribed within the state/non-state distinction because power relations for Nietzsche correspond to the force

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[64]Andrew Mason, "Politics and the State," *Political Studies* 37 (1990): 576.

[65]Ibid, p. 585.

of moral values and the possibility for future value creation in terms of the revaluation of present-day values. Therefore, Nietzsche's conception may be loosely described as a non-state conception but the state/non-state framework fails to capture what is unique in Nietzsche. The political in Nietzsche exceeds a liberal framework altogether in terms of its reference to the modern state, state institutions, and present-day values writ large.

Nevertheless, Michel Foucault praises Nietzsche for thinking about power in a non-state way. Characterizing Nietzsche's approach as a non-state conception is important to Foucault because *he* thinks about force relations beyond the state conception and for him it is crucial to articulate and promote resistance to the state, or juridico-discursive, model of power. Foucault's non-state approach may also be described as a "micropowers" approach insofar as he concerns himself with force relations, diffuse throughout society, that are relations of domination and resistance. Thus, Foucault's characterization of Nietzsche suggests that the political in Nietzsche is a non-state or micropowers approach to relations that inverts the juridico-discursive model of analysis. I argue that it is misleading to view Nietzsche's approach as a micropowers approach according to the terms of Foucault's conceptualization because doing so fails to capture what is uniquely political in Nietzsche's thought.

As mentioned in the introduction, over the past few decades two basic standpoints on the political in Nietzsche have emerged. What separates these two positions fundamentally is how they deal with Nietzsche's anti-democratic or elitist ideas on the formation of culture and his interest in hierarchically ranked moralities.[66] One position emphasizes the

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[66]It is not difficult to find evidence of the link between Nietzsche's anti-democratic sentiments and his thoughts on hierarchical moral relations. In BGE 202 Nietzsche states that "the democratic movement is the heir of the Christian movement". Since Christian moral psychology must be overcome so, alike, democratic values must be overcome (cf. BGE 203). Democratic values, like Christian values, are universal values. There really is no getting around this for Nietzsche and thus he advocates a rank-ordering of moral psychologies so that his so-called highest types may be produced. Another crucial point here is that Nietzsche does not think that the ethical life of the *Übermensch* is something universalizable but I discuss this at length in chapter four (cf. BGE 211).

link between Nietzsche's conception of power and his anti-democratic sentiments suggesting a fundamental incompatibility between our narrow political concerns and Nietzsche's hierarchically ordered moral perspectivism. The other position eschews hierarchy stressing the protean and "agonistic" nature of power in Nietzsche which is thought to be transmissible within our contemporary democratic ethos.[67] The term "agonistic" comes from the Greek "agon" meaning contest or struggle and is thought to refer to relations of domination and resistance as relations of strife. I discuss "agonism" at greater length in the next chapter but what must be emphasized in the context of this chapter is that taking a position on the political in Nietzsche has come to mean the difference between, on the one hand, reading Nietzsche as an anti-democratic thinker and, on the other hand, reading him as an under-determined democratic thinker whose thoughts on power may be appropriated for use within a modern democratic context.

The basic position of those interpreters who advocate the agonal-democratic Nietzsche is that Nietzsche's thought has no self-contained political philosophy insofar as there is no unambiguous conception of hierarchy or moral relations that follows necessarily from his ontology of the will to power. Therefore, this position represents the claim that the political in Nietzsche involves a conception of power that renders impossible any attempt to derive a clear hierarchical framework from it. And this reading of Nietzsche has been extremely influential. However, I argue that it obscures the moral axis of power by privileging a highly generalized notion of the strife and flux of force relations eschewing a concern for the more specific issue of hierarchy that really drives what is uniquely "Nietzschean" in his power hypothesis. Nevertheless, it is this agonal-democratic interpretation of the political in Nietzsche that connects up nicely with Foucault's interest

[67]See my introduction for a brief list of recent contributions to these two positions. I discuss the idea of agonistic democracy specifically in the next chapter and add several other commentators' accounts to the list of democratic interpretations of Nietzsche.

in an analysis of power that exceeds the juridico-discursive model. In other words, the agonal-democratic conception rests on a consideration of power relations in terms of a non-state approach to power.

In this chapter I explore these different characterizations of power in Nietzsche at a certain level. What this requires is a consideration of Michel Foucault's and Gilles Deleuze's readings of Nietzsche since it is Foucault and Deleuze who offer the most influential interpretations of the Nietzsche whose thoughts on power exceed the state conception but do not apparently exceed our present-day values altogether. My position is that Nietzsche's power relation conception is not transmissible within our contemporary democratic ethos because it is intimately linked to his thoughts on hierarchy. In this way, I argue that the shared non-state interpretation of Nietzsche found in the work of Foucault and Deleuze amounts to a misrepresentation of what is uniquely political in Nietzsche and that this misrepresentation threatens to restrict Nietzsche studies in political theory if it is read back into Nietzsche the way it is in the case of the agonal-democratic Nietzsche.

Although I discuss agonal-democratic interpretations *per se* at greater length in chapter three, it is important to state, in this chapter, that the Foucault-inspired reading of Nietzsche which underlies agonal-democratic theories has proven to be an interesting and influential outgrowth of Nietzsche's influence. But the point I want to make and follow through on in chapters three and four is the idea that the agonal-democratic interpretation of Nietzsche has important limitations and that it tends to obscure what is uniquely political in Nietzsche. In this way, I argue for two strains of Nietzsche interpretation in political theory and in an attempt to establish a new direction for the anti-democratic Nietzsche I launch a critique, in this chapter, of the philosophical basis for an agonal-democratic Nietzsche. Therefore, in this chapter, I am more concerned with a critique of the intellectual lineage which has been established, tentatively, between Nietzsche and

Foucault and Deleuze. And it is not until the next chapter that I turn to a critique of the more explicit political arguments of Nietzsche's agonal-democratic interpreters.

What I suggest is that Foucault and Deleuze bring about a taming of Nietzsche's ideas by re-aligning the trajectory of his conception of power according to their shared political standpoint as it may be loosely defined within the context of our present-day values. I acknowledge that Foucault and Deleuze deny trying to get Nietzsche right and that they make creative use of his ideas in a relatively explicit way. But what I am pointing to is the question of the political in Nietzsche and the dubious integrity of reading a Foucaultian or Deleuzean standpoint back into Nietzsche after the fact of appropriation.

I begin the chapter with several sections on Foucault's characterization of Nietzsche as a philosopher of power and attempt to address, as briefly as possible, the key differences between Foucault and Nietzsche concerning hierarchy and power. In the last few sections I focus on some specific aspects of Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. In these sections I attempt to illustrate how Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche's power hypothesis subverts the pivotal element of hierarchy in Nietzsche's ontology. By acknowledging the significant differences between Nietzsche and Foucault and Deleuze I hope it will become clear that we need to keep the political in Nietzsche separate and distinct from the political in Foucault and Deleuze.

Foucault's characterization of Nietzsche's power relation conception

Foucault's defenders emphasize the fact that he denies trying to get Nietzsche right in the first place and any attempt to criticize him for misinterpreting Nietzsche is missing the point of Foucault's overall project. Now if we are either assessing Foucault's work in and of itself or assessing his interpretation of Nietzsche for the sake of pointing out what he

gets wrong, then I would say that this objection is both valid and uncontroversial. Foucault denies the importance of an exegetical reading of Nietzsche's texts.[68] Beyond this fact, however, what is at stake in the present analysis is something more than a straightforward consideration of Foucault's project *versus* Nietzsche's. What is at stake is the political in Nietzsche or rather that which is *uniquely* political in Nietzsche apart from the concerns of Foucault. Therefore, what I am trying to uncover are the aspects of Foucault's appropriation of Nietzsche's ideas that make it impossible for us, after the fact of that appropriation, to return once again to Nietzsche and read a Foucault-like standpoint back into Nietzsche's particular political position.

I assume that Foucault fails to discuss the specifics of what Nietzsche is doing in order to develop his micropowers approach. However, the integrity of the link between Foucault and Nietzsche rests on the claim that power relations are relations of strife that can never be mediated in terms of a fixed and unchanging meaning or identity.[69] I argue that this position makes sense only at a very general level and only against the backdrop of Foucault's attempt to avoid discussing a closer reading of Nietzsche's texts. Foucault's overly generalized reading of Nietzsche's power relation conception begs the question of what is being obscured by Foucault with respect to what Nietzsche is doing specifically. Hence, uncovering that which is being obscured will help us see more clearly the

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[68]Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, trans. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), pp. 53-54. Cf. Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Routledge, 1988), pp. 31, 33, 48, 107, 250-251.

[69]The closest Nietzsche comes to making this kind of generalization about power is in *On the Genealogy of Morals* where he traces the genealogy of the meaning of punishment and observes that meaning is fluid and therefore the shifting sign or symptom of relations of strife (GM II, 12). But, importantly, relations of strife are defined according to Nietzsche's ontological hypothesis of the will to power and his description in this section of *GM* concludes by re-affirming the specificity of that particular ontological commitment. Foucault may have been inspired by Nietzsche's thoughts on the meaning of punishment in essay II of *GM*, especially when it came to writing *Discipline and Punish*, but abstracting a generalized approach to power relations from essay II, without considering Nietzsche's underlying ontological framework, distorts *Nietzsche's* project.

misleading basis of the agonal-democratic reading of Nietzsche as a tidy lineage linking Foucault to Nietzsche.

To begin, I suggest that what is being obscured is the important link between power relations and the rank-ordering of moral psychologies in Nietzsche's formulations. The process of obscuring this link is initiated by describing Nietzsche as a philosopher of power first and foremost rather than as a moral psychologist whose thoughts on the "moral" are developed into an ontological hypothesis of "power". Foucault states that:

> Nietzsche is the philosopher of power, a philosopher who managed to think of power without having to confine himself within a political theory in order to do so.[70]

Of course it would be absurd to analyse too closely something Foucault said in an interview but it is necessary to make better sense of the way Foucault characterizes Nietzsche as a political thinker in order to understand how he avoids the moral core of Nietzsche's argument.

Foucault suggests that Nietzsche's approach to power is new or different because it does not represent a "political theory". Escaping a political theory in this context has to do with escaping the state conception or juridico-discursive model(s) of power. The idea here is that the juridico-discursive model sees power purely in terms of restriction wherein a "law of truth" is projected onto reality and "difference" is categorized in opposition to the unity of identity theoretically grounded in the law of truth in question.[71] In an attempt to escape the limitations of this approach to power, Foucault employs a "Nietzschean" conception of the relationality of forces which is thought to include "difference" within power rather than

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[70]Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p. 53.

[71]Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power" in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. H. L. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982), p. 212. Cf. *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 78-108.

restricting it or seeing it as external to power.[72] On Foucault's view a micropowers approach, which Nietzsche's conception is said to represent, sees domination and resistance, equally, as articulations of power and this view establishes "resistance" within power overturning the juridico-discursive approach which restricts power to the unity of identity and sees freedom purely in terms of a liberation from power. As Foucault puts it, "resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power."[73]

Importantly, Foucault's framework may be described as broadly democratic due to the "levelling" politics of difference his opposition to juridico-discursive hierarchy promotes. The state conception sees power purely in terms of the law and state policy which excludes the social and public institutional realms from a conception of the political. The juridico-discursive model sets up a discourse of binary opposition which sees freedom purely in terms of the absence of power and this imposes a hierarchical law of truth, power, and subjectivity that denies the omni-presence of power, and the more inclusive view that all individuals participate in power relations. It is this comprehensive approach which makes Foucault's politics of difference a levelling one that resists the formation and proliferation of hierarchy despite the underlying claim that relations of force or strife are always relations of domination and resistance.

Although broadly democratic, it is important to understand Foucault's approach as non-theoretical in the sense that he directs our attention toward a new analysis of the flux of relations of force from a standpoint of strategic resistance which cannot be reduced to a unified theoretical structure of power:

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[72]Foucault describes Nietzsche's power relation conception as the view that "the basis of the relationship of power lies in the hostile engagement of forces". Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p. 91.

[73]Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 95.

> I would like to suggest another way to go further towards a new economy of power relations, a way which is more empirical, more directly related to our present situation, and which implies more relations between theory and practice. It consists of taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point. To use another metaphor, it consists of using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used. Rather than analysing power from the point of view of its rationality, it consists of analysing power relations through the antagonism of strategies.[74]

Foucault describes his non-theoretical or "strategic" approach as "genealogical" and he explicitly links his genealogical investigations to the standpoint of resistance where he characterizes genealogy as that which is intended "to entertain the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchize and order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its objects."[75]

Therefore, Foucault attributes to Nietzsche the view that the basis of the relationship of power is the "strategic" or "agonistic" engagement of forces. Furthermore, the new relationship posited between the subject and power suggests that resistance, as a power relation, represents, in part, the attempt to promote "difference" or as Foucault puts it "new forms of subjectivity".[76] Having established Foucault's interpretation of Nietzsche's power relation conception, I now turn to a critique of Foucault's characterization in an effort to distinguish Nietzsche apart from Foucault.

separating Nietzsche from the Foucaultian Nietzsche

Given Foucault's characterization of Nietzsche's power relation conception as I have outlined it thus far, it is important to state explicitly what the Foucault-inspired basis of the agonal-democratic Nietzsche is in order to emphasize what is at stake in my analysis of the

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[74]Foucault, "The Subject and Power", pp. 210-211.

[75]Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p. 83.

[76]Foucault, "The Subject and Power", p. 216.

differences separating Nietzsche from Foucault. The underlying position of the agonal-democratic interpreters of Nietzsche is that Nietzsche and Foucault share the same approach to the self-creating subject of power. Keith Ansell-Pearson provides an excellent summary of the philosophical basis for the agonal-democratic position where he offers the following characterization of Foucault's reading of Nietzsche:

> On a number of occasions Foucault has openly acknowledged his debt to Nietzsche. Nietzsche influenced Foucault in a number of ways, but they can basically be reduced to two. Firstly, Nietzsche's understanding of power in terms of relations of forces had a tremendous influence on Foucault's attempt to think about power in a way which went beyond the juridical understanding of power prevalent in political theory. Secondly, Nietzsche's critique of modern metaphysics and its privileging of the subject (a subject that was construed as rational and free but at the same time dehistoricised and disembodied) had an enormous impact on Foucault and the way in which he came to construe the problem of human freedom and creativity. [77]

In his efforts not only to study but reverse the objectivizing of the subject, as "rational and free but at the same time dehistoricised and disembodied", Foucault is thought to have employed a Nietzschean power relation conception in order to establish the grounds on which subjects might think of themselves beyond a restrictive conception of subjectivity and come to see themselves as self-creating participants in power.

This characterization of Ansell-Pearson's is crucial to my attempt to separate the political in Nietzsche from the political in Foucault. Ansell-Pearson describes Nietzsche's influence on Foucault in terms of the "significance" of Foucault's reading of Nietzsche for political theory. Making use of Nietzsche in terms of the political in Foucault is an exciting and promising line of study but it must also be seen to have certain limitations. What is objectionable is reading the significance of Foucault's Nietzsche back into Nietzsche and thus denying what is uniquely political in Nietzsche. The standpoint Foucault develops is often read back into Nietzsche's thought and the political in Nietzsche is assumed, according to the agonal-democratic reading, to be much more similar to the political in

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[77]Keith Ansell-Pearson, "The Significance of Michel Foucault's Reading of Nietzsche: Power, The Subject, and Political Theory" *Nietzsche-Studien* 20 (1991): 270.

Foucault's work than it actually is. Since I argue that Foucault and Deleuze alter the terms and implications of Nietzsche's power relation conception I devote the remainder of the chapter to discrediting the attempt to obscure the differences between Nietzsche and Foucault and Deleuze on the issue of hierarchy.

resistance and the status of the slave

At this point we can begin to consider the key differences between the power relation conception in Nietzsche's work and in Foucault. Foucault's conception of relations of strife, his "agonism", is articulated from the point of view of resistance within power relations.[78] Within this framework what resistance requires, in order for us to say that someone participates in power, is a minimum degree of "liberty".[79] Foucault states:

> Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized. Where the determining factors saturate the whole there is no relationship of power; slavery is not a power relationship when man is in chains.[80]

Since resistance is a "power relation" and may not be described as such from a position external to power, the status of the slave is pivotal to our understanding of the limits of Foucault's framework for he clearly thinks that participation in power is beyond the slave's grasp.

However, it is often difficult to pinpoint what Foucault means by "resistance". He states:

> Even though the relation of power may be completely unbalanced or when one can truly say that he has "all power" over the other, a power can only be exercised over another to the extent that the latter still has the possibility of committing suicide, of jumping out of the window or of killing the other. That means that in the relations of power, there is necessarily the possibility of

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[78]See Foucault, "The Subject and Power", pp. 221-222. Cf. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I*, pp. 94-97.

[79]Michel Foucault, "The Ethic of the Care of the Self as a Practice of Freedom" in *The Final Foucault*, ed. J. Bernauer and D. Rasmussen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), p. 12.

[80]Foucault, "The Subject and Power", p. 221.

> resistance, for if there were no possibility of resistance - of violent resistance, of escape, of ruse, of strategies that reverse the situation - there would be no relations of power.[81]

In this passage Foucault describes resistance as suicide, murder, violent resistance, escape, ruse, and strategies to reverse the situation. For Foucault resistance is made up of a number of possibilities that would be representative of power and yet the figure of the slave defines the limits of power in Foucault. Thus, the figure of the slave is controversial with respect to Foucault's description of resistance for surely the slave would be capable of some form of resistance. Indeed, the slave would at least be able to kill himself.

In *The History of Sexuality: Volume I* Foucault describes power relations as "intentional but non-subjective".[82] What he means by this is that there is no historical subject, as there is for Marx in the form of the proletariat, who brings about historical change. And the implication of this description of power, in terms of individual action, is that there is no "doer" behind the "deed" as Nietzsche puts it in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (GM I, 13). Now I argue that even though Foucault understands power in "non-subjective" terms, as Nietzsche does, the status of the slave in his conception of power is still un-Nietzschean since he keeps the slave outside of power and Nietzsche sees the slave as central to power relations.

If the slave is able to kill himself he would, according to Foucault, be participating in power. This is obviously a problem for Foucault, in light of his description of what resistance might entail. But for my purposes what is interesting is that suicide could never represent a form of resistance that might also be understood as either a practice of the self, as in the "care of the self", or as "self-creation" in a Nietzschean sense. The point is simply that Foucault's framework is obscure yet clearly un-Nietzschean.

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[81]Foucault, "The Ethic of the Care of the Self as a Practice of Freedom", p. 12.

[82]Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I*, p. 94.

the un-Nietzschean nature of Foucault's project

It is important to note that Foucault admires very specific aspects of Greek ethical life but is scornful of Greek culture in a more general sense. He likes the idea of the *bios* as a work of art and he admires the practice of self-rule. However, he is generally dismissive of the overall moral climate amongst the Greeks:

> The Greek ethics of pleasure is linked to a virile society, to dissymmetry, exclusion of the other, an obsession with penetration, and a kind of threat of being dispossessed of your energy, and so on. All this is quite disgusting![83]

What Foucault dislikes the most about Greek society is the institution of slavery and this, as I have just explained, is reflected in an approach to power that is unable to see the slave as a participant in power. Therefore, Foucault's standpoint could be interpreted as one which seeks to re-introduce certain admirable elements of Greek ethical life in a modern setting where the problem of slavery does not inhibit individuals from participating in power within a "resistance" framework.

By conceiving of a resistance standpoint Foucault diverges from Nietzsche's path and abandons the substance and structure of Nietzsche's power ontology as well as Nietzsche's vision of a new self-creating subject of power. Where Foucault and Nietzsche part company is over the production of the power relation from the standpoint of resistance rather than domination. Nietzsche, unlike Foucault, views the production of subjectivity from the perspective of both the strong and the weak but he theorizes an ethic of self-creation as "self-overcoming" within a hierarchical moral framework that ultimately relegates the perspective of the weak to a lower position within that hierarchy.

Nietzsche's standpoint is ultimately an extra-moral standpoint that articulates a new self-

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[83]Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 355.

creating subject of power above ordinary morality and at the expense of the "agents" of ordinary morality. As James Bernauer observes:

> Foucault's notion of self-formation is always in the context of a struggle for freedom within an historical situation. It is why he refers to the subject as an "agonism," a "permanent provocation" to the knowledge, power, and subjectivizations which operate on us ... [t]his ecstasy would be misunderstood if it was seen as a Nietzschean leap beyond common morality into an elitist superhuman status ... [u]nlike Nietzsche, Foucault identified with the weak and the vanquished, the mentally ill and the deviant, with the lives of such infamous people as Pierre Rivière and Herculine Barbin ... [t]his identification motivated the movement of his thought toward an ever expanding embrace of otherness, an expansion that is the condition for any community of moral action.[84]

What we see in Nietzsche's standpoint is an appreciation and affirmation of exploitation. Nietzsche not only admired the Greeks for the same reasons that Foucault admired them but he, unlike Foucault, affirmed their overall moral climate of slavery and hierarchy and he thought that their unique and inspirational ethical lives were the direct product of exploitative institutions.[85] Foucault, on the other hand, made a real effort to separate out those ascetic practices that he deemed admirable from the overall moral structure of Greek society he found so repugnant. And this effort on Foucault's part reflects his moral position within our present-day values despite his efforts to avoid discussing the moral axis of power in Nietzsche.

In diverging from Nietzsche's path Foucault dissolves the moral categories of noble and slave along with their corresponding ontological descriptions as life-affirming will to power and life-denying will to power respectively. By denying the slave a place in power relations Foucault effectively undermines the theory of moral psychology that forms the basis of Nietzsche's so-called power relation conception. For Nietzsche, as he illustrates

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[84]James Bernauer, "Michel Foucault's Ecstatic Thinking" in *The Final Foucault*. eds. J. Bernauer and D. Rasmussen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), p. 71.

[85]I do no want to emphasize Nietzsche's appreciation of hierarchy at the expense of his appreciation of the slave revolt in morality in which man became "an interesting animal" (cf. GM I, 6). The point is that Nietzsche's future-oriented project appears to involve uniting the advantages of self-consciousness, that developed out of the bad conscience, with a re-introduction of the kind of hierarchy he admired in Greek society, as a prerequisite for a high culture.

clearly in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, the slave type who is unable to resist, according to the terms that Foucault appears to demand as a prerequisite for power, nevertheless brings about a "spiritual" revenge that clearly establishes his position within the morally defined power relations of Nietzsche's model.

What is important to note here is that Foucault abandons the framework of moral relations that Nietzsche uses to develop his critique of moral agency (GM I, 13). For Nietzsche the concept of the rational and free moral agent is derived from an account of the subject first posited by slaves and the agents of a slavish moral psychology. But Nietzsche never describes the position of the slave the way Foucault does. For Nietzsche, not only is the slave a vital part of power from the vantage point of the strong, as the necessary "difference" to everything noble, but in fact it is the slave's lowly standpoint with respect to the strong that brings about the *moral* resistance of the weak leading eventually to a revaluation of noble values and the *overcoming* of noble morality on the part of the weak.

At this point Nietzsche documents the development of the notion of the responsible moral agent as a product of the inversion of power relations that the slave revolt in morality brings about. It is over this long historical process of inversion that the kind of noble nature embodied in the classical ethics of the Greeks and Romans is gradually subverted and forced to conform to the conditions of moral agency imposed upon it by the forces of the Christian moral universe (GM II, 2). In this way, unlike for Foucault, power relations for Nietzsche always involve the forces of noble and slave nature, or will to power. This is why Nietzsche re-introduces, at the end of this historical process, the significance of noble nature to overcoming the slavish ascetic ideal of modernity and its doctrine of pity for the weak. He reveals this intention in many parts of his *On the*

Genealogy of Morals and throughout his other mature works of the 1880's. The re-emergence of the noble over the slavish is most evident in the third essay of his genealogy where Nietzsche writes:

> Away with this "inverted world"! Away with this shameful emasculation of feeling! That the sick should *not* make the healthy sick - and this is what such an emasculation would involve - should surely be our supreme concern on earth; but this requires above all that the healthy should be *segregated* from the sick, guarded even from the sight of the sick, that they may not confound themselves with the sick. Or is it their task to be nurses and physicians? But no worse misunderstanding and denial of *their* task can be imagined: the higher *ought* not to degrade itself to the status of an instrument of the lower, the pathos of distance *ought* to keep their tasks eternally separate! (GM III, 14)[86]

This is Nietzsche's clearest pronunciation in *On the Genealogy of Morals* of a call to return to hierarchy and it represents something quite different from Foucault's desire to embrace "otherness" as Bernauer puts it. Indeed, Foucault's attitude might be better understood, from a Nietzschean perspective, as contributing to the modern doctrine of pity for the weak. Regardless of this characterization, however, it is important to see the re-introduction of hierarchy as a serious anti-democratic position and not just under-developed rhetoric.[87]

In effect, what Nietzsche is calling for is a revaluation of values *after* the long process of slavish conformity has occurred. Therefore, he is calling for a revaluation of present-day values. The purpose of such a revaluation is to *produce* a new kind of subjectivity that is one of self-creation in an extra-moral sense. This is the only kind of "otherness" Nietzsche wishes to embrace and it relies on the "difference" of noble will to power entirely. Thus, Nietzsche conceives of the new self-creating subject of power within the same framework of morally designated will to power that he began with in the first essay of his *On the Genealogy of Morals* but he is not calling for a simple reversal of values or return to a

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[86]Cf. BGE 44. Here Nietzsche warns his free spirit against becoming the instruments of democracy with its doctrine of "equality of rights" and "sympathy for all that suffers".

[87]See BGE 258-265; cf. GM III, 25.

master morality. At the end of the moral (modern) period in history Nietzsche anticipates the advent of an extra-moral period of mankind wherein a strong and independent noble nature will re-emerge above a weak and slavish one but it will express itself as a value creating nature rather than as a nature circumscribed within a noble or master morality *per se*.[88] And yet, what Nietzsche's vision of self-creation still requires is a hierarchy wherein the common morality of present-day values is superseded and ranked beneath a so-called extra-moral realm wherein the re-emergent noble will to power may establish a re-configured ethical life. The point here is that a hierarchy of relations is necessary to produce a certain type of subjectivity.[89] This is how power is productive of the subject on Nietzsche's view.

Foucault abandons the distinction between noble and slave and simply adopts Nietzsche's critique of moral agency after the fact of appropriation. His moral perspective remains securely grounded in the common morality of our present-day values rather than in the future-based context of Nietzsche's anti-democratic extra-moral period. And, significantly, Foucault divorces the genealogical method from the will to power ontology altogether. Benjamin Sax describes this separation of the genealogical method from Nietzsche's power conception in the following way:

> The will to power is an interpretation and an experiment in interpretation, designed to allow us to rethink our present-day values. The will to power is a hypothetical construct of the genealogical method ... In his 1971 essay on Nietzsche, Foucault seemed to be blind to this strategic and creative level of Nietzschean genealogy ... he made it seem that genealogy was sufficient unto itself; but such a claim would only result in a reversal of values (something Nietzsche clearly rejects) and not a transvaluation of all values (the self-proclaimed goal of his thinking). Nietzsche sees no such unity of method and in fact structures the whole of *On the Genealogy of Morals* and *Beyond Good and Evil* as incomplete and open-ended works. Both were written in relation to a

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[88]The best description of the process Nietzsche maps, from the pre-moral to the moral and on to the anticipated extra-moral period, may be found in BGE.32.

[89]Cf. "What is Noble" (esp. section 257). Here Nietzsche explicitly links the ethic of self-overcoming to the pathos of distance between "strata". I will discuss this important section at greater length in chapter 6.

future condition.[90]

The separation of genealogy from the will to power is necessary in order to re-introduce genealogy as an non-theoretical approach that specifically resists the juridico-discursive model of power.[91] In other words, separating genealogy from will to power makes it possible to employ it as a method of analysis from the non-state standpoint on power.

Deleuze and hierarchy

Early in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* Gilles Deleuze appears to capture the essential elements of Nietzsche's power ontology and specifically his notion of hierarchy with respect to relations of force between the noble will to power and the slave will to power. I introduced Deleuze's account of Nietzschean will to power in the first chapter and did so with specific reference to the difference between active and reactive force. Deleuze was thus seen to have distinguished relations of active and reactive force in terms of a two-pronged conception of hierarchy. Here, in the last few sections of this chapter, I launch a brief critique of Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche where he appears to depart from this dualism and theorize the synthesis of active and reactive force. In this way, my critique attempts to point out the inconsistencies of Deleuze's account of power in Nietzsche and how his earlier and more accurate account of hierarchy is eventually subverted in order to provide the philosophical basis for a levelling politics of difference akin to Foucault's.

It may be helpful to briefly summarize Deleuze's early position by re-introducing the relationship between the two senses of hierarchy he distinguishes as active and reactive hierarchy. What Deleuze suggests is that reactive hierarchy compels active force to

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[90]Benjamin Sax, "On the Genealogical Method: Nietzsche and Foucault" *International Studies in Philosophy*, vol. 22, no. 2 (1990): 135-136.

[91]I address the status of "genealogy" in Nietzsche's thought at greater length in chapter 5.

become reactive. The slave revolt in morality and the process of rendering man morally calculable represents the triumph of reactive force and the realization of reactive hierarchy. In this way, Deleuze claims that reactive force is successful by "separating active force from what it can do".[92] This description corresponds nicely with Nietzsche's critique of the subject and his description of the "doer" who is separated from his deeds (GM I, 13). The idea is that the slave type compels the noble type to become responsible for the discharging of his strength and thus effectively separates the noble type from what he can do by imposing upon him the reactive psychology of responsibility for evil.

Under the conditions of reactive hierarchy the master has, as Deleuze puts it, stopped being a master because he is separated from what he can do. Here Deleuze describes the will to power in terms of "forces" in order to describe more easily the formation, dissolution, and re-formation of relations amongst individuals and their identities with respect to underlying power relations. In the case of reactive hierarchy the slave type "prevails over the master who has stopped being one" but in terms of their actual original historical identities it no longer makes sense to speak of either masters or slaves at all. In other words, it may still make sense to speak of noble or slave traits and the hegemony of slave "force" but it makes no sense to speak of a so-called original noble or slave identity since these identities are no longer relevant.[93]

Deleuze admits that the dualism of Nietzsche's will to power ontology makes it impossible to think of active force as either disappearing altogether or turning into reactive force. Nietzsche's ontology of power as hierarchy is such that active and reactive forces can, at bottom, be neither dissolved completely nor assimilated into their opposite. It is this

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[92]Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 64.

[93]Ibid, p. 60.

ontological dualism that requires Deleuze to refer to active force as "becoming-reactive" force under the conditions of reactive hierarchy. The point is simply that in order to account for the potential re-emergence of active force, in the event of a shift to active hierarchy, forces may never be described in terms of a synthesis which might be thought to eliminate the fundamental distinction between instincts of life-denial and those of life-affirmation. And importantly, it is the potential shift to active hierarchy that Deleuze appears to be most interested in articulating.

eternal recurrence and becoming-active

To begin his task, Deleuze suggests that "becoming-active" must mean affirming life and being life-affirming "just as becoming-reactive is negating and nihilistic".[94] Presumably, therefore, becoming-active will involve a revaluation of values articulated in terms of an active psychology re-uniting active force with what it can do. However, what is problematic about Deleuze's account of this process is that he employs Nietzsche's teaching of eternal recurrence to explain the future triumph of active force. Deleuze's use of the eternal recurrence ideal is problematic because he seems to interpret it in an anti-Hegelian way that does not resonate within Nietzsche's overall framework of life-affirmation. I will begin the attempt to unravel Deleuze's interpretation by offering a brief description of the eternal recurrence ideal and by reproducing Deleuze's basic claim about the significance of eternal recurrence.

The Nietzschean conception of eternal recurrence is first introduced in *The Gay Science* as the idea that life recurs eternally. The force of this thought is described as "the greatest weight" for it could only be endured by the strongest of life-affirming individuals (GS

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[94]Ibid, p. 68.

341). Only the strongest person could affirm that the evils and trials of life in general, and one's own life in particular, recur eternally. Nietzsche touches on eternal recurrence again in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *Twilight of the Idols*, and *Ecce Homo.* He also has something to say about it in his unpublished notes which have been edited and re-produced by Walter Kaufmann in *The Will to Power*. Now what is important to acknowledge about the idea of eternal recurrence is that Nietzsche describes it as his greatest teaching but at the same time devotes relatively little attention to it. In the past the basic point of contention amongst Nietzsche's interpreters has been whether it represents an ethical ideal of life-affirmation or whether it represents a cosmological theory that life actually recurs eternally.[95] Increasingly, and in recent years especially, the possibility that Nietzsche intended eternal recurrence to represent a cosmological truth has been largely refuted. The evidence weighs heavily in favour of the notion of eternal recurrence as an ideal of life-affirmation intended to replace the ascetic ideal of the slave will to power. The meagre evidence that Nietzsche may have intended a cosmological theory is to be found almost exclusively in his unpublished notes.[96]

Thus, it is significant that Deleuze draws largely from the unpublished notes in piecing together his version and he makes the following claim about eternal recurrence:

> Only the eternal recurrence can complete nihilism *because it makes negation a negation of reactive forces themselves*. By and in the eternal return nihilism no longer expresses itself as the conservation and victory of the weak but as their destruction, their *self-destruction*.[97]

What Deleuze derives from eternal recurrence is the idea of "active negation". Deleuze suggests that reactive forces, in confronting nihilism, go that one extra step and negate

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[95]Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, pp. 245-286.

[96]Ibid. Clark offers a summary of the different interpretations of eternal recurrence along with a consideration of how Nietzsche's unpublished notes on eternal recurrence have been received.

[97]Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 70.

themselves as negating forces. And it is this self-destructive negation that represents the so-called active negation. As Deleuze puts it:

> Active negation or active destruction is the state of strong spirits which destroy the reactive in themselves, submitting it to the test of the eternal return and submitting themselves to this test ...[98]

Yet what remains unclear in Deleuze's account is the status of the eternal recurrence hypothesis. Is eternal recurrence an ideal of life-affirmation or a cosmological theory? Deleuze, rather confusingly, describes it as both an ethical thought and a fundamental "selection" of power itself.[99] Thus, at the very least he unites eternal recurrence with the will to power ontology.

It would make sense that as an ideal the ethical thought of eternal recurrence would help liberate active force from its status as "becoming-reactive" force because only the strongest types would be able to bear the weight of this most abysmal thought. However, eternal recurrence could not compel reactive force to become active since this would violate the terms of Nietzsche's ontological hypothesis of power as hierarchy. In other words, the weak and slavish could not affirm the notion of eternal recurrence and "become active" since their life-denying nature precludes them from affirming life at the highest level that eternal recurrence demands. The significance of hierarchy in determining the implications of eternal recurrence suggests that active force does not influence reactive force in the same way that reactive force separates active force from what it can do and thus an active hierarchy would be qualitatively different from a reactive hierarchy. An active hierarchy would not involve a "becoming-active" of reactive force but simply a

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[98]Ibid.

[99]Ibid, pp. 68-71. As an ethical ideal Deleuze describes eternal recurrence as the following imperative or practical synthesis; "whatever you will, will it in such a way that you also will its eternal return." Deleuze's construction here sounds far too Kantian to reflect Nietzsche's position appropriately and from a "Nietzschean" perspective it might be thought to represent certain "slavish" streaks in his, Deleuze's, work.

liberation of active force from its "becoming-reactive" condition.

Returning to Deleuze's ambiguous rendering of eternal recurrence, it appears that he may have contradicted himself with respect to what he said earlier about hierarchy and in doing so he may have violated the unique terms of Nietzsche's power ontology. The basis of this contradiction lies in Deleuze's attempt to unite eternal recurrence with the will to power ontology itself. Deleuze's claim is that eternal recurrence is actually *productive* of active force. In this way he moves from the thought experiment of eternal recurrence to the ontological force of eternal recurrence within power relations:

> It is no longer a question of the simple thought of the eternal return eliminating from willing everything that falls outside this thought but rather, of the eternal return making something come into being which cannot do so without changing nature. It is no longer a question of selective thought but of selective being; for the eternal return is being and being is selection.[100]

By making eternal recurrence an ontological element of power, that "selects being", Deleuze appears to contradict Nietzsche's strict distinction between noble and slave will to power. Eternal recurrence, on Deleuze's rendering of it, would make it possible for reactive force to negate itself and "become active" through an obscure process of "selection". Although Deleuze may not be claiming that eternal recurrence is a cosmological truth, he nevertheless adjusts Nietzsche's ontology of power so that what was formerly a strict dualism can now be understood as a unity of active force insofar as the role of eternal recurrence, as a selective ontological element of power, has the capability to transform reactive force into active force. In this re-configuration of Nietzsche's ontology reactive force is negated and as Deleuze states explicitly "[t]he small, petty, reactive man will not return".[101]

Deleuze's reference to the "small, petty, reactive man" is an allusion to the section "The

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[100]Ibid, p. 71.

[101]Ibid.

Convalescent" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* where Nietzsche offers his most compelling description of the role of eternal recurrence. Here Nietzsche describes Zarathustra's nausea at the idea that the small man will return eternally (Z, *The Convalescent*). On my reading, which is supported by Maudemarie Clark and others, what emerges is the truth about eternal recurrence as an ideal of life-affirmation. The nausea Zarathustra suffers from cannot simply be over the idea that the small man recurs eternally but that he, Zarathustra, can never will the negation of the small man, his nemesis for so long, since it is only because of the small man that he may overcome the reactive force of the small man within himself. In other words, active force can only liberate itself from its becoming-reactive condition. As life-affirming force it does not negate reactive force *per se* but rather affirms itself and in turn, according to the ideal of eternal recurrence, affirms the small man as well.

In the metaphor of "The Convalescent", eternal recurrence produces a snake which gets caught in Zarathustra's throat. As the metaphor unfolds Zarathustra bites off the head of the snake and spits it out. For Deleuze the snake represents the reactive force which Zarathustra negates or finally has his revenge against once and for all but, as I argue, what is closer to the spirit and substance of Nietzsche's power ontology is the view that the snake represent the nausea of eternal recurrence as a test for the *Übermensch* and Zarathustra spits it out only to recover and resume the highest path to the affirmation of life.[102]

I argue that Deleuze's rendering of eternal recurrence contradicts the idea of active hierarchy because it undermines hierarchy altogether. The becoming-active of reactive force is an impossibility according to Nietzsche's power relation hypothesis. If reactive

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[102]See Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, p. 277.

force can "become active" then the entire framework of the inequality of force relations is rendered contradictory. On Deleuze's interpretation, active and reactive forces undergo a kind of synthesis wherein reactive force negates itself and actually turns itself into active force. What this amounts to is a synthesis of forces by way of the elimination of reactive force altogether. Not only does this violate the idea of life-affirmation but it destroys the idea of *inter pares* equality which symbolizes the underlying incongruity between noble and slave will to power.

The only question remaining is why Deleuze tries to manipulate Nietzsche's power relation conception from an ontological dualism to an ontological unity of forces. Philip Goodchild goes a long way toward answering this question where he remarks:

> By relating the overman to a quality of synthesis, rather than to any particular force, Deleuze radically subverted the distasteful political implications of Nietzsche's position. For Deleuze, there will no longer need to be any supreme force or great commander who subjects all others' wills to his own; indeed Deleuze found a different way of relating wills apart from violence and conflict. For this reason, his reading of Nietzsche differs significantly from many of Nietzsche's own expressed opinions and is politically much more interesting: instead of favouring a self-affirmative aristocracy, Deleuze always favoured the lowest.[103]

What Goodchild confirms in his characterization of Deleuze's intentions is the importance of hierarchy to Nietzsche's power relation conception. At the same time he provides us with a good reason for associating Deleuze's position with Foucault's in terms of a concern for the weakest, or lowest as he puts it. Deleuze is unable to derive a non-hierarchical interpretation of the triumph of active force without compromising the integrity of Nietzsche's power relation ontology. The production of the *Übermensch,* in all his enigmatic value-legislating splendour, depends on the pathos of distance between a higher extra-moral realm and a lower realm of common morality. Hierarchy produces the *Übermensch* and at the same time affirms reactive force in the guise of the small man.

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[103]Philip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), p. 32.

Thus, Nietzsche's power relation conception demands that an active hierarchy of relations of force be a *real* hierarchy.

Deleuze's anti-Hegelian framework

Further consideration of Deleuze's interpretation would suggest that the idea of an "active negation" fits comfortably within the anti-Hegelian framework of interpretation that he employs to characterize Nietzsche's thoughts throughout *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Of course theorizing the synthesis of active and reactive forces makes Deleuze appear to be Hegelian rather than anti-Hegelian but what he wants to do is re-think a unity of forces that translates as a desire for "difference" in contradistinction to the Hegelian synthesis of desire that leads to a unity of identity. In other words, Deleuze employs the Hegelian language of "synthesis" in order to arrive at a very anti-Hegelian, or un-Hegelian, result. Alan Schrift offers support for this characterization of Deleuze's intentions where he remarks:

> By tracing the interplay of affirmation and negation in Nietzsche's typology of active and reactive force, Deleuze concludes that the *Übermensch*, Nietzsche's metaphor for the affirmation of multiplicity and difference as such, is offered in response to the conception of human being as a synthesized unity provided by the Hegelian dialectic.[104]

On my view Deleuze may have arrived at an un-Hegelian result in his manipulation of Nietzsche's ontology of force relations but in doing so he has arrived at a rather un-Nietzschean result as well. Re-thinking the *Übermensch* as a metaphor for difference complements Deleuze's synthesis of forces approach and is I would argue the un-Hegelian end Deleuze has in mind from the very start. By eliminating the *Übermensch*, as a unique vision of extra-moral value-legislation, however enigmatic that vision may be, Deleuze re-

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[104]Alan Schrift, "Nietzsche's French Legacy" in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. Bernd Magnus and Kathleen Higgins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 330.

articulates power in Nietzsche according to the non-specific outcome of force relations in terms of "difference". Thus, Deleuze's characterization of Nietzsche's aims goes a long way toward theorizing the idea of groundless difference wherein "otherness" is embraced beyond any particularly Nietzschean vision of the self-creating subject of power.[105]

conclusion

Goodchild's evaluation of Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche, as more politically interesting than Nietzsche's own conception of a "self-affirmative aristocracy", is typical of the opinions expressed in many recent studies of Nietzsche's thought. Indeed, this approach informs the standpoint of those interpreters I referred to above as the advocates of an agonal-democratic Nietzsche. Like Foucault, Deleuze appears to articulate the power relation conception from the standpoint of "difference" as it may be associated with the position of resistance to hierarchy and this corresponds to the non-state standpoint generally speaking. Deleuze and Foucault may differ in other respects but their shared standpoint in contradistinction to Nietzsche's is quite clear. Most importantly, for the purposes of my argument in chapters three and four, it is this standpoint which forms the basis of the agonal-democratic reading of Nietzsche.

What I want to establish firmly in this chapter, therefore, is that the political in Foucault and Deleuze is dissimilar to the political in Nietzsche. In other words, there is something unique about the political in Nietzsche which Foucault and Deleuze either bypass, subvert, or simply refuse to acknowledge. Nietzsche's framework of power re-asserts hierarchy in a uniquely anti-democratic way and this puts his framework of analysis well beyond the

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[105]Deleuze states that: "Nietzsche's practical teaching is that difference is happy; that multiplicity, becoming and chance are adequate objects of joy by themselves and that only joy returns. Multiplicity, becoming and chance are the properly philosophical joy in which unity rejoices and also in being and necessity." Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 190.

resistance standpoint.

In the context of the political in this chapter, I attribute the resistance standpoint to Deleuze as well as Foucault's insofar as Deleuze's attempt to tame Nietzsche, by removing the hierarchical elements of his power ontology, reflects a levelling politics of difference similar to Foucault's. It could be argued that what I refer to as a resistance standpoint misleadingly makes Foucault and Deleuze out to be defenders of the "oppressed" and indeed I do make this sort of claim where I cite the characterizations of Bernauer and Goodchild who refer to the positions Foucault and Deleuze champion as the positions of the weakest or the lowest in contradistinction to Nietzsche's position. Therefore, it could be argued that neither Foucault nor Deleuze ever explicitly champion so-called oppressed individuals or groups and such a contention would seemingly be helped along by acknowledging the fact that both Foucault and Deleuze actually abandon traditional revolutionary causes on the Nietzschean grounds that they suffer too much from *ressentiment*. However, I suggest that even if those individuals Foucault and Deleuze appear to champion do not fall neatly into traditional categories of what constitutes the "oppressed", they nevertheless set out to oppose hierarchy in an effort to "celebrate difference". The point I am making is simply that opposing hierarchies of truth in an effort to promote new subjectivities or "difference" ought to be viewed as championing the oppressed in some important sense for it is surely not the opposite, namely, the attempt to philosophize more hierarchy and oppress a greater number of people for the benefit of producing new forms of subjectivity.

Thus, my purpose in this chapter has been to separate Nietzsche from Foucault and Deleuze on the issue of hierarchy. Although the issue of hierarchy alone applies more directly to Deleuze's explicit anti-Hegelian appropriation, Foucault's more subtle

characterization of Nietzsche's power relation conception involves an assimilation of various Nietzschean ideas within a non-state approach to the political.

Given these fundamental differences, I suggest that we view the important appropriations of Nietzsche that Foucault and Deleuze offer strictly in terms of the genealogy of Nietzsche interpretation *within* a straightforward state/non-state framework of the political. This gives us the opportunity to articulate what is uniquely political in Nietzsche beyond such a framework and, as I demonstrate in chapter seven, this anti-democratic Nietzsche provides us with an interesting model of the political against which we might improve our democratic arguments.

On my view the non-state appropriation is not necessarily more politically interesting than the hierarchical interpretation. Nor is the hierarchical interpretation more politically interesting than the non-state appropriation. The non-state standpoint represents a particular strain of interpretation that helps address identity-based issues in political theory whereas the hierarchical reading captures the uniqueness of Nietzsche's difference as a political thinker, challenging us in other, less specific, ways.

By illustrating the significant differences between these thinkers, with respect to hierarchy and power, I have offered an analysis which might form the basis of a framework of categorization that allows for a multiplicity of interpretations while at the same time saving a place for the anti-democratic impulse that lies at the core of what is unique in Nietzsche's political philosophy. In the context of the recent debate over the taming or domestication of Nietzsche my position attempts to mediate between the conflicting views that Nietzsche is either an anti-democratic thinker on the one hand or that he is an under-determined democratic thinker on the other hand.[106] My conclusion is that Nietzsche's

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[106]See Ruth Abbey, Fredrick Appel, and Mark Warren, "Critical Exchange: Domesticating Nietzsche" *Political Theory* 27, no. 1 (1999): 121-130.

power relation conception of the political is closely linked to the idea of hierarchy and is therefore not transmissible within the context of our present-day values. Thus, my reading affirms a multiplicity of appropriations while at the same time resisting the recent trend in Nietzsche interpretation to read Foucault or Deleuze back into Nietzsche's political philosophy.[107] I now turn to a critique of agonal-democratic readings of Nietzsche to demonstrate, further, the importance of leaving a space for the anti-democratic Nietzsche.

[107]Appreciating the uniqueness of philosophers was extremely important for Nietzsche too. In *The Gay Science* he writes: "Those who want to mediate between two resolute thinkers show that they are mediocre: they lack eyes for seeing what is unique. Seeing things as similar and making things the same is the sign of weak eyes." (GS 228).

CHAPTER THREE - AGONISTIC DEMOCRACY

The recent trend to construct a normative democratic theory out of Nietzsche's philosophy has led to the tentative and controversial proposition that a new political vision of the Left ought to draw upon Nietzsche's rendering of the Greek *agon*, or "contest", to form its basic structure.[108] In the last chapter I referred to this approach as the agonal-democratic reading of Nietzsche but instead of addressing the agonal-democratic theory straight away I paused first to consider Foucault's and Deleuze's characterizations of Nietzsche's thought since they appear to have inspired the agonal-democratic position to a significant extent. In this chapter I turn to a more focussed consideration of the agonal-democratic argument but I refer to it as the theory of agonistic democracy and in doing so I move from a consideration of the poststructuralist reading that encouraged it to a direct analysis of the specific political project Nietzsche's thought is said to engender.

There are several versions of agonistic democracy and what they share is a theory of institutionalised competitive pluralism derived from Nietzschean building blocks. Of course elements of a competitive or agonistic pluralism may be found in the work of recent liberal theorists as well and indeed as far back as J. S. Mill's *On Liberty*.[109] But I am obviously concerned with the most recent Nietzschean versions of political pluralism. By referring to *the* theory of agonistic democracy I mean those core elements of the various theories of agonistic democracy that are uniquely Nietzschean and at the same time of normative interest in terms of a shared theoretical response to the fact of pluralism.

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[108]William Connolly, *Identity/Difference* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991); David Owen, *Nietzsche, Politics, and Modernity* (London: Sage Publications, 1995); Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993); Lawrence Hatab, *A Nietzschean Defence of Democracy* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995).

[109]Cf. John Gray, *Post-Liberalism: studies in political thought* (London: Routledge, 1996) and William Galston, *Liberal Purposes: goods, virtues, and diversity in the liberal state* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

I develop my analysis in this chapter within a framework comparing the theory of agonistic democracy to John Rawls's theory of political liberalism. Given the adversarial status that proponents of agonistic democracy (agonists) confer upon Rawls in particular, I set out to compare and contrast the theory of agonistic democracy to Rawls's theory of political liberalism in an attempt to assess the claims of agonists according to the force of the Nietzschean elements in their theories that are meant to rival certain controversial elements in Rawls's theory. By uncovering the limitations of the democratic Nietzsche, in this context, I continue my efforts to re-focus the discussion on developing a better framework for understanding what is uniquely political in Nietzsche's thought.

I begin with a brief summary of the argument of the last chapter but within the context of William Connolly's attempt to politicize a Foucault-inspired reading of Nietzsche. I then move on to an account of the agonist position against Rawls. At this point I turn to a consideration of "perspectivism" and "agonistic respect" as Nietzschean ideas that are dealt with controversially in the theory of agonistic democracy. I conclude the chapter by discussing the limitations of the reading of Nietzsche that is the motor-force of the political theory of agonistic democracy.

William Connolly and the Foucaultian nature of agonistic democracy

Nietzsche does not produce arguments in a way that is typical of most thinkers. Instead, he often presents himself as an *agent provocateur* whose ideas follow in the wake of *ad hominem* attacks on earlier philosophers. For this reason Nietzsche may be considered combative in a way that reflects and augments *his* approach to philosophy. Indeed, Nietzsche's consistent attempts to focus our attention on the link between a thinker's ideas and that thinker's actual ethical life, is representative of Nietzsche's own unique approach to assessing the value of the philosophical activity. Thus, Nietzsche may be thought of as

engaging in a very real or very lived philosophical "contest" and it is this agonistic approach to the philosophical life that he may be said to project on to his extra-moral philosophers of the future. I argue that agonists fail to appreciate this aspect of Nietzsche's thought and in doing so they narrow the political in Nietzsche by reducing agonism to the level of democratic political pluralism.

Agonistic democracy is the product of a Foucaultian interpretation of Nietzsche. William Connolly, one of the most influential and prolific proponents of agonistic democracy, develops his approach to politicizing Nietzsche on the basis of the claim that Nietzsche's philosophy is void of any unambiguous political structure.[110] Thus, Connolly describes his interpretation as a "political thematization of Nietzschean sentiments".[111] Connolly states that, in forming a political vision, "I use Nietzsche to fill out Foucault and Foucault to fill out Nietzsche until we reach a perspective I am willing to endorse."[112] Now this is a fairly accurate self-characterization but what is most significant, with respect to what I have described as being uniquely political in Nietzsche, is that Connolly may also be said to read a Foucaultian standpoint back into Nietzsche. And in doing so Connolly relies on the claim that Nietzsche's so-called agonism is simply open-ended and straightforwardly amenable to a Foucaultian articulation.[113] As mentioned above, this is based on the assumption that the unsystematic nature of Nietzsche's thought precludes it from constituting a "political

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[110]See the following texts for a comprehensive look at the development of Connolly's political thought. In each of these contributions the basic position of agonistic democracy is presented to a greater or lesser degree. William Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988); *Identity/Difference* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991); "Beyond Good and Evil: The Ethical Sensibility of Michel Foucault" *Political Theory* 21, no. 3 (1993); *The Augustinian Imperative* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993); *The Ethos of Pluralization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); "A Critique of Pure Politics" *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 24, no. 1 (1997).

[111]Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, p. 197.

[112]Connolly, "Beyond Good and Evil", p. 368.

[113]See Mark Redhead and William Connolly, "Nietzsche and Liberal Democracy: a Relationship of Antagonistic Indebtedness?" *The Journal of Political Philosophy* vol. 5, no. 2 (1997): 183-193.

theory" *per se* and this particular Foucaultian characterization establishes the resistance standpoint within the non-state conception of power relations that I discussed in the last chapter. In other words, the Foucaultian characterization articulates the political in Nietzsche within a democratic framework of "resistance" to hierarchy broadly speaking. And this makes agonistic democracy an extension of the "levelling" approach to pluralism or "difference" that I identified in the last chapter.

Connolly does admit that Nietzsche's elitist or aristocratic sentiments have some bearing on the nature of his positive ethical teachings but for Connolly this only adds to the reasons for giving Nietzsche a Foucaultian gloss rather than alerting us to the likelihood that there is more of a structure to Nietzsche's arguments than might be evident at first glance. Therefore, what gets lost in the Foucaultian gloss is the unique extra-moral nature of the ethic of self-overcoming. Instead of seeing self-overcoming as a product of hierarchy, of the uniquely political in Nietzsche, Connolly and other Foucault-inspired political theorists tend to see the ethic of self-overcoming as a highly individualized ethic *in need* of politicization. These theorists fail to acknowledge the connection between the ethic of self-overcoming and the extra-moral philosophical agonism that is produced by a hierarchically ordered set of power relations.

The following characterization by Leslie Thiele is representative of a position that he and many others share with Connolly:

> Nietzsche's struggle to order his soul led him to disdain and depreciate politics. Foucault opted for its proliferation. In short, Foucault politicized what Nietzsche had internalized: the will to struggle.[114]

What has occurred in this Foucaultian gloss on Nietzsche's ideas is the complete eradication of the uniquely political which issues from Nietzsche's ontology of will to power. On this interpretation the will to power becomes the will to struggle and the will to

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[114]Leslie Paul Thiele, "The Agony of Politics: The Nietzschean Roots of Foucault's Thought" *American Political Science Review* 84, no. 3 (1990): 923.

struggle is interpreted as "resistance". The ethic of struggle as resistance which Foucault champions is something altogether different from the ethic of self-overcoming Nietzsche establishes according to the will to power. Resistance replaces domination or exploitation in this rendering and the political in Foucault is read back into Nietzsche subverting the political as hierarchy and value creation. The political in Foucault, as Jon Simons puts it, aims "to prevent the solidification of strategic relations into patterns of domination by maintaining the openness of agonistic relations."[115] In this way, Connolly and other agonists are able to eschew Nietzsche's extra-moral philosophical agonism and re-think agonism in terms of democratic pluralism.

The ethical argument of the philosophy of agonistic relations seeks to advance the notion of "agonistic respect" between competing identities. Connolly describes the ethic of agonistic respect as the recognition of contingent identity on the part of individuals and groups who realize that the sustained conflict and competition between different identities and conceptions of the good is crucial to the further maintenance and expression of one's life:

> You could not be what you are unless some possibilities of life had been forgone ("to do is to forgo"). And you now depend upon the difference of the other for your identity. Recognition of these conditions of strife and interdependence, especially when such recognition contains an element of mutuality, can flow into an ethic in which adversaries are respected and maintained in a mode of agonistic mutuality, an ethic in which alter-identities foster agonistic respect for the differences that constitute them, an ethic of care for life.[116]

Based on the idea of agonistic respect, Connolly attempts to articulate political relations in terms of an "ethos of engagement" wherein the issue of contingent identity, of pluralism, is admitted into the institutional framework of politics.[117] And this is the foundation on which the political theory of agonistic democracy is built.

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[115]Jon Simons, *Foucault and the political* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 4.

[116]Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, p. 166.

[117]Connolly, "A Critique of Pure Politics", pp. 20-21.

the meaning of agonism

Against this Foucaultian appropriation of Nietzschean agonism, I argue that there is an important tension between Foucault and Nietzsche with respect to the use of the Greek *agon* and that this must be properly acknowledged and accounted for. For Nietzsche, the *agon* describes ethical relations amongst the noblest types and there is no "agonism" which is descriptive of social or political relations amongst contingent identities *equally* across society. Therefore, Foucault's description of the resistance standpoint within power relations as an agonism is particularly un-Nietzschean.

Nietzsche's use of the Greek *agon* is limited to a discussion of the ethical life of the Greeks in an early essay entitled *Homer on Competition* (HOC). What is significant about the *agon*, or contest, is that it should be interpreted more in terms of an ethic of struggle amongst strong and independent *equals* rather than an ethic of struggle as *resistance*. This would explain why Nietzsche sometimes refers to power relations in terms of domination but never in terms of agonism. To refer to power relations as agonism would be to confuse the difference between the ethic of struggle the nobles engage in amongst themselves and the nature of force relations between noble will to power and slave will to power which may never be understood in terms of a struggle amongst *equal* forces.

Taking this point a little further, if we look for some kind of agonism in Nietzsche's mature thought it would have to be seen as being particular to his so-called highest types or *Übermenschen* rather than as a description of power relations in general as Foucault sees it. Where we can find evidence of what might be referred to as agonism in Nietzsche's mature thought it is invariably a product of relations amongst equals as in the case where Nietzsche himself appears to compete for philosophical glory with the philosophers of the past including, and amongst his favourites, Socrates, Plato, and Kant. Another example of

this agonism might be found in the section "Of the Friend" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Z, *Of the Friend)*. Nietzsche's recommendation that we make our friend our greatest enemy makes sense for his highest types in terms of a contest or "agonism" of self-overcoming but not between higher and lower types who Nietzsche clearly feels ought to be segregated. And I take this up at greater length later toward the end of the chapter where I discuss the integrity of Connolly's notion of agonistic respect. The point for Nietzsche, however, is that the doctrine of equality which typifies democratic values is a levelling equality that prevents the noble will to power from re-emerging. This formulation is the crux of Nietzsche's ontological hypothesis and if we are to say that Nietzsche *promotes* a specific conception of "equal relations", it would only make sense amongst the so-called highest types of the extra-moral period. Equality is always understood to be *inter pares* within Nietzsche's framework of power (cf. BGE 30, 44, 219, 221, 259, 265).

Foucault's interpretation appears to see agonism as a way of avoiding the reduction of difference to sameness, or the unity of identity, and this is the approach that Connolly and others pick up on. Along these lines Foucaultian agonism might be thought to meet the requirements of democratic equality while avoiding an equality of sameness. But what Foucault means by "difference" is definitely not what Nietzsche means and the interpretation of "difference" and "agonism", in the theory of agonistic democracy, is highly questionable as a conception directly attributable to Nietzsche. In other words, attributing an agonistic and levelling politics of difference to Nietzsche represents little more than reading Foucault back into Nietzsche.

In summary, my position on "agonism" in Nietzsche is that it is only directly attributable to his thought as "philosophical agonism" and philosophical agonism appears in two distinct forms in his writings. Philosophical agonism means either the competition Nietzsche imagines between himself and the philosophers of the western tradition or it

means a "friend/enemy" form of agonistic respect amongst Nietzsche's philosophers of the future. But in neither case is there evidence that agonism in Nietzsche is universalizable *within* power relations writ large. Therefore, agonism is only possible *inter pares*. And I also want to emphasize the fact that although the Greeks had their own unique framework for the production of excellence, that included the *agon* as an institutional check on tyranny and chaos, there is no clear link between agonism and excellence in Nietzsche's positive teachings insofar as he offers no unambiguous conception of what constitutes "excellence".[118]

the agonists and Rawls

In constructing his theory of political liberalism, John Rawls seeks to articulate the political in terms of a shared "identity". And he distinguishes this notion of identity as separate from what he refers to as a conception of the good.[119] Rawls states that:

> [I]n the well-ordered society of justice as fairness citizens share a common aim, and one that has a high priority: namely, the aim of political justice, that is, the aim of ensuring that political and social institutions are just, and of giving justice to persons generally, as what citizens need for themselves and want for one another. It is not true, then, that on a liberal view citizens have no fundamental common aims. Nor is it true that the aim of political justice is not an important part of their identity (using the term 'identity', as is now often done, to include the basic aims and projects by reference to which we characterize the kind of person we very much want to be). But this common aim of political justice must not be mistaken for ... a conception of the good.[120]

The characterisation of political justice as political "identity" is important to my analysis of agonistic democracy because agonists appear to think that, by imposing one fixed notion of identity, a liberal notion of identity, onto all groups and individuals, Rawls is guilty of

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[118]I discuss this at greater length in chapter 4. The point is that independent value creation is, as a form of life, so radically individualized that there is no standard of excellence between value creating types that is communicable, according to Nietzsche's presentation of the concept.

[119]John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 19-20. Here Rawls offers a lengthy definition of what he means by a conception of the good.

[120]John Rawls, "The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus" *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1987): 10, n. 17.

"negating" the plurality of identities and "denying" them access to the public sphere where they might otherwise be allowed to flourish as "political" identities. However, if it can be shown that agonists themselves are unable to establish basic egalitarian principles due to a weak interpretation of Nietzschean ideas, then the point about political "identity" becomes far less significant.

My summary of the agonist position against Rawls is that agonists share the conviction that Rawlsian "neutrality" toward competing doctrines of the good places unreasonable restrictions on public discourse and needlessly inhibits the development and expression of "difference". Restrictions on public discourse are considered unreasonable in part due to the fact that issues concerning the good continually find their way back into the public sphere anyway and therefore require access to public expression in a way that satisfies their ever-emerging nature as public issues. On my reading of their collective position, agonists claim that in giving priority to the right over the good, Rawlsian neutralists prematurely dismiss the possibility that competing conceptions of the good might be susceptible to the kind of rational consensus that both ensures stability yet allows for a more robust expression of individual and collective identity. The notion of competing doctrines of the good is best described as the fact of pluralism. Contrary to the position of Rawlsian neutralists, agonists appear to believe that this fact may be mediated in a way that allows difference to flourish in the public sphere.

I will now introduce the agonist position with reference to the criticisms that Chantal Mouffe levels against Rawls's theory. Mouffe is not a "Nietzschean" agonist but I make use of her position in an introductory way since her discussion makes certain points in relation to Rawls that helps clarify the theory of agonistic democracy. Chantal Mouffe characterizes the fact of pluralism as uniquely modern and she criticizes Rawls for failing to fully appreciate this fact. Thus, she suggests that the crucial difference for us, between

ancient and modern democracy, is the latter's acceptance of pluralism:

> Such a recognition of pluralism implies a profound transformation in the symbolic ordering of social relations. This is something that is totally missed when one refers, like John Rawls, to the *fact* of pluralism. There is, of course, a fact which is the diversity of the conceptions of the good that we find in a liberal society. But the important difference is not an empirical one; it concerns the *symbolic* level. What is at stake is the legitimation of conflict and division, the emergence of individual liberty, and the assertion of equal liberty for all.[121]

Mouffe acknowledges that the Rawlsian position recognizes the fact of pluralism but she insists that it is insensitive to the political needs of a pluralistic ethos. On Mouffe's view, liberty and equality follow from the full recognition and expression of difference. In other words, it is only the full recognition and expression of the conflict and contest which exists between and amongst competing conceptions of the good that ensures democratic equality and liberty in a uniquely modern way. Here, Mouffe's notion of democratic equality and liberty ought to be understood as non-Rawlsian insofar as the priority of conceptions of the good is re-asserted in a uniquely agonistic way. The idea of justice which attaches to her view is built on the notion that the institutionalised expression of the conflict and division between conceptions of the good, at the political level, is the only way to ensure equality and liberty for all.

Therefore, this conception of pluralism is meant to rival Rawls's claim about justice as fairness. What I argue below, however, is that the Nietzschean-agonist position is a hollow one built on a specious interpretation of the Nietzschean concepts of "perspectivism" and "agonistic respect". I argue that neither perspectivism nor agonistic respect, as they appear in Nietzsche's philosophy, can guarantee egalitarian justice.

Rawls emphasizes the nature of individuals as citizens and not their non-public identities. His response is worked out in terms of the notion of justice as fairness and is described as the theory of political liberalism. Rawls argues that the most reasonable political

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[121]Chantal Mouffe, "Democracy, Power, and 'the Political'" in *Democracy and Difference*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 246.

conception of justice for a democratic constitutional regime is a liberal conception. In turn, he draws his "organising idea" from what he identifies as public political reason. This organising idea is "that of society as a fair system of social cooperation between free and equal persons viewed as fully cooperating members of society over a complete life".[122] Thus, Rawls introduces what he refers to as the overlapping consensus which orders the political sphere.[123] Justice as fairness represents an overlapping consensus which forms our political identity insofar as it mirrors "the shared fund of implicitly recognized basic ideas and principles" which form public culture.[124] The difference between "identity" and "the good", which Rawls articulates in terms of a conception of political justice is distinguished in terms of the values or conceptions which exist in the public political realm rather than as the truth of any one philosophical or moral doctrine. Grounding his claims in what represents our public political reason is the only way to render those claims publicly justifiable given the fact of pluralism.[125]

Thus, Rawls claims to have replaced a comprehensive Kantian liberalism with a purely political liberalism.[126] Now this may be a difficult position to sustain without conceding certain limitations and agonists focus their attack on certain misleading aspects of Rawls's argument. However, concerning the competing claims of agonists, it needs to be asked whether or not the theory of agonistic democracy derived from Nietzsche's philosophy can compete with political liberalism given Nietzsche's limitations as an egalitarian thinker. If, as I argue, the Nietzschean foundations of agonistic democracy do not yield an

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[122]Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, p. 9.

[123]Ibid, pp. 132-172.

[124]Ibid, p. 8.

[125]Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 207.

[126]Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, p. 172.

unambiguous egalitarian framework for political autonomy, then it may be concluded that Rawls's theory is, still, more appropriate to our present-day circumstances and demands despite the tensions in it that agonists are critical of.

The agonist David Owen elaborates his criticisms of Rawlsian liberalism from a Nietzschean standpoint where he describes Rawls's overlapping consensus as "anti-perfectionist state neutrality".[127] Owen observes that what is central to Rawls's anti-perfectionist position is that there can be no exceptions to the rule that the autonomy of persons as citizens would necessarily be breached under any attempt to unify modern political society according to a conception of the good.[128] Here Owen offers closer scrutiny of Rawls's claim to a neutrality which presupposes an anti-perfectionist position concerning the autonomy of persons as citizens. According to Owen the problem is not that neutrality fails to address the concern that the conflict between conceptions of the good may lead to social disagreement but rather that it is disingenuous to claim neutrality in the event of various "perfectionist" social agreements. In other words, in the event of increasing social agreement with respect to a particular perfectionist conception of the good, for instance, neutrality might have to be abandoned, and a comprehensive liberal doctrine be re-imposed, in order to protect the non-perfectionist autonomy of all citizens. Thus, Owen claims that the "neutral" quality of Rawls's theory, the quality that is intended to make the theory "political" rather than "comprehensive", is misleading and unsustainable.

Owen's criticisms echo the observations of Mulhall and Swift with respect to the anti-perfectionist position Rawls maintains on the autonomy of citizens:

> But the establishment of, and state action designed to reflect, reasonable social agreement upon some aspect of a perfectionist comprehensive doctrine could result in a localized but definite

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[127]Owen, *Nietzsche, Politics, and Modernity*, p. 155.

[128]Ibid.

> encroachment upon the autonomy of citizens as Rawls understands it and how could someone substantively committed to an anti-perfectionist liberal polity regard such a consequence as permissible or just?[129]

In pointing out that under certain circumstances Rawls's understanding of autonomy would have to be re-asserted, Mulhall and Swift suggest that, at bottom, Rawls still relies on a comprehensive liberal doctrine of the good to secure what should be limited to a purely political doctrine of non-perfectionist autonomy. Given the inconsistency of Rawls's claims in this context, Owen concludes:

> In the face of pluralism, this defence admits the controversy it was designed to avoid. Thus it appears that Rawls must *either* give up the strong connection between anti-perfectionism and autonomy modelled by his political conception of justice *or* recognise the unsustainability of the distinction between political and comprehensive liberalism.[130]

Rawls himself admits that in certain circumstances where individuals, holding comprehensive religious and philosophical doctrines, attempt to assert perfectionist ideals the state may have no other choice but to impose elements of a comprehensive liberal doctrine in an effort to maintain the authority of an non-perfectionist conception of justice.[131] Thus, Owen's point is valid. However, Rawls, in admitting the difficulty of maintaining neutrality under certain circumstances, directs our focus back to the non-perfectionist conception of political justice that may, nevertheless, remain the most accurate description of a so-called shared political "identity".

Now what is immediately significant here is the fact that Owen's criticisms represent the position agonists tend to adopt in response to the inconsistency of Rawls's claim to a purely political liberalism. In response, Owen and others seek to advance the claim that the competition between comprehensive doctrines can only be dealt with reasonably once it is acknowledged that all views, including liberal arguments for political justice, are

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[129]Mulhall and Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians*, p. 225.

[130]Owen, *Nietzsche, Politics, and Modernity*, p. 159.

[131]Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, p. 152.

inextricably linked to certain larger conceptions of the good. In this way, Mouffe argues that Rawlsian politics reduces what ought to be a vibrant public arena of "difference" to the level of "a struggle on the part of minorities and so called interest groups to assert their rights."[132]

The shared position advanced by agonists like Mouffe and Owen, in both theoretical and practical terms, is best represented in the following remarks by William Connolly:

> The issues of identity and the good thus cannot be excluded from public discourse. They inevitably seep back into the public arena in one way or another whenever attempts are made to exclude them by procedural means. The connections between personal and collective identity must be engaged overtly and politically if they are not to spawn a collective politics that unconsciously represses difference in the name of neutrality.[133]

Thus, agonists oppose Rawls in favour of a politicized model of pluralism. This model celebrates difference and promotes the fair competition between diverse claims to identity within the public sphere. But what is most significant about the agonist notion of pluralism, at least for my purposes, is that it represents an egalitarian articulation of the Nietzschean concepts of perspectivism and agonistic respect.

agonistic perspectivism

Central to the theory of agonistic democracy is an appeal to the perspectivist contingency of identity. In his rendering of a so-called Nietzschean agonism, Lawrence Hatab claims that identities are contingent insofar as one perspective necessarily relies on an "other's", conflicting and opposing, perspective in order to remain self-coherent. Hatab attributes this view to Nietzsche in his *On the Genealogy of Morals* where Nietzsche presents the conflict between master and slave in terms of a competition between moral perspectives. Hatab concludes:

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[132]Mouffe, "Democracy, Power, and 'the Political'", p. 247.

[133]Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, p. 161.

> The bottom line in Nietzsche's genealogy, then, is that *every* perspective is mixed with its Other. Such a mixture has two components: First, a perspective needs its Other as an *agonistic correlate*, since opposition is part of a perspective's constitution; second, a perspective can never escape a certain *complicity* with elements of its Other. Conflict, therefore, is not simply to be tolerated; affirming oneself requires the affirmation of conflict, since the self is not something that is first fully formed and then, secondarily, presented to the world for possible relations and conflicts. The self is formed *in* and *through* agonistic relations. So in a way openness toward one's Other is openness toward oneself.[134]

On Hatab's view, Nietzsche's concepts of perspectivism and agonism are conjoined and together this notion of agonistic perspectivism may be "cashed out as a model for political pluralism".[135]

I introduced my position on Nietzsche's "perspectivism" in chapter one with reference to Maudemarie Clark's interpretation of it. With respect to the political appropriation of perspectivism agonists employ, it may be helpful to re-visit her interpretation in order to judge the credibility of the agonist account. Hatab's interpretation of Nietzsche is representative of the position agonists maintain on the issue of relations of "identity". What is essential to this interpretation of Nietzsche is the egalitarian "political" gloss on perspectivism. Interpreting Nietzsche's perspectivism as an argument for the equally contingent and competing nature of all perspectives (identities) allows agonists to make the further claim that all perspectives are equally "politically" valid *in this respect*. Therefore, what must be considered is what Clark's position would be on this particular conception of perspectivism.

Clark addresses this relativist interpretation where she offers a critique of Alexander Nehamas's account of perspectivism.[136] Thus, Nehamas may be said to offer the account of perspectivism that informs the agonist position or at least the account that is most like the

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[134]Hatab, *A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy*, p. 48.

[135]Ibid. Hatab, in a later footnote, acknowledges his debt to Connolly and suggests that his project ought to serve as an attempt to further extend the argument for the thematization of Nietzsche's thought in a contemporary democratic context (Hatab, p. 254).

[136]Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, pp. 154-158.

one agonists adopt. Nehamas states:

> Perspectivism does not result in the relativism that holds that my view is as good as any other; it holds that one's own views are the best for oneself without implying that they need be good for anyone else.[137]

This form of relativism establishes the equal validity of perspectives as *competing* perspectives but it must be emphasized that Nehamas's claim is articulated at an epistemological level rather than a political level. David Owen may be seen to offer the politicized version of Nehamas's interpretation where he writes:

> [T]his thesis regards perspectives as having an equal right to claim epistemic authority and only rules out the attempt by certain perspectives (e.g. Kant's) to deny this right to all other perspectives. The modelling of this theory of truth as a political theory entails that persons holding particular substantive perspectives on the good have an equal right to claim political authority and that the only position ruled out is that of denying this equal right to those whom we disagree with.[138]

In this movement from epistemological perspectivism to political perspectivism, Owen appears to be suggesting that the Kantian claim to non-perspectival knowledge is inferior to "perspectivism" at the political level as well as at the epistemological level. However, no clear argument is made as to how this movement is internally consistent. In other words, Kant's epistemological position is not the same as Rawls's political position. Rawls does not claim that political liberalism is a non-perspectival political perspective but, rather, that it constitutes the best description of political justice given the fact of pluralism.

Thus, Owen claims that Rawls and Nietzsche actually share the belief that modernity is formed by the fact of an irreconcilable pluralism concerning doctrines of the good but, according to Owen's Nietzsche, it is possible to re-think the question of democratic equality in terms of the Nietzschean conception of agonism between competing comprehensive doctrines. Thus, it may appear as though Owen's version rules out Kant's, and therefore Rawls's, position in much the same way that Nietzsche's perspectivism rules

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[137]Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 72.

[138]Owen, *Nietzsche, Politics, and Modernity*, p. 160.

out the non-perspectival perspective as absurd and therefore cognitively inferior (cf. GM III, 12). However, Nietzsche's perspectivism is merely a rhetorical move that allows him to escape the metaphysical correspondence theory of truth. Perspectivism does not, in other words, translate politically, for example, as an epistemological reply to Kant and at the same time as a political response to Rawls. Rawls's non-perfectionist neutrality is not a non-perspectival political perspective and it seems inaccurate for Owen to suggest such an association.

It is furthermore worth considering what Clark has to say about the Nehamasian interpretation Owen may be thought to rely on. The key to Clark's critique is, as presented in the first chapter, her ability to pinpoint how the relativist theory fails to account adequately for Nietzsche's view that some perspectives are false. Clark's critique is as follows:

> If there are always competing perspectives that are as good as our own, then it is not merely the case that perspectivism itself could be false. Rather, from some equally legitimate perspective, it is false. Further, in making all beliefs equally true, his interpretation makes them all false. Only the whole that incorporates them all is true... Nehamas can defend perspectivism against these objections by reducing it to anti-foundationalism. In that case, however, perspectivism will not explain Nietzsche's claim that knowledge falsifies or any other claim about truth.[139]

Clark's point is that a purely anti-foundational position with respect to perspectival truths has no way of distinguishing what is true from what is false without re-entering the framework of the falsification thesis. Since we know that perspectivism establishes the possibility that certain claims could be truer than others, we know that Nietzsche did not adopt a simple anti-foundationalist standpoint on truth. Thus, another factor making political perspectivism a doubtful appropriation is the fact that it has no framework for establishing certain political perspectives as "truer" or "better" than others in any way.

Clark's criticisms of Nehamas's interpretation, in light of Owen's politicization, appear to establish the fact that the particular version of relativism at work in this interpretation

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[139]Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, pp. 157-158.

leads to a rather Hegelian conclusion about all perspectives being true/valid only in the actualization of the political whole. As Clark herself suggests, "[w]e have here the Hegelian view that truth is the whole, in which beliefs lose their partiality by abandoning their claim to be the whole truth."[140] Of course, on my view, it is inappropriate for agonists to attribute this kind of egalitarian relativism to Nietzsche in the first place because it denies the role of hierarchy in his thought. Diana Coole makes a similar point where she writes:

> To collapse perspectivism into relativism is to render Nietzsche an advocate of what he saw as symptomatic of modernity's decadence, while re-situating his political significance within the politics of the egalitarian ideologies he condemned as nihilistic sickness.[141]

What is clear from this brief discussion of perspectivism is that the equality of perspectives, and therefore identities or conceptions of the good is not something that may be directly attributable to Nietzsche's philosophy. Given Clark's account of perspectivism, it appears as though agonists like Owen, for example, would force Nietzsche back into the purely anti-foundationalist or neo-Kantian position he actually attempted to overcome by developing his notion of hierarchically ordered perspectival knowledge. Furthermore, adapting Nietzsche's perspectivism to an account of political pluralism obscures what is uniquely political in Nietzsche.

excellence and agonistic respect as hierarchically determined concepts

Nietzsche explains how, in ancient Greek society, grudge and envy, as goads to mens' actions, were channelled into an interest in competition and away from the kind of struggles to the death that such emotions were capable of inciting. In this way, envy was considered a blessing and a natural invitation to compete with others. Thus, Nietzsche

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[140]Ibid, p. 157.

[141]Coole, "The Politics of Reading Nietzsche", p. 359.

documents the Hellenic teaching that "every talent must develop through a struggle" (HOC 192). Greek competition or agonism, generally speaking, is understood by Nietzsche as an ethos which allowed life to continue and the Greek state to exist.

Agonists bypass a concern for the meaning of the *agon* to the lives of the Greeks and the life of the Greek state in favour of an interest in those elements of Greek agonism that appear to be relevant to modern pluralism. In this way, agonists focus on the element of ostracism which allowed Greek society to perpetuate itself, striving for excellence. What agonists emphasize is the institutionalization of ostracism wherein a hegemonic force is ostracised in order to perpetuate the competition amongst the remaining forces in society. Thus, Bonnie Honig remarks:

> According to Nietzsche, it was for the sake of the contest that the Greeks practised ostracism. In contrast to most commentators, who see ostracism as proof of the Greek demos' intolerance of excellence, Nietzsche sees the practice as evidence of the Greek commitment to the promotion of excellence. It banishes those strong enough to dominate the agon in order to keep the agon open.[142]

Ostracism, in terms of agonistic democracy, would appear to correspond with Owen's recommendation to exclude any Kantian-neutralist perspectives from the political sphere. Hence, what agonists derive from Nietzsche's rendering of the Greek *agon* is the notion of an institutionalised competitive pluralism. The hope is to construct a set of democratic political arrangements wherein difference may be allowed to flourish and excellence may be pursued at the same time.

With these goals in mind, Hatab reaches the following conclusions:

> Nietzsche argued that the Greek agon represented a *cultivation* of destructive instincts which did not strive for the annihilation of the Other, but rather an arranged contest that would test skill and performance in a competition. In this way, strife produced excellence, not obliteration, since talent unfolded in a struggle with a competitor.[143]

Yet this flourishing of difference combined with a pursuit of excellence appears to

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[142]Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*, p. 70.

[143]Hatab, *A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy*, p. 62.

represent a rather superficial reading and appropriation of ethical conceptions particular to the ancient world. What is superficial about this reading is the denial of what "excellence" represents and the political structure of society, writ large, that was required to produce excellence in the Greek context.

The framework for excellence in the Greek context is a hierarchy built on the institution of slavery. Similarly, according to my interpretation of Nietzsche's political framework, "excellence" for him is also made possible because of hierarchical power relations. Of course, for Nietzsche, excellence would have to be understood in terms of independent value creation but, as I argue in the next chapter, this particular form of excellence is partially incomprehensible. Therefore, excellence in Nietzsche's case is obscure but hierarchically produced.

In light of the significance of hierarchy to both the Greek and Nietzschean contexts, this characterization of excellence would be incomprehensible as a democratic perfectionist conception of autonomy because neither the Greek version of "self-mastery" nor the Nietzschean version of value creation is circumscribed within a political framework that is "egalitarian" according to our contemporary standards of universality. What Nietzsche admires most about the Greeks is the association of art to the ethical lives of the Greeks who participate at the highest level of culture. In this way, he affirms the fact of slavery and the necessity of hierarchy for the production of art and ethical relations of the kind the Greeks produced.

Nietzsche is well aware of the profound differences between what he admired in the Greeks and what is lacking in modern European political culture:

> The misery of men living a life of toil has to be increased to make the production of the world of art possible for a small number of Olympian men. Here we find the source of the hatred which has been nourished by the Communists and Socialists as well as their paler descendants, the white race of 'Liberals' of every age against the arts, but also against classical antiquity. (TGS 179)

The production of culture in terms of the production of excellence is the common thread that connects Nietzsche's philosophical and ethical concerns from his earliest period to his untimely breakdown. Indeed, it is my position that it is only in terms of the production of hierarchy and the *Übermensch* that the term "political" is uniquely applicable to Nietzsche at all. Given the reality of Nietzsche's sentiments, especially in terms of his recognition that modernity fails to offer the type of ethical landscape on which his hierarchical political architecture might be realised, it is obvious that Nietzsche's criticisms of modern European culture are not intended to serve as a prelude to the kind of normative democratic theorising that agonists take them to be.

Rather than articulating a theory of political equality, Nietzsche is interested in exploring the possibilities of inequality. This is a non-negotiable element of Nietzsche's uniquely political concerns, since what he emphasizes most in his interpretation of Greek culture, with respect to his own political sentiments, is not so much the ethic of respect the Greeks may be thought to have exhibited toward their agonistic rivals but instead the broad social framework of a hierarchical society whose main concern is the cultivation of excellence. It may be that there is a case to be made for the interpretation of Nietzsche's agonism as "agonistic respect" but this is not strictly speaking an egalitarian element of his thought in the modern democratic sense that Connolly, for example, suggests. Nietzsche's unique political vision, which I believe exists in conjunction with his ethical concerns, puts him at odds with modernity and its efforts to advance the cause of democratic equality and liberty.

Nevertheless, it may be helpful to explain my position with reference to the specific Nietzschean passages that are thought to establish the idea of "agonistic respect". The idea of agonistic respect, as introduced earlier in the chapter, comes from Nietzsche's peculiar thoughts, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* on the nature of friendship. In *Thus Spoke*

Zarathustra Nietzsche writes:

> And often with our love we only want to leap over envy. And often we attack and make an enemy in order to conceal that we are vulnerable to attack. 'At least be my enemy!' - thus speaks the true reverence (*so spricht die wahre Ehrfurcht*), that does not venture to ask for friendship. If you want a friend, you must also be willing to wage war for him: and to wage war, you must be *capable* of being an enemy. You should honour even the enemy in your friend. Can you go near to your friend without going over to him? In your friend you should possess your best enemy. Your heart should feel closest to him when you oppose him. (Z, *Of the Friend)*

What agonists are interested in, in this passage, is the idea of *Ehrfurcht* or "reverence" for one's enemy *as one's friend.* What is helpful to the agonist position is the idea that "one should feel closest to him when you oppose him". This maxim establishes, for agonists, the contingency of identity as an agonistic contingency that demands *Ehrfurcht* between and amongst all parties.

Now it is not my claim that this type of *ethical* framework is either "untrue" or "unhelpful" with respect to identity politics in general but I do insist that it is un-Nietzschean where it is translated into the specific framework of political equality that agonists assume. Nietzsche does not promote this kind of agonism within a universal framework of equality. As I have argued above, any notion of agonistic respect that might be directly attributable to Nietzsche would have to be an *inter pares* agonistic respect. I realize that it could be argued that Nietzsche's eternal recurrence ideal of life-affirmation suggests a certain agonistic respect where it requires the highest type to affirm the slave type, as a precondition of his ascendancy, but strictly speaking the slave type is neither a "friend" nor an "enemy" according to the terms of friendship Nietzsche describes in *Zarathustra*. Indeed, the highest type must affirm the slave type at the same time that he subjects that type to his will to power. The will to power hierarchy in Nietzsche precludes the possibility of "agonistic respect" according to the political structure of agonistic democracy. Therefore, my interpretation establishes the integrity of the claim that what is uniquely political in Nietzsche is contrary to the theory of agonistic democracy.

conclusion

What I have confirmed in this chapter are the limitations of the democratic Nietzsche. The claim that agonistic perspectivism and agonistic respect are at the same time egalitarian and Nietzschean is unsustainable. Having illustrated these limitations, I have also established the fact that because Nietzsche offers no clear egalitarian framework for agonistic equality and autonomy, the theory of agonistic democracy, insofar as it relies on Nietzschean ideas to establish its status as a legitimate rival to Rawls's theory, is unsuccessful.

Given the dubious integrity of the interpretations of perspectivism and agonism that inform the theory of agonistic democracy, it is clear that agonists have no way of guaranteeing democratic equality and liberty according to Nietzsche's philosophy. Seyla Benhabib criticizes the theory of agonistic politics in the following way:

> Agonistic visions of democratic politics inevitably invite the question, How can we be so sure that the agon of episodic politics, or the contest of pluralisms that cannot be adjudicated at the higher levels, will all be instances of good and just democratic politics as opposed to being instances of fascism, xenophobic nationalism, right-wing populism?...How can theorists of agonistic democracy safeguard freedom and justice, respect for the rights of citizens as equal and free beings, if they are unwilling to place some constraints that bind, trump limit, and otherwise confine the will of the sovereign people?[144]

Benhabib's "Kantian" criticisms in this passage are important because they remind us of Rawls's claim about what constitutes a shared political identity. Even if Rawls's non-perfectionist neutrality is unsustainable as a purely political form of liberalism, it, nevertheless, attempts to safeguard the "rights of citizens as equal and free beings" in an unambiguous way. Thus, agonists attack Rawls's notion of political "identity" without realizing that their own position is, still, less reasonable than his in many other respects.

What I suggest is that agonists adopt Nietzsche's anti-Kantian position without making better sense of what that position entails and how it undermines democratic and egalitarian

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[144]Seyla Benhabib, "The Democratic Moment and the Problem of Difference" in *Democracy and Difference*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 8.

structures of thought at all levels. Indeed, Nietzsche's anti-Kantian position requires that he construct a new anti-democratic vision of politics as hierarchy and autonomy as independent value creation. This requirement, that Nietzsche imposes upon himself and his thought, affects all his mature ideas, including his notion of agonistic respect. What I am arguing, however, is not that Nietzsche's various positive teachings are closed to appropriation but simply that they do have a place within Nietzsche's unique and self-contained political thought and therefore their value as democratic ideas may be limited *for that very reason.*

In my discussion of agonistic democracy, including the elements of perspectivism and agonistic respect, I have pointed in general to the anti-democratic nature of Nietzsche political project. In doing so, I touched on the idea that Nietzsche's conception of excellence, his conception of philosophical autonomy, is partially incomprehensible. Therefore, I now turn to a further explication of Nietzschean autonomy with respect to its obscure articulation in his formulations.

CHAPTER FOUR - THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WALTER KAUFMANN'S ARISTOTELIAN NIETZSCHE

In *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist,* Walter Kaufmann emphasizes Nietzsche's apparent debt to Aristotle concerning *greatness of soul.*[145] Kaufmann suggests that Nietzsche's opposition to Christianity "can scarcely be seen in proper perspective apart from Aristotle's ethics".[146] Of course one of Kaufmann's main concerns in this seminal post-war study is to rescue Nietzsche from his reputation as a proto-fascist thinker. Thus, where Kaufmann introduces an Aristotelian Nietzsche he appears to do so as part of a larger effort to dispel all fear of the proto-fascist Nietzsche.[147]

The proto-fascist Nietzsche is the philosopher whose thought is irresponsibly associated with war, eugenics, and race exploitation. In this way, Kaufmann's Aristotelian Nietzsche represents an attempt to overcome the proto-fascist Nietzsche and affirm instead the creative and virtuous Nietzsche directing us toward those great human beings who enjoy an overflowing strength of character. What makes Nietzsche's project acceptable in this context is the promotion of the *Übermensch* as a universally communicable exemplar of virtue.

Kaufmann's move to underline Nietzsche's supposed Aristotelian influence is employed as a way of minimizing the exploitative overtones of Nietzsche's thoughts while, at the same time, maximizing the ideal of the *Übermensch* as a "great-souled man". On Kaufmann's interpretation, however, no genuine effort to make sense of Nietzsche's peculiar views on hierarchy is made. Walter Sokel offers an appropriate summary of

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[145]Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (New York: Meridian Books, 1966), p. 327. Cf. WP 981(*Seelengrösse*); Aristotle, *Ethics*, trans. J. A. K. Thomson (London: Penguin Books, 1976), iv, 3 (*megalopsychia).*

[146]Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, p. 327.

[147]Ibid.

Kaufmann's de-politicization of Nietzsche where he states that:

> [K]aufmann removes the Will to Power from any important connection with political-social considerations. He does not pose the questions which his own emphasis on this element in Nietzsche's thought elicits. The whole political dimension of this thought is bracketed out by Kaufmann. He considers Nietzsche to be an "a-political" thinker, although it was Nietzsche himself who doubted the possibility of such an animal.[148]

Nietzsche's notion of autonomy as value creation is never considered closely in association with his hierarchical conception of relations between active and reactive will to power. Thus, the implication of Kaufmann's reference to Aristotle's influence on Nietzsche is that Nietzsche's great-souled man, his *Übermensch*, ought to be recognized as a *universal* ideal of human virtue. In this way, what makes Nietzsche acceptable is the universal nature of the *Übermensch* as an ideal and this marks Kaufmann's contribution as one of the first and most influential post-war attempts to render Nietzsche respectable.

Since the initial influence of Kaufmann's book a great deal has been written about Nietzsche's philosophy and it is to Kaufmann's credit that he was able to bring about a change in the way Nietzsche was received in the English-speaking world. Yet Kaufmann was able to help render Nietzsche respectable by divorcing his ethical ideal from the implications of the will to power hypothesis. It is ironic, therefore, that today Nietzsche is increasingly read for the political in his thought, since it was Kaufmann who de-politicized Nietzsche and, as I argue in this chapter, it is his apolitical Nietzsche that remains at the heart of recent attempts to establish Nietzsche's relevance to democratic theory.

In this chapter I claim, with respect to Kaufmann's influential analysis, that the apolitical Nietzsche must be seen as an important but inaccurate reading that has since led to other misleading characterizations of the *Übermensch* ideal. But it is not my purpose here to revisit Kaufmann's position in any comprehensive way. In fact, I limit my focus in this short chapter to his brief consideration of Aristotle's influence. What I want to stress is

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[148]Walter Sokel, "Political Uses and Abuses of Nietzsche in Walter Kaufmann's image of Nietzsche" *Nietzsche-Studien* 12 (1983): 438.

that I am not introducing a reassessment of Kaufmann's interpretation to reclaim certain aspects of his work which have either been discredited or improved on over the years. Instead, I want to link what I consider to be a significant underlying premise of Kaufmann's position to the contemporary debate on the nature of the political in Nietzsche's thought. Therefore, I limit my focus to Kaufmann's interpretation of Nietzsche's appropriation of Aristotle's *megalopsychos,* or great-souled man. My conclusion is that Kaufmann's apolitical Nietzsche, presented in Aristotelian terms, has been transformed into a democratic Nietzsche. However, the underlying weaknesses of Kaufmann's original characterization are reproduced in this democratic Nietzsche and this result suggests that our contemporary discourse continues to obscure, overlook, and deny what is uniquely political in Nietzsche.

Nietzsche contra Aristotle and Christianity

Alasdair MacIntyre acknowledges Nietzsche's debt to Aristotle concerning greatness of soul but, unlike Kaufmann, hastens to point out the profound differences between the original rendering and Nietzsche's unique appropriation of it.

> Nietzsche rarely refers explicitly to Aristotle except on aesthetic questions. He *does* borrow the name and notion of "great-souled man" from the *Ethics,* although it becomes in the context of his theory something quite other than it was in Aristotle's. But his interpretation of the history of morality makes it quite clear that the Aristotelian account of ethics and politics would have to rank for Nietzsche with all those degenerate disguises of the will to power which follow from the false turning taken by Socrates.[149]

What MacIntyre refers to as "the false turning taken by Socrates" may be better articulated here as the key element present in both the Aristotelian and Christian value systems that Nietzsche identifies as the life-denying expression of the will to power.[150] What these two

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[149]Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London: Duckworth & Co, 1976), p. 117.

[150]In *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche claims that: "The moralism of the Greek philosophers from Plato downwards is pathologically conditioned: likewise their estimation of dialectics. Reason = virtue = happiness means merely: one must imitate Socrates and counter the dark desires by producing a permanent *daylight* - the daylight of reason. One must be prudent, clear, bright, at any cost: every

moral frameworks have in common is the idea that the good for man is linked to the *telos* of man in terms of that which is achieved through the proper exercise of the virtues and grounded in something other than the human will (i.e. in the metaphysical). MacIntyre associates this connection with the work of Aquinas and his efforts to shape the New Testament according to certain key Aristotelian principles:

> The New Testament's account of the virtues, even if it differs as much as it does in content from Aristotle's - Aristotle would certainly not have admired Jesus Christ and he would have been horrified by St. Paul - does have the same logical and conceptual structure as Aristotle's account. A virtue is, as with Aristotle, a quality the exercise of which leads to the achievement of the human *telos*.[151]

The important connection for Nietzsche is that both the Aristotelian and Christian moral systems share a principle that posits the universally communicable notion of the proper exercise of the virtues as the correct path to the human *telos*.

On Nietzsche's view it is the universality of virtues that makes these two systems life-denying expressions of the will to power because universalism denies the worldly difference separating human types in favour of a metaphysical ideal (WP 315):

> My brother, if you have a virtue and it is your own virtue, you have it in common with no one.
>
> Let your virtue be too exalted for the familiarity of names: and if you have to speak of it, do not be ashamed to stammer. Thus say and stammer: 'This is *my* good, this I love, just thus do I like it, only thus do *I* wish the good. "I do not want it as a law of God, I do not want it as a human statute: let it be no sign-post to superearths and paradises. It is an earthly virtue that I love: there is little prudence in it, and least of all common wisdom" (Z, *Of Joys and Passions*).[152]

For Aristotle, the great-souled man is magnanimous and the virtue of magnanimity "seems to be a sort of crown of the virtues, because it enhances them and is never found apart

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yielding to the instincts, to the unconscious, leads *downwards* ..." (TI, *The Problem of Socrates*, 10). I discuss the significance of Socrates as Nietzsche's arch-rival in the next chapter.

[151]MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 184. Cf. GS 139.

[152]It is important to note that, like Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, Aristotle's great-souled man might not be considered a particularly democratic ideal either, by our standards, but the issue in this chapter is universalism and however un-democratic Aristotle's ethical theory might be the teleological structure of virtue in it is based on a fundamental universalism that Nietzsche's ethical position attempts to overcome.

from them."[153] For Nietzsche, the "self" is known only as a performative self or, rather, as the will to power in action. Therefore, although Nietzsche often refers to certain traits or capabilities, including honesty, solitude, and courage, as virtues there is no conception of the *Übermensch's* magnanimity that would represent the "crown of the virtues" (cf. D 556; BGE 284).

This "anti-universalism", with respect to virtues, must be understood in terms of how *telos* is re-configured in Nietzsche's thought. Nietzsche re-thinks *telos* along anti-universalist lines in order to establish an earthly, as opposed to metaphysical, ideal. In this light, Kaufmann's attempt to describe the *Übermensch* as both creative and exemplary may be seen to ignore this anti-universalism. The *Übermensch* is not an exemplary human being in universal terms but rather an earthly *telos* conceived within a fundamental anti-universalist framework of virtue that separates man as a species from a future type that overcomes him.

In this way *telos* itself is re-configured. For Nietzsche, creativity is understood in terms of the self-legislation of values divorced from a universal framework of virtue and happiness. The reason why there may be no earthly *universal* ideal for Nietzsche is because life is "will to power" and will to power is the expression of hierarchy. Given the will to power hypothesis in Nietzsche's thought, what fundamentally separates Nietzsche from Aristotle is his perspective on the relationship between virtues and the human *telos*.

On Nietzsche's view Aristotle's approach, like the Christian approach, denies the difference between a strong and independent health that acts according to individual virtues and a weak and conformist sickness that requires a universal framework for the exercise of virtues to achieve "happiness". Nietzsche establishes this position clearly in the following passage:

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[153]Aristotle, *Ethics*, p. 155.

> The most general formula at the basis of every religion and morality is: "Do this and this, refrain from this and this - and you will be happy! ..." Every morality, every religion *is* this imperative - I call it the great original sin of reason, *immortal unreason*. In my mouth this formula is converted into its reverse - *first* example of my "re-valuation of all values": a well-constituted human being, a "happy one", *must* perform certain actions and instinctively shrinks from other actions, he transports the order of which he is the physiological representative into his relations with other human beings and with things. In a formula: his virtue is the *consequence* of his happiness. (TI, VI, 2)

In summary, where Kaufmann states that Nietzsche's interpretation of greatness of soul is strongly influenced by Aristotle's ethical framework MacIntyre insists that it is not. With regard to Kaufmann's assertion that Nietzsche's anti-Christian position may be best understood in light of his appropriation of Aristotle's *megalopsychia,* it becomes necessary, given MacIntyre's account of things, to make better sense of what Kaufmann subsumes in this claim. The tension lies between Kaufmann's coupling of Nietzsche and Aristotle against Christianity and MacIntyre's claim that Nietzsche never strays from his view that both the Aristotelian and Christian perspectives represent, equally, "the false turning taken by Socrates".

Kaufmann's Aristotelian Nietzsche

Kaufmann develops his Aristotelian Nietzsche where he hints at a shared Aristotelian and Nietzschean ethical view with regard to relations between the strong and the weak (the exceptional and the common/mediocre). He suggests that, with respect to the self-opinion of the common man, Aristotle "condemns vanity without in the least praising meekness or humility; and many of the provocative ideas which he expresses so unprovocatively and dryly are fashioned into polemical arrows in Nietzsche's works, especially in *Zarathustra*".[154] Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* includes his *positive* ethical teaching therefore Kaufmann's interest in anti-Christian "polemical arrows" ought to be interpreted here as an allusion to Nietzsche's alternative ethical project. Thus, where

[154]Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, p. 328.

Kaufmann associates the highest virtue with an elevated social ranking, he appears to leave open the possibility of a link between Nietzsche and Aristotle with regard to the magnanimity of the great-souled man.

What is of foremost significance, however, is the fact that in commenting as he does on the differences between Aristotelian and Christian moral systems, Kaufmann never bothers to acknowledge the key aspect these frameworks have in common concerning the relationship of virtue and *telos*. In this way, he introduces Aristotle's influence on Nietzsche and, in turn, the anti-Christian nature of that influence in a very selective fashion. What Kaufmann suggests, without explicitly claiming it, is that Nietzsche's anti-Christian approach to virtue *does not* amount to a complete separation of a noble ethical framework from the overall moral framework of virtue that a community might be thought to share *universally*:

> Nietzsche's point is *not* that the happiness of the weak should be sacrificed to that of the strong, but that the weak are incapacitated for ultimate happiness. Only the strong attain that happiness which all men want.[155]

In this passage, Kaufmann's conclusions appear to be expressed in the teleological terms appropriate to Aristotle's moral framework wherein "the strong attain that happiness which *all men want*".

The suggestion here is that Nietzschean hierarchy does not necessarily preclude the notion of an Aristotelian-like *telos* for man. But, significantly, Kaufmann never makes the explicit claim that on Nietzsche's view the happiness of the strong represents the happiness which all men *ought* to desire or ought to be habituated to desire. Therefore, Kaufmann does not *explicitly* ground his interpretation of Nietzsche in the Aristotelian terms of moral teleology and this allows him to avoid positing any overt link between virtue and *telos*. Nevertheless, the implication of Kaufmann's description of a so-called Nietzschean

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[155]Ibid, p. 329.

"happiness", in the passage cited above, remains that, like its Aristotelian counterpart *eudaimonia*, it ought to be understood in terms of a *telos* for man, however ill-defined.

Against Kaufmann's reading, it is important to represent clearly Nietzsche's thoughts on hierarchy as they appear, for example, in section 57 of *The Anti-Christ.* In this section Nietzsche does appear to characterize his intentions in terms of an end for man but, unlike Aristotle who imagines a *telos* for man in universal moral terms, Nietzsche imagines the end for man to be the creation of a *highest* type that would represent the overcoming of man. On this view the nature of a so-called highest type is not to be understood in terms of a recognizable end with respect to all individuals forming a universally integrated ethical community. Instead, the majority of individuals, the "herd", would simply form the "moral" foundation upon which an "extra-moral" type might flourish. This highest type is the value legislating philosopher of the future, or the *Übermensch,* and should be understood as such within the context of an active hierarchy of relations in which the highest type presides over a caste-like society:

> A high culture is a pyramid: it can stand only on a broad base, its very first prerequisite is a strongly and soundly consolidated mediocrity. (AC 57)

Hierarchical relations are never worked out in detail in Nietzsche's philosophy but they conform to the framework of active hierarchy as I introduced it in chapter one. The essential point in this framework is that, as Nietzsche puts it in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, "mankind in the mass sacrificed to the prosperity of a single *stronger* species of man - that *would* be an advance" (GM II, 12).

Nietzsche does not secure his ideal according to universal moral principles but rather on the basis of that which defines and ensures the difference between his ideal and the rest of mankind. Even for Plato, the health of the soul is a universal ideal in the service of which *his* framework of hierarchy makes sense but this is not the case for Nietzsche. Nietzsche's anti-universalism separates the mediocre from the *Übermensch* at all levels and there is no

virtue in common between them. Thus, Nietzsche insists that, "[f]or the mediocre it is happiness to be mediocre" (AC 57). And what this suggests, concerning Kaufmann's characterization of Nietzsche's intentions, is that he overlooks Nietzsche's "political" framework of power in a very misleading way with respect to Nietzsche's ethical ideal.

Kaufmann's critique of the proto-fascist Nietzsche

Kaufmann claims that the proto-fascist Nietzsche is an inaccurate interpretation. Kaufmann shifts the focus away from the proto-fascist Nietzsche toward the Nietzsche who inspires a uniquely creative strength of character. In this way, where Kaufmann re-considers Nietzsche's admiration for Caesar and Napoleon he concludes that:

> [I]t was not the military or political successes which Nietzsche looked to, but the embodiment of the passionate man who controls his passions: the man who, in the face of universal disintegration and licentiousness, knowing this decadence as part of his own soul, performs his unique deed of self-integration, self-creation, and self-mastery.[156]

Kaufmann's point is that if one identifies Nietzsche's admiration for such controversial historical figures correctly, in terms other than the terms of political and military conquest, then one must admit that Nietzsche does not really cross over to something "unacceptable", where unacceptable amounts to affirming the manipulation and exploitation of the rest of humanity on the part of the great man. The argument Kaufmann wishes to advance, it seems, is that if there is strong evidence that Nietzsche is more interested in strength of character than simply measuring the value of great men on the basis of their ability to set masses in motion and destroy great numbers of enemies, then he is not, at bottom, an unacceptable advocate of "power". Indeed, it is on the integrity of this link to character that Kaufmann suggests that Nietzsche's *Übermensch* has important Aristotelian qualities.

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[156]Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, p. 273.

It is also along these lines that Kaufmann emphasizes the significance of Goethe, Beethoven, Heine, and Stendhal *as well as* Caesar and Napoleon. The great-souled man, as artist and warrior alike, is to be valued for his great character. With respect to Napoleon Kaufmann seeks to distance Nietzsche's admiration for the famous general from any admiration for nationalism or wars of liberation. Kaufmann's concern is to bracket out Nietzsche's "politics", where politics might be thought to mean the power that the great man wields over the rest of humanity. Sidestepping a more comprehensive consideration of the political, Kaufmann links Nietzsche with Aristotle concerning greatness of soul in an effort to advance the idea that Nietzsche intends to offer up the character of the great-souled man as an exemplar of virtue rather than as an exemplar of tyrannical power.

But I argue that Kaufmann's focus on escaping the tyrannical Nietzsche obscures the disjunction *Nietzsche* establishes between the ethical life of the *Übermensch* and the idea of moral "utility". Nietzsche states:

> "Moral evaluation," in so far as it is a social evaluation, measures men exclusively according to the effects they produce. A man with a taste of his own, enclosed and concealed by his solitude, incommunicable, reserved - an unfathomed man, thus a man of a higher, at any rate a different species; how should you be able to evaluate him, since you cannot know him, cannot compare him? (WP 878)

Given Nietzsche's stress on the moral incommunicability of the great-souled man it is patently inaccurate of Kaufmann to suggest that Nietzsche is positively influenced by Aristotle's ethics in the way that he claims Nietzsche is. Moreover, the proto-fascist Nietzsche that Kaufmann targets for critique is never the uniquely political Nietzsche because hierarchy and independent value creation are never addressed in terms of a unified political philosophy in Kaufmann's book. Indeed, if they had been, then Kaufmann would have had to acknowledge the fact that Nietzsche's description of value creation, with its emphasis on being morally incommunicable, makes it impossible to universalize any value as an ethical ideal. Nietzsche states that "the 'higher nature' of the great man lies in being

different, in 'incommunicability', in distance of rank, not in an effect of any kind - even if he made the whole globe tremble"(WP 876).

Thus, the "value" of the great-souled man, for Nietzsche, is never understood according to a utility-based criterion of value, be it moral or military. There is a fundamental division between the *Übermensch* and the rest of society with respect to "value" and what this means is that there is no attempt in Nietzsche's books to articulate the value of his ethical ideal to humanity in a way that is familiar to us. The only "value" Nietzsche's highest type may be the thought to have is as an overcoming of the species man itself.

At the time that Kaufmann wrote his book it was necessary to liberate Nietzsche from his reputation as a proto-fascist thinker, and this would explain Kaufmann's attempt to undermine the purported military and tyrannical nature of Nietzsche's great-souled man. But what is most significant about Kaufmann's reading, for my purposes, is that the apolitical thesis that would allow for an Aristotelian Nietzsche is still very much with us. Therefore, in the next section, I suggest that it is the apolitical Nietzsche that has been re-politicized as a perfectionist ideal within democratic structures of thought. Thus, it may be interesting to consider the possibility that Kaufmann's Aristotelian Nietzsche remains at the centre of our assumptions about Nietzsche's value and these assumptions may be working against a better understanding of the political in Nietzsche.

the politics of perfection

In his book on the political in Nietzsche, Dan Conway insists that the *Übermensch* ideal represents the "perfection" of the species man as it is.[157] In this way, Conway's presentation of Nietzsche's ideal appears to re-introduce Kaufmann's thesis that the *Übermensch* is an exemplary human being (i.e. an example of ethical perfection for all

[157]Conway, *Nietzsche and the political*, pp. 20-21.

others to emulate). Conway claims that the *Übermensch* "embodies a perfection of the soul from which others may draw courage and inspiration."[158] Yet Conway differs from Kaufmann where he presents Nietzsche's philosophy as uniquely "political". On Conway's view, Nietzsche ought to be considered political where "[t]he central task of politics ... is to produce (as a matter of design) those individuals who stand, 'in relation to humankind as a whole,' as exemplary human beings."[159]

What makes Conway's interpretation political is that he attempts to address the question of producing the *Übermensch* whereas Kaufmann sees Nietzsche's highest type as exemplary without further mention of the future context of the ideal. As I argued above, Kaufmann does not describe Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, nor the production of such individuals, as distinctly political because his specific aim is to disabuse his reader of the proto-fascist Nietzsche. Moreover, Kaufmann's interpretation may be considered decidedly apolitical where it ignores the real nature of the link Nietzsche forges between the unique ethical life of his highest type and hierarchical will to power. Hence, given the shortcomings of Kaufmann's reading, it would appear that interpreters like Conway would have to address this important link if their work were to be considered a proper analysis of what is uniquely political in Nietzsche's thought.

Conway does address hierarchy to a certain extent. He addresses the difference between Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and the noble type generally speaking. Conway remarks:

> In contrast to Zarathustra's ambiguous teaching, Nietzsche's sketch of the *Übermensch* in *The Antichrist(ian)* is consistent with (and explicitly linked to) his more familiar discussions of the political role of exemplary human beings. On those rare occasions when he uses the term *Übermensch*, he apparently has in mind the apotheosis of those specimens of "higher humanity" to whom he more regularly refers. While it may be important in certain contexts to distinguish between the *Übermensch* and this "higher humanity," we are justified in treating the two concepts as continuous within the economy of Nietzsche's thought. Indeed, the only salient difference between the *Übermensch* and other, more familiar specimens of this "higher humanity" is that the emergence of the *Übermensch* is *willed* by those commanders and legislators who undertake

[158]Ibid.

[159]Ibid, p. 21.

> the task of perfecting the all-too-human.[160]

In this passage Conway does not obscure things in terms of an Aristotelian influence on Nietzsche the way Kaufmann does. Yet, in claiming that the only thing which separates Nietzsche's *highest* type from his *higher* types is the notion that the former is to be *willed* where the latter simply appeared, Conway may be seen to have sidestepped the issue of the "incommunicability" between strata as misleadingly as Kaufmann.

Conway is able to ignore the incommunicability of Nietzsche's highest type on the authority of one passage from *The Anti-Christ* wherein, according to him, Nietzsche rules out the kind of ethical solitude the *Übermensch* may be thought to represent in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*:

> Nietzsche describes these *übermenschlich* types as standing "relative to," rather than independent of, "humanity as a whole" (AC 4). This description not only militates against defining the *Übermensch* in absolute or ideal terms, but also directs our attention to the relationships that obtain between *Übermenschen* and "humanity as a whole." In fact, if these *übermenschlich* types stood independent of "humanity as a whole," estranged altogether from the ethical life of the communities that produce them, then they could play no role in the permanent enhancement of humankind. It is within the domain of these (admittedly unique) relations that the distinctly ethical content of Nietzsche's perfectionism resides. His attention to these relations furthermore indicates that he understands the *Übermensch* as constituting the perfection, rather than the transcendence, of humankind.[161]

Conway's rather obscure argument is based on the claim that Nietzsche's highest type does not represent an overcoming of man but rather man's perfection. Yet he also claims that Nietzsche's highest type is not an ideal. This begs the question as to what constitutes "perfection" on Conway's interpretation where a highest type would represent something perfected in less than ideal terms.

Conway, like Kaufmann before him, defines Nietzsche's *Übermensch* in virtue of what

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[160]Ibid, p. 22.

[161]Ibid, p. 23. Conway does go on to admit that communities of this type could never be founded on the kind of rational principles or notions of inclusiveness which would be sufficient "to mollify Nietzsche's liberal critics". Nevertheless, he suspects that such communities would be friendly, that they would cater to a certain aesthetic sensibility, and that they would create an environment wherein individuals would be free to "elevate one another through conflict and contest" (p. 24). Such claims point to the theory of agonistic democracy I considered in the last chapter.

he is not rather than what he is. For Conway, he is *not* a transcendent type. But what does this mean exactly? To discover what this means it is necessary to examine Nietzsche's thoughts in *The Anti-Christ,* since it is in this book that Conway finds the textual support for his specific rendering of Nietzsche's intentions. In *The Anti-Christ* Nietzsche states:

> Mankind does *not* represent a development of the better or the stronger or the higher in the way that is believed today. "Progress" is merely a modern idea, that is to say a false idea. The European of today is of far less value than the European of the Renaissance; onward development is not by *any* means, by any necessity the same thing as elevation, advance, strengthening. (AC 4)

Clearly, in this passage, Nietzsche is attempting to disabuse his nineteenth century readers of their *faith* in moral progress. This challenge opens up a space for Nietzsche to suggest what *he* would consider to be a real "enhancement" of man. Thus, he points toward his highest type by referring back to the great men of the past who appeared on the world's stage randomly and not as the result of any *necessary* process ordained by God:

> In another sense there are cases of individual success constantly appearing in the most various parts of the earth and from the most various cultures in which a *higher type* (*höherer Typus*) does manifest itself: something which in relation to collective mankind is a sort of superman (*etwas, das im Verhältnis zur Gesamt-Menschheit eine Art Übermensch ist*). Such chance occurrences of great success have always been possible and perhaps always will be possible. And entire races, tribes, nations can under certain circumstances represent such a *lucky hit.* (AC 4)

Importantly, it is this passage which Conway considers to be "decisive" evidence that Nietzsche's highest type "embodies a perfection of the soul from which others may draw courage and inspiration."[162] But the integrity of Conway's claim depends largely on what Nietzsche's comparison is intended to suggest. What is much more consistent with his overall project is that Nietzsche is simply saying that the "lucky hit" throughout history establishes a hierarchy of types that allows us to consider the possibility of producing an even greater type in the future but by design rather than by luck.

Nevertheless, in this section of *The Anti-Christ,* Conway identifies two elements which are meant to secure his interpretation of Nietzsche's "politics of perfection". Firstly, since

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[162]Conway, *Nietzsche and the political*, p. 20.

Nietzsche does not consider the scientific evolution of man to be necessarily synonymous with man's moral "improvement", his epic portrayal of the *Übermensch* in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* as a *future* type, must be viewed as an entirely "literary" embellishment. Secondly, and following from this first point, it may be concluded that if the *Übermensch* is not specifically a *future* type then, given what Nietzsche has to say about the higher type in the foregoing passage from *The Anti-Christ*, the figure of the *Übermensch* is meant to be as exemplary a figure, "in relation to humankind as a whole", as those specimens which make up Nietzsche's "higher humanity" are and have been in the past. The only difference between Nietzsche's highest type and his higher humanity is, to repeat, the fact that the former is meant to be *willed* where the latter simply appeared. Thus, Nietzsche is rendered "political" where, as introduced above, "[t]he central task of politics ... is to produce (as a matter of design) those individuals who stand, 'in relation to humankind as a whole,' as exemplary human beings."[163]

Conway, like Kaufmann, manages to circumvent the specific relationship of ethics to social order in Nietzsche's thought by relying on the specious assumption that Nietzsche's *Übermensch* represents an exemplary human being with respect to the rest of humanity. Unlike Kaufmann, Conway addresses the difference between the highest type and Nietzsche's higher humanity as "political" but in doing so he fails to distinguish properly between the two according to the difference between a traditional framework of moral universalism and Nietzschean anti-universalism. By concentrating on the "production" of exemplary human beings Conway is able to render Nietzsche political according to a democratic perfectionist framework while implicitly remaining faithful to the apolitical Nietzsche of Kaufmann's earlier work.

Where Nietzsche, in *The Anti-Christ*, describes his higher type as "something which in

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[163]Ibid, pp. 20-21.

relation to collective mankind is a sort of superman (*Übermensch)*", he does not say that his higher type in this instance *is* the *Übermensch* he introduces elsewhere, let alone *a more accurate* rendering of the *Übermensch* he introduces elsewhere. All that he appears to say is that "noble" individuals represent something *übermenschlich* "in relation to collective mankind". In *The Anti-Christ* Nietzsche states that what distinguishes his philosopher of the future most profoundly, from both his higher humanity and mediocre types, is his unique conception of happiness that involves a superior capability and desire for the life of extra-moral danger:

> The most spiritual human beings, as the *strongest*, find their happiness where others find their destruction: in the labyrinth, in severity toward themselves and others, in attempting; their joy lies in self-constraint: with them asceticism becomes nature, need, instinct. (AC 57)

Nietzsche never identifies his higher humanity within "the labyrinth" as he describes it here. "The labyrinth", most certainly, indicates the pursuit of knowledge but it reflects the philosopher of the future's pursuit of "performative" or "experimental" truth-seeking, specifically, and this involves an ethic of extra-moral self-overcoming that corresponds to the life of independent value legislation. Thus, greatness of soul is the philosopher's virtue alone and it is a communicable "virtue" only in the sense that it represents how philosophical "happiness", "the labyrinth", may be bracketed out and distinguished apart from the happiness of the rest of humanity.

conclusion

In this chapter I have established the incommunicability of the *Übermensch* ideal according to Nietzsche's own characterization of an autonomy that defies any universal framework of virtue. I have done so in order to illustrate why the uniquely political in Nietzsche defies the attempt on the part of agonists and other democratic-perfectionist interpreters of Nietzsche, like Conway, to tame his ideas by forcing them into a universal

framework of values or virtues as the case may be. Nietzschean autonomy, as self-overcoming and value creation, is not comprehensible as a framework for the perfection of individuals or groups within an egalitarian ethos and is therefore not possible as a solution to the fact of pluralism within a political context that must be democratic. A democratic politics of difference is necessarily a "levelling" politics and Nietzsche's politics of difference is a "hierarchical" politics.

If Nietzsche's conception of autonomy is to be thought of as representing a politics of perfection then such a politics is necessarily anti-democratic in nature. Of course it is possible to conceive of an anti-democratic, or un-democratic, notion of autonomy that is still comprehensible to us even though we are egalitarians. Indeed, Aristotle's conception of the great-souled man provides us with just such a framework. But Nietzsche's conception, as I have presented it thus far, defies even Aristotle's approach because of its fundamental anti-universalism. In this way, what is unique about the political in Nietzsche is that it is both anti-democratic and anti-universalist.

At this point it is necessary to consider the nature of Nietzschean autonomy as a unique conception of the philosophical life. Self-overcoming and self-creation is for Nietzsche a mode of life that is possible only for the philosopher of the future. This makes Nietzschean autonomy an exclusive conception but it is important to make better sense of how Nietzsche develops this notion of philosophy and the way in which he came to articulate it as universally incommunicable. It is to this discussion that I now turn.

PART II

CHAPTER FIVE - TRAGIC PHILOSOPHY

In part two of the thesis I present an exegesis of Nietzsche's political philosophy. The argument I construct should be seen as an alternative to the recent democratic articulations of the political in Nietzsche that I have addressed in part one. My approach to the political in Nietzsche is based on the supposition that there is an important relationship between Nietzsche's revaluation of philosophy and his thoughts on hierarchy. I develop my position according to this basic claim.

In an attempt to establish a new conception of the political in Nietzsche I argue that it is not enough to say simply that Nietzsche's thought is presented in an unsystematic way and that it therefore defies categorization as a self-contained political philosophy. Instead, I argue that Nietzsche's thought is more accurately described as *anti*-systematic or *anti*-theoretical and what it means to be anti-theoretical in Nietzsche's case suggests a unique relationship between politics and philosophy that ought to be acknowledged and better understood. For Nietzsche, being anti-theoretical has to do with a particular unity of style and content. Against what will be called a "theoretical" unity of style and content, Nietzsche's aphoristic and genealogical style/method complements the attempt to re-think philosophy in the direction of a life-affirming way of living a philosophical life. Thus, Nietzsche attempts to subvert and overcome a "life-denying" way of doing philosophy and being a philosopher.

In keeping with Nietzsche's inclination to divide the world up into types it may be said that there is a theoretical type that embodies a life-denying will to truth. Nietzsche challenges the integrity of the theoretical will to truth by replacing the goal of "truth" with the goal of "life". Nietzsche associates the systematic philosopher with slave morality and

thus, by contrast, associates a noble will to power with the possibility of an anti-theoretical philosopher of the future. In *Daybreak* Nietzsche states:

> Systematisers practise a kind of play-acting: in as much as they want to fill out a system and round off its horizon, they have to try to present their weaker qualities in the same style as their stronger - they try to impersonate whole and uniformly strong natures. (D 318)

In this aphorism Nietzsche establishes a link between how one philosophizes and the type of weak or strong life individuals represent as types of philosophers.

Therefore, in this chapter, I address Nietzsche's attempt to distinguish an anti-theoretical conception of philosophy apart from a theoretical one. I describe Nietzsche's anti-theoretical conception of philosophy as tragic philosophy and in doing so I concentrate on the significance of tragic knowledge and the pre-Socratic thinkers Nietzsche admired. In this chapter I focus on Nietzsche's early and middle periods in order to establish the key elements of his political thought that, later, come to inform the positive teachings of his mature period which I turn to in the next chapter. The purpose of presenting my position in this way is to trace the development of Nietzsche's conception of philosophy from an early pre-Socratic or "tragic" approach in general to the more specific Nietzschean idea of philosophy as value legislation.

This chapter is presented in eight parts. I begin by situating Nietzsche's anti-theoretical approach within the context of the controversy over Nietzsche's status as a political thinker. In the second section I introduce the idea of the tragic and the theoretical as competing ways of thinking about philosophy that map onto Nietzsche's intuitions about life-affirmation and life-denial. In the third and fourth sections I describe this opposition in terms of the significance of genealogy as a personalized Nietzschean mode of philosophizing over and against something I describe as Socratism. And in the fifth section I provide an overall context for Nietzsche's attitude toward Socratism by linking it up with his critique of the ascetic ideal in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. In the last three sections of

the chapter I launch an exegesis of Nietzsche's efforts to liberate "tragic" philosophy from what I have introduced in the first three sections as "theoretical" philosophy. It is in these last three sections that I focus specifically on an exegesis of the development of Nietzsche's ideas from his early writings of the 1870s through *Human All Too Human* and *Daybreak* up to *The Gay Science.*

It must be emphasized that in these last three sections, especially, I establish the origin and early development of the role of philosophy and hierarchy in Nietzsche's thought. What this requires is an exegesis that also illustrates how the development of Nietzsche's political philosophy evolves in relation to his struggle with the metaphysical correspondence theory of truth, or the "falsification thesis", as I referred to it in chapter one. Therefore, an important element of my exegesis in part two is to articulate the movement of Nietzsche's thoughts on philosophy and hierarchy according to the stages of overcoming the two world theory of representation.

Foucault, Bernard Williams, and the question of "theory"

Foucault's characterization of Nietzsche as the first philosopher to think about power relations beyond the structure of traditional political theory suggests that Nietzsche's thought is non-theoretical and therefore the philosophy in it is not rigidly circumscribed within a fixed conception of the political. In other words, Nietzsche's non-theoretical approach is thought to preclude the possibility that there is a self-contained political philosophy that we ought to be concerned about. My counter-claim is that this approach is limited where our concern may be to develop a conception of what is uniquely political in Nietzsche.

The Foucaultian position relies on the implications of Nietzsche's thought as non-theoretical or unsystematic. Bernard Williams elaborates this position where he suggests

that "[w]ith Nietzsche ... the resistance to the continuation of philosophy by ordinary means is built into the text, which is booby-trapped, not only against recovering theory from it, but, in many cases, against any systematic exegesis that assimilates to theory."[164] Despite this obstacle to easy understanding which Williams presents as something Nietzsche orchestrated, where he describes the texts as "booby-trapped", Williams nonetheless refuses to characterize Nietzsche's thought as non-philosophical. Thus, Williams claims that Nietzsche is non-theoretical yet philosophical.

What is odd about Williams's characterization is that he acknowledges the overtly intentional nature of Nietzsche's non-theoretical method yet he makes no effort to better understand what Nietzsche's purpose might mean over and against a philosophical tradition that relies on theory as a prerequisite for its communication and elaboration. By "theory" or the "theoretical" I mean *systematic* in terms of a well-ordered and logical progression of ideas presented in a formal exposition. But I also refer to the theoretical throughout this chapter as a mode of philosophizing that embodies a life-denying will to truth according to Nietzsche's framework of moral psychology. Therefore, the theoretical may be understood, on Nietzsche's perspective, in terms of the unity of form and content particular to a mode of philosophical "life" Nietzsche opposes.

Now what is especially curious about Williams's characterization of Nietzsche's philosophy is that he goes on to suggest that even though Nietzsche's texts are in-themselves "securely defended against exegesis by the extraction of theory" we should not, in attempting to put those texts to use, feel constrained to avoid theorising ourselves.[165] Indeed, Williams says nothing about taking Nietzsche seriously from the point of view that

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[164]Bernard Williams, "Nietzsche's Minimalist Moral Psychology" in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*, ed. Richard Schacht (London: University of California Press, 1994), p. 238.

[165]Ibid. I suggest that "extraction" is a misnomer and that Nietzsche's relation to "theory" is best described as an abstention from theory.

there might be something in his non-theoretical philosophy that resists assimilation to *our* theoretical mode of philosophizing. What I mean is that the non-theoretical nature of Nietzsche's style of writing may be an important clue to something substantive in his thought which is meant to resist our attempts to "theorise" his ideas and thus tame them as well. But Williams merely suggests that "Nietzsche will not help if he is taken to impose some one method on us."[166]

In focussing our attention on what might be helpful to us instead of what Nietzsche is actually doing or saying, Williams undermines the possibility that Nietzsche's texts may yield a rather sophisticated political philosophy. This explains why Williams is adamant that Nietzsche is philosophical yet unhelpful as a thinker who offers us a unified body of thought. The point is to retain Nietzsche's value *to us* without having any *Nietzschean* limits imposed on that value. What Williams actually says is that the legitimacy of the attempt to *make use* of Nietzsche follows from Foucault's claim that there is "no single Nietzscheism" we should be concerned about and that this truth (?) follows necessarily from the abstention from theory in Nietzsche's texts.[167] The abstention from theory, as mentioned above, refers to the presentation of ideas in an unsystematic way that makes deriving a unified political philosophy impossible.

I argue that Williams ends up restricting our political interpretations of Nietzsche by imposing this apparent "truth" about what the abstention from theory in Nietzsche's texts means. In other words, Williams presents us with a particular interpretation based on assumptions made about what the abstention from theory in Nietzsche ought to mean *for us*. In this way, Williams's argument follows from Foucault's assessment of Nietzsche as the first philosopher to conceive of power relations outside of a political theory since this

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[166]Ibid.

[167]Ibid.

is what allows Foucault to make the claim that there is no single Nietzscheism about which we ought to be concerned. And I discussed Foucault's position at length in chapter two. Williams, however, goes on to discuss Nietzsche's conception of the will in terms of a thin moral psychology that might be of interest to us. Once again, Nietzsche's conception of the will is assumed to be of interest to us according to Williams *because* it plays no necessary part in a unique Nietzschean political philosophy that would make it more difficult for us to assimilate within our systematic theories of politics and morality.

Concerning my counter-claim, what is most significant is the idea that Nietzsche's philosophy is void of theory but not philosophy and this is supposed to mean, according to Williams, that we can theorise Nietzschean ideas within the framework of democratic politics but we cannot attribute to Nietzsche any significant and integrated political framework of his own. This is important to my position because it amounts to "policing" Nietzsche's philosophy in a way that discredits any attempt to piece together a uniquely Nietzschean political vision. It is interesting to note, therefore, that elsewhere, in *Shame and Necessity,* Williams claims that Nietzsche's philosophy does not yield a coherent politics. He qualifies this observation on the grounds that any politics Nietzsche may be thought to have does not address *our* ethical concerns. Thus, he concludes that Nietzsche "provides no way of relating his ethical and psychological insights to an intelligible account of modern society - a failing only thinly concealed by the impression he gives of having thoughts about modern politics that are determinate but terrible."[168]

In this way, Williams attempts to strengthen his approach by suggesting, inaccurately, that if Nietzsche may be thought of as advocating a certain political position at all then he must have intended it to be applicable within a modern moral context. And this claim is

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[168]Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity*, (California: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 9-10.

clearly meant to give the impression that Nietzsche's political formulations remain under-determined in contrast to many of his philosophical claims. In turn, Nietzsche's philosophical claims may be separated out and made to appear more transmissible within our modern political theories.

Williams's efforts to discredit a link between Nietzsche's ethical and political philosophy parallels Foucault's appropriation of Nietzsche's ideas on power. Foucault, as I have mentioned in previous chapters, abandons Nietzsche's conception of power, as will to power, on the grounds that Nietzsche's thoughts are open to a myriad of uses and interpretations. And this allows Foucault's own formulations on power to remain equivocal with respect to their Nietzschean roots. Thus, where Nietzsche stresses the elements of commanding and obeying in all power relations and the necessary link to revaluation therein, Foucault's observations and hypotheses emphasize both domination and resistance in power relations without any necessary link to moral values or moral psychology *per se*.

What I want to emphasize, therefore, is that Foucault's characterization of Nietzsche as a non-theoretical and unsystematic thinker is a purely negative re-classification which fails to make sense of Nietzsche's positive teachings and therefore the uniqueness of his relationship to the theoretical tradition. Characterizing Nietzsche as an unsystematic thinker merely serves to obscure his unified project wherein the style/method of philosophizing is intended to complement an alternative philosophical and political framework based on a new way of thinking outside of, or beyond, what might be referred to as the "theoretical". In like manner, by dissociating the substance of Nietzsche's thought from the style of presentation, Williams *is* able to assimilate what he describes as Nietzsche's "minimalist moral psychology" to "theory" since this, as he puts it, may be valuable to us. But this misses out on an aspect that is more specifically important to

Nietzsche. In other words, it overlooks the anti-modern and future "us" to whom Nietzsche is speaking. In assimilating Nietzsche's minimalist moral psychology to theory Williams eschews any concern for the possibility that there is something about doing philosophy in a theoretical way that is representative, on Nietzsche's view, of a certain moral psychology that he, Nietzsche, opposes and hopes to overcome. Thus, Williams ignores the significance of the connection between form and content that Nietzsche articulates and exploits. Williams, like Foucault, avoids and obscures what is uniquely political in Nietzsche.

Given my position against Foucault, I need to discredit Williams's characterization of Nietzsche's philosophy by offering an exegesis of Nietzsche's thought that establishes an interesting link between his philosophy and his politics. Specifically, this requires an exegesis that defies Williams's claim that Nietzsche's texts are securely defended against exegesis by the abstention from theory. What is required is an analysis of Nietzsche's position on the "theoretical" as a life-denying mode of philosophy. It will then be necessary to elaborate Nietzsche's alternative anti-theoretical vision which may be described as tragic philosophy.

the theoretical and the tragic

In his *Attempt at a Self-Criticism* (ASC) Nietzsche claims that as early as *The Birth of Tragedy* he began to associate the philosophical activity with life-affirming values at least insofar as he began to question the value of pessimism as a sign of either weakness or strength:

> An intellectual predilection for hard, gruesome, evil, problematic aspects of existence, prompted by well-being, by overflowing health, by the *fullness* of existence? Is it perhaps possible to suffer precisely from overfullness? The sharp-eyed courage that tempts and attempts, that *craves* the frightful as the enemy, the worthy enemy, against whom one can test one's strength? From whom one can learn what it means "to be frightened"? What is the significance of the *tragic* myth among the Greeks of the best, the strongest, the most courageous period? And the tremendous

> phenomenon of the Dionysian - and, born from it, tragedy - what might they signify? (BT, ASC, 1)

In this passage from *Attempt at a Self-Criticism*, written 16 years after *The Birth of Tragedy*, his interest in the Greeks and especially the tragic myth among the Greeks must be understood in terms of a re-emergence of tragic pessimism in the future context of the *Übermensch* ideal which he had introduced at this point. It is tragic pessimism that Nietzsche affirms over and against the nihilism of the Christian ascetic ideal. The tragic view of life is a pessimism toward life that is life-affirming and this must be weighed against the optimism of modern man that seeks truth in order to overcome the suffering and iniquity of existence. Thus, he states the following:

> Could it be possible that, in spite of all "modern ideas" and the prejudices of a democratic taste, the triumph of *optimism*, the gradual prevalence of *rationality*; practical and theoretical *utilitarianism*, no less than democracy itself which developed at the same time, might all have been symptoms of a decline of strength, of impending old age, and of physiological weariness? These, and not pessimism? ... It is apparent that it was a whole cluster of grave questions with which this book burdened itself. Let us add the gravest question of all. What seen in the perspective of *life*, is the significance of morality? (BT, ASC, 4)

Of course the question of the link between morality and "life" has already been answered by Nietzsche at this point. The "physiological weariness" refers to the slave morality of Christianity and its modern forms of expression: rationality, democracy, and utility. Modernity has inherited the physiological weariness of the original slave revolt in morality which relied on the weapon of spiritual rather than physical revenge against the strong or noble types. Spiritual revenge is "theoretical" revenge in the sense that the genius of the weak was to develop the idea of responsibility for evil which imposed bad conscience on to the moral psychology of the strong (GM I, II). In this way, modernity represents a physiological weariness because it affirms life only at the level of the morality of utility as I described it in chapter one.

Although Nietzsche had not developed his hypothesis of the will to power at the time that he wrote *The Birth of Tragedy*, it is clear that tragic pessimism is understood by the

Nietzsche of *The Birth of Tragedy* as a life-affirming instinct of some sort, however ill-defined that instinct may have been at that stage. The key difference between the theoretical and the tragic in *The Birth of Tragedy* is the difference between approaches to truth-seeking and knowledge. Theoretical optimism describes the Socratic turn toward rationality and the pursuit of eternal truth whereas tragic knowledge maintains the significance of illusion, myth, and what may be referred to as the purely anthropomorphic nature of all philosophical knowledge. Clearly, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche is struggling with metaphysics at a very initial stage. However, the important point is that he tries to distinguish a tragic mode of thinking and knowing apart from a theoretical mode of thinking and knowing.

The Socratic turn toward eternal truth puts truth on the road to radical scepticism with respect to the so-called world of appearances or the world of the senses and this, according to Nietzsche's famous argument, ends in nihilism as the Christian ascetic ideal begets the will to scientific truth that undermines the foundations of the Christian god and Christian values (GM III). Yet, in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche has already identified the seeds of an alternative perspective and thus it is the tragic mode that affirms the need for art and illusion as the backdrop to truth-seeking. The tragic mode affirms illusion as the necessary medium of truth-seeking and in this way secures knowledge against the unwitting drive to nihilism. In his notes from the 1870s Nietzsche writes:

> For the tragic philosopher the appearance of the metaphysical as merely anthropomorphic completes the *picture of existence*. He is not a *sceptic*. Here there is a concept which must be *created*, for scepticism is not the goal. When carried to its limits the knowledge drive turns against itself in order to proceed to the *critique of knowing*. Knowledge in the service of the best life. One must even *will illusion* - that is what is tragic. (PT 12)

Therefore, it is the ability to "will illusion" which Nietzsche describes as tragic and he sees this mode of knowing as a creative mode superior to scepticism.

In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche writes:

> Therefore Lessing, the most honest theoretical man, dared to announce that he cared more for the search after truth than for truth itself - and thus revealed the fundamental secret of science, to the astonishment, and indeed the anger, of the scientific community. Besides this isolated insight, born of an excess of honesty if not of exuberance, there is, to be sure, a profound *illusion* that first saw the light of the world in the person of Socrates: the unshakeable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of *correcting* it. This sublime metaphysical illusion accompanies science as an instinct and leads science again and again to its limits at which it must turn into *art - which is really the aim of its mechanism.* (BT, 15)

What Nietzsche means by "correcting" being is the modern faith in science and the idea that our will to scientific truth will eventually eliminate suffering and injustice. In this way, Nietzsche attacks the feeling of moral evolution that tends to accompany scientific advancement. Nietzsche's presentation of truth here foreshadows his critique of the Christian will to truth in his mature works. But what is especially noteworthy at this early stage is that Nietzsche has already conceived of the problem of nihilism. The difference between Nietzsche's presentation of the tragic mode in *The Birth of Tragedy* and his re-configuration of it as value creation is that in the later works Nietzsche gives "life" ontological definition as the will to power. Thus, in the mature Nietzsche, we find a version of the tragic that has been re-introduced according to the framework of active hierarchy.

In the early writings Nietzsche is already thinking about an alternative to the ascetic ideal but the tragic conception is still a non-specific idea about the need for art to provide the meaning for truth-seeking which the drive for truth itself cannot offer us. Therefore, what I would point to as evidence of Nietzsche's first and original step down the road to the revaluation of values is his presentation of the tragic as a world view in opposition to the theoretical world view he sees embodied in the figure of Socrates. Nietzsche writes:

> If ancient tragedy was diverted from its course by the dialectical desire for knowledge and the optimism of science, this fact might lead us to believe that there is an eternal conflict between *the theoretical* and *the tragic world view*; and only after the spirit of science has been pursued to its limits, and its claim to universal validity destroyed by the evidence of these limits may we hope for a rebirth of tragedy. (BT, 17)

It is this particular tragic approach to truth-seeking that Nietzsche would go on to develop

further and not the Wagnerian pretensions that may appear to eclipse his ideas in *The Birth of Tragedy* on a superficial reading of it. But I now turn to a brief summary of the unity of style and content in Nietzsche's overall project that will help introduce, further, the theme of tragic philosophy.

aphorism and genealogy as an anti-theoretical style

One of Nietzsche's criticisms of his first book is that it fails to communicate his ideas in an altogether new and personalised language of its own. And what is most important about this self-criticism is that the style did not properly complement the substance of what he wanted to say. Therefore, Nietzsche laments having expressed his thoughts in *The Birth of Tragedy* the way he did. What he suggests is that he should have allowed himself an individual language of his own in which to express new values at odds with Kant's and Schopenhauer's "spirit and taste". Instead, however, he attempted to express his new thoughts "by means of Schopenhauerian and Kantian formulas" (BT, ASC, 6).

Concerning the phases of Nietzsche's writing and how he presents his thought, his work may be divided into three different stages. The first stage includes *The Birth of Tragedy*, his notes from the early 1870s, his early essays including *The Greek State, Homer on Competition,* and *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, as well as his *Untimely Meditations.*[169] In these early writings Nietzsche makes his first bold attempt to wrestle with truth as well as the purpose of philosophy and the role of the philosopher. The early writings, except for the notes, were presented in essay form and are distinguished more by their polemical character than by their example as experiments in how philosophical ideas might be communicated anti-theoretically. Nevertheless, they address the theme of anti-

[169]Since I have made reference to *Homer on Competition* in earlier chapters, and I make reference to *The Greek State* in chapter 7, I focus on *Philosophy and Truth*, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, and *Untimely Meditations* in this chapter.

theoretical philosophy in an interesting way and they are vital to understanding the consistency of Nietzsche's concerns for they represent the intellectual workshop from which he eventually launched his critique of moral psychology and his positive teachings of the will to power, eternal recurrence, and the *Übermensch.*

The next phase of writing, known amongst Nietzsche scholars as the middle period, represents the time of Nietzsche's first indulgence in the aphoristic mode and includes *Human All Too Human, Daybreak,* and *The Gay Science.* During this period Nietzsche's style is considered to have been at its most anti-dogmatic and I want to acknowledge this period as Nietzsche's initial attempt to develop an "anti-theoretical" style of writing to complement his attack on "theoretical" philosophy. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* therefore, marks the next significant transition and ushers in the mature period of Nietzsche's positive teachings. During this final period Nietzsche may be said to have experimented a great deal with his writing style and the presentation of his thought is at times poetic and allegorical. Overall, however, his most consistent style is best summarized as aphoristic.[170] The aphoristic style is combined with a highly rhetorical mode in the mature writings providing Nietzsche with a cultivated "language of his own" in which to communicate his new ideas and positive teachings.

What distinguishes the aphoristic style of the final period from the middle period is the gradual development of that style from an earlier anti-dogmatic approach to a more integrated presentation of the central themes of his work. Books like *Beyond Good and Evil* and *On the Genealogy of Morals* are well thought out and in them we can see Nietzsche's attempt to offer the most sophisticated presentation of his unique style. In the mature works Nietzsche's rhetorical and aphoristic mode of expression may be seen as the language of the will to power and it represents an overcoming of the Schopenhauerian

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[170]See Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist,* pp. 76-78.

language of the will Nietzsche set out to re-configure. The consistent development of this new "language" represents the movement away from the systematic style of traditional philosophy and toward a new vision of what philosophy might become.

What obtains in *On the Genealogy of Morals* is the best example of the unity of form and content that is representative of Nietzsche's overall philosophical experiment. His so called genealogical method is not a new method of doing philosophy within the theoretical tradition but rather the attempt to re-configure moral philosophy itself in terms of the attempt to posit his own "anti-method" of moral psychology that operates in the service of revaluation. Of course one could, as Foucault does, simply describe genealogy as the practice of documenting the non-linear history of morality but ultimately such a description forces Nietzschean genealogy into a traditional and universalist category of methodology that it actually attempts to escape.[171] Therefore, it is my claim that there is no such thing as a genealogical method that is independent of both the theoretical tradition *and* Nietzsche's ontology of will to power. I argue that what makes Nietzsche's philosophy so unique is the metaphorical language of noble and slave that he "creates" in order to develop new thoughts about moral psychology and build a foundation for his re-conceptualization of the philosophical life. Nietzsche's new metaphorical language is expressed aphoristically and thus the message he is trying to get across is that there is a necessary unity of form and content to be observed and digested in his books.

Of course what is also significant, in light of Williams's claims, is that the third genealogical inquiry is presented as an exegesis of an aphoristic passage from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. By offering an exegesis of one of his aphorisms, within the framework of his

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[171]See Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984). In this essay Foucault writes about genealogy *per se*. But in writing about genealogy as a method in-itself Foucault abstracts from the specific Nietzschean context of re-valuation and in doing so attempts to make use of Nietzschean ideas in much the same way that Williams would have us make use of them.

genealogical inquiry, Nietzsche actually demonstrates the integrated nature of the project he has been developing by illustrating the associations that culminate in his explanation of the meaning of the ascetic ideal. Therefore, he offers an aphoristic exegesis of an aphorism (cf. GM preface, 8). He emphasizes the significance of the unity of form and content to his overall project by offering an exegesis that is not presented systematically but nevertheless seeks to explain an integrated body of thought. In this way, he opposes an entire tradition that assumes that unity and understanding can only come from a systematic presentation of philosophical ideas. Thus, Nietzsche's overall experiment is best characterized as an *anti-theoretical* philosophy, for it is only in self-conscious contrast to the theoretical that Nietzsche is able to articulate a new approach to valuing. The theoretical is identified as an expression of life and Nietzsche's anti-theoretical style/method complements a tragic world view that he would like to champion and re-introduce within the future context of what philosophy might become.[172]

Socratism

In *Attempt at a Self-Criticism* Nietzsche identifies the death of Greek tragedy at the hands of "Socratism" as the most important theme in *The Birth of Tragedy* (BT, ASC, 1). What Nietzsche means by Socratism is the desire to be rational at all costs and how that desire translates as a moral phenomenon. Commentators have pointed out that Nietzsche's apparent attempt to *blame* Socrates for the death of Attic tragedy is not only historically inaccurate but fails to do justice to the comprehensive nature of the Platonic Socrates who was as invested with wit, irony, and story-telling, as he was with the desire to be rational.

[172]Of course it could be argued that Nietzsche's exegesis in *GM* is more integrated *because* it is more systematic than any of his other books. But I would prefer simply to see it as Nietzsche's best presentation of his aphoristic style.

Thus, commentators criticise the one-dimensional nature of Nietzsche's Socrates.[173] But such criticisms tend to reflect a preoccupation with scholarship and they fail to appreciate Nietzsche's attempt to re-value Socrates by articulating Socrates's influence in terms of something Nietzsche describes as "Socratism".

Beginning with the themes he presents in *Attempt at a Self-Criticism,* it is clear that the Nietzsche of the mature period perceives the pessimism of the tragic Greeks to be a source of great strength and life-affirmation especially in terms of the affirmation of the "instincts".[174] In a corresponding way, the optimism of Socratism is viewed as a symptom of decline or life-denial in so far as the "Socratism of morality" is perceived to have helped bring about the "dissolution of the instincts" (BT, ASC, 1). What is implicit in Nietzsche's questioning is the process of revaluation itself or the question of the value of values. Here Socrates and morality are re-valued and in the process Nietzsche attaches the descriptive term "theoretical" to the individual who acts according to the values of Socratism (BT, ASC, 1). "Life" is placed at the centre of things in terms of the value of moral values. The value of values is to be measured against the example of "the Greeks of the best, the strongest, the most courageous period" (BT, ASC, 1). The Greeks, as a culture, represent an expression of heroic life that affirms the physical world with all its cruel and enigmatic contingencies.

Of course what has been present from Socrates onward is the optimism of the will to truth which Nietzsche calls theoretical optimism. Nietzsche re-values this tradition by

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[173]V. Tejera, *Nietzsche and Greek Thought* (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), pp. 81-111.

[174]Nietzsche's criticisms of *BT* can also be found in *Ecce Homo* (EH BT). Although *EH* was written dangerously close to the time of Nietzsche's breakdown, and therefore ought to be regarded with suspicion, his reasons for altering the title of *BT*, from *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music* to the 1886 version entitled *The Birth of Tragedy Or: Hellenism and Pessimism*, are made clear in this section. The new title represents a shift in emphasis away from his early obsession with Wagner, his attempt to derive an artists' metaphysics out of tragic music, and toward the value of Greek tragic pessimism for "life".

claiming that Socrates's process of questioning, his dialectics, is designed to undermine the authority of the Hellenic instincts in favour of a drive to truth that is nihilistic. But it is important to make clear what Nietzsche means by "instincts". The Socratic desire to be rational at all costs is no less an "instinct" on Nietzsche's view than pessimism is an instinct of the Hellene. The steadfast will to truth which Nietzsche describes as theoretical and Socratic, and the rationalism that gives birth to scientific practices out of the Socratic tradition, involve the same instinct for life that the tragic involves insofar as the uncompromising search for knowledge, like tragic pessimism, gives life meaning for a time. Beyond this, however, Nietzsche clearly distinguishes between tragic instinct and the theoretical instinct to rationalism in terms of the kind of lives which these two opposite categories of instincts tend to produce or promote, and from which they spring. In this way, both the tragic and the theoretical represent life-preserving instincts but beyond the basic level of community preservation they are very different instincts in so far as they serve to promote very different "types" of life.

On this view theoretical optimism promotes weakness rather than strength in elevating the realm of eternal truth above the realm of appearances. The theoretical instinct confers value upon life-preservation and in an important sense stops *at that level* of life-affirmation. And it is this level that Nietzsche would later associate with the morality of utility. The Hellenic instincts of strength and struggle affirm life beyond mere preservation and utility because they value the senses and the physical virtues in pursuit of greatness. These "tragic" instincts thus promote and represent the discharge of strength in a life-affirming way that disdains, not self-preservation or the preservation of the community *per se*, but the weakness of an inordinate concern for preservation.[175] Simply put, greatness is

[175]The Hellenic instincts affirm life also, and very importantly, because they do not want to correct life, they accept it as it is. The very instinct to want to correct life betrays a non-acceptance of life; i.e. those who want to correct life fail to pass the eternal recurrence test.

valued above self-preservation. Nietzsche captures this difference with remarkable vividness in a passage from an early essay:

> [T]he person who lives life most beautifully is the person who does not esteem it. Whereas the common man takes this span of being with such gloomy seriousness, those on their journey to immortality knew how to treat it with Olympian laughter, or at least with lofty disdain. Often they went to their graves ironically - for what was there in them to bury? (PT 62)

Now it may seem that both the noble and common man disdain "this life", on my interpretation, and therefore there is something problematic or contradictory about how I have presented things. However, what is significant is why and how these types disdain "this life".

Indeed, this is the origin of Nietzsche's new metaphorical language of noble and slave and in it we can see the seeds of his hypothesis of the will to power as an ontological dualism. Even at this early stage he separates life into two qualitatively different categories of the life-affirming and the life-denying. The life-denying category describes the common, weak, or mediocre man whose affirmation of life is merely that of self-preservation and therefore an affirmation which disdains "this life" because it is not "eternal life". In this way the common man's life-will represents a "denial" of the noble man's great health and great discharging of strength. And that is what it means to be life-denying for Nietzsche. The theoretical man, therefore, is the life-denying type because his moral values represent a mode of existence that devalues the Hellenic instincts in favour of the desire to be rational and, like the slave type of Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*, confers value upon the so-called real world over and against the sensual world of appearances. Theoretical optimism undermines the value of the Hellenic instincts by denying the value of "anthropomorphic" knowledge in favour of "eternal" knowledge. Alternatively, the noble type, on Nietzsche's view, is thought to disdain "this life" only insofar as he disdains an inordinate concern for self-preservation. For the noble type there is no distinct faith in an "eternal life" that is wholly separate from "this life" and therefore there is no "reason" for

disdaining this life in the way that the common man disdains it.

In this way, Nietzsche's alternative conception is grounded in the so-called world of appearances or the world of the senses but is also re-valuing that world by interpreting it in terms of what he deems to be life-affirming *versus* life-denying. These concepts are of his own creation and his ontology of types serves as a framework of the will through which to re-think the philosophical activity from the vantage point of the philosophical life lived. Socratism, the reduction of Socrates to a "type", fits within the Nietzschean conception of life-denial and forcing the fit is Nietzsche's clear intention. From the vantage point of Nietzsche's later works we can see that Socratism, as the instinct to be absurdly rational, gets its one-dimensional character from Nietzsche's attempt to make Socratism explicitly proto-Christian. In other words, Socrates must represent the life-denying type because the Socratic instinct to be rational must, for Nietzsche's philosophical framework to remain internally consistent, prefigure the ascetic ideal of the Christian moral universe.

If the ascetic ideal of Christianity can be linked to Socratism, then Nietzsche's opposition to the Christian as an expression of "life", or to the "Crucified" as a life-denying "type", may be elevated to an even greater world-historical meaning in terms of his consistent attempt to re-value ascetic moral psychology from his earliest work *The Birth of Tragedy* to his mature works of the late 1880s:

> It was only Christianity, with *ressentiment against* life in its foundations, which made of sexuality something impure: it threw *filth* on the beginning, on the prerequisite of our life ... Affirmation of life even in its strangest and sternest problems, the will to life rejoicing in its own inexhaustibility through the *sacrifice* of its highest types - *that* is what I called Dionysian, *that* is what I recognized as the bridge to the psychology of the *tragic* poet ... And with that I again return to the place from which I set out - the *Birth of Tragedy* was my first revaluation of all values: with that I again plant myself in the soil out of which I draw all that I will and *can* - I, the last disciple of the philosopher Dionysus - I, the teacher of the eternal recurrence. (TI, What I Owe to the Ancients, 4 - 5)

Here, in *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche not only demonstrates his desire to present his philosophical experiment as an original and consistent one but he displays his penchant for reinterpreting specific figures in new ways that fit within his framework of revaluation. In

this passage it is the Greek art deity Dionysus who has been reinterpreted and re-valued. The Dionysus of *The Birth of Tragedy* was already a new figure that Nietzsche had manipulated to fit within his immature metaphysics of the Apollinian and the Dionysian. But the figure Dionysus re-appears in the later works reinterpreted yet again. Apollo has disappeared and Nietzsche has abandoned the Wagnerian pretensions of his earlier work. Here Dionysus represents the tragic type over and against the "Crucified" (WP 1052 ; EH, Why I am a Destiny, 9). Most importantly, Dionysus is a philosopher and Nietzsche's reference to his earliest work here helps conjure an opposition between Dionysus as the "tragic" philosopher and Socrates as the "theoretical" philosopher. The point I am making is that Nietzsche's effort to characterize Socrates as proto-Christian reflects an overall attempt to present the life of different "types" of individuals in terms of their life-denying and life-affirming nature. But it may help to think of Socratism in terms of the ascetic ideal and situate the discussion within the exegetical context of the third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*.

the ascetic ideal

In the third genealogical inquiry it is clear that the answer to the question "what is the meaning of the ascetic ideal?", which forms the title of the inquiry, is that the ascetic ideal itself offered man meaning for his suffering (GM III, 28). What is meant by ascetic is, in part, the quintessential Christian ideal of poverty, humility, chastity and the entire framework of life-denial that leads to the attainment of grace in the Christian afterlife. Yet what is also made clear in this exegesis is that the ascetic ideal "is an expression of the basic fact of the human will, its *horror vacui: it needs a goal* - and it will rather will *nothingness* than *not* will" (GM III, 1). This "nothingness" is of course "God" or the idea of metaphysical "being", a reality behind appearance and the sensual world which dates

back to the Platonic Socrates and the pursuit of knowledge of the Forms. And this will to nothingness is another way of representing what Nietzsche refers to as theoretical optimism. What Nietzsche suggests is that our time-honoured faith in the Christian god as the meaning behind human suffering is representative of a myth we have affirmed over the centuries in order to affirm species self-preservation (cf. BGE 4). But what makes Nietzsche's argument more comprehensible in his mature works is the fact that he has overcome the problem of metaphysical realism by denying the very possibility of there being a non-perspectival perspective or "real" world.

Furthermore, the significance of the ascetic ideal as a purely "life-preserving" ideal explains why Nietzsche is able to describe Christianity as Platonism for "the people" (BGE, preface). Thus, Nietzsche refers to the people as the "herd" and to the instincts of the people as "herd instincts". Morality itself, on this view, is herd instinct. Indeed, any universal set of moral values suggests an underlying herd psychology or herd consciousness for Nietzsche, to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the nature of the particular culture in question. The instincts of Christian morality represent the conditions for the preservation of a certain type of community and as I described it in the first chapter such a community represents a reactive hierarchy at the ontological level of will to power.

It is important to note that as early as *The Gay Science* Nietzsche already has an answer to the question "what seen in the perspective of life, is the significance of morality?". His answer is that, "[m]orality is herd instinct in the individual" (GS 116). And this helps explain what is implicit in the characterization of certain individuals as "types". Thus, his argument extends to the idea that the will to truth as "reason" becomes the predominant and overriding instinct of herd types:

> From time to time this instinct, which is at work equally in the highest and basest men - the instinct for the preservation of the species - erupts as reason and as passion of the spirit. Then it is surrounded by a resplendent retinue of reasons and tries with all the force at its command to make us forget that at bottom it is instinct, drive, folly, lack of reasons. Life *shall* be loved, *because* -!

> Man *shall* advance himself and his neighbour, *because* -! What names all these Shalls and Becauses receive and may yet receive in the future! (GS, 1)

The value conferred upon "reason", or the will to a non-perspectival perspective, which the scientific tradition has inherited from the much older Socratic tradition, is an ideal which functions so as to preserve the species in the sense that it is the site of herd "meaning".

Thus, Nietzsche re-values science as well by characterizing it in terms of the contingencies of life-denying instincts rather than in terms of a universal value-free category of its own. In effect, Nietzsche demotes reason to a radically instrumental status insofar as reason may no longer appear to be "self-reliant" (GM III, 25). And in this way the hierarchy of reason is replaced by the hierarchy of "life". Nietzsche does, at times, praise the scientific drive as one of the finest human instincts but only where it is associated with knowledge of the senses. What he despises is the positivist claim to the neutral grasp of reality (WP 481; BGE 134; GS 335).

For Nietzsche, the theoretical view is an embodied "perspective". Thus, it makes more sense to speak of the theoretical in terms of a "type". A theoretical type is a herd type because he lives his life by the herd instinct of species self-preservation which operates according to the ascetic ideals of a Socratic, Christian, and modern scientific faith in the will to truth. Returning to Nietzsche's concerns in *Attempt at a Self-Criticism,* it is now clear that what he intends to do, where he considers the "Greeks of the best, the strongest, the most courageous period", over and against the "theoretical man", is to affirm the tragic over the theoretical on the grounds that it promotes a better, stronger, and more courageous type of individual and thus produces a higher type of "life" (BT, ASC, 1). Along these lines, Werner Dannhauser makes the following observation concerning Nietzsche's early position on theoretical Socratism:

> Nietzsche expounds a tragic view of the world and asserts that there is an eternal battle between it

> and the theoretical view of the world. As the archetype of the theoretical man, Socrates is both the greatest exponent of the theoretical world view and its symbol. The battle between the two views centres around the definition, value, and status of instinct, consciousness, reason, science, and teleology.[176]

Dannhauser's conclusions help substantiate the significance of Nietzsche's comparative framework distinguishing the tragic apart from the theoretical in terms of competing "truth-seeking" hierarchies. I now turn to an exegesis of the origins of Nietzsche's alternative philosophical conception and how he develops his position gradually throughout his middle period.

the mythical drive and the significance of the pre-Socratics

A tragic view of the world is the consequence of tragic knowledge. But what exactly does Nietzsche mean by tragic knowledge in the early writings and why does he think that the pre-Socratic thinkers practised tragic philosophy? To give an account of the tragic and how Nietzsche develops it into a conception of life-affirming philosophy, it is necessary to trace the development of his thought from *The Birth of Tragedy* and the early notes up to *The Gay Science.*

In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche presents his immature metaphysics of the Dionysian and the Apollinian. These categories represent the eternal unity of nature and the illusion of individuation respectively. The Dionysian defines the intoxicating power of nature which remains eternally the same. The Apollinian defines man's desire, through art, to escape the Dionysian and place his faith in the principle of individuation that provides him with the illusion of beauty.

As the unity of Dionysian and Apollinian elements, Nietzsche claims that Attic tragedy provided the Hellene with "metaphysical comfort - that life is at the bottom of things,

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[176]Werner Dannhauser, *Nietzsche's View of Socrates* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 118.

despite all changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable" (BT 7). In this way Nietzsche sees tragic art as life-affirming and promotes it as such over and against what he refers to as a "Buddhistic negation of the will" (BT 7). The negation of the will is the immediate effect of tragic knowledge. Nietzsche describes this clearly with reference to the negation of the will in the example of Shakespeare's Hamlet:

> Knowing kills action; action requires the veils of illusion: that is the doctrine of Hamlet, not that cheap wisdom of Jack the Dreamer who reflects too much and, as it were, from an excess of possibilities does not get around to action. Not reflection, no - true knowledge, an insight into the horrible truth, outweighs any motive for action, both in Hamlet and in the Dionysian man. (BT 7)

The relationship between the Dionysian and the Apollinian in Attic tragedy offers the Hellene the remedy of tragic knowledge insofar as the terrible chaos and cruelty of life is given representation in the Apollinian illusion of tragic art. Of course the Greeks did not speak of "the will" in this way and Nietzsche's language here represents an attempt to respond to Schopenhauer's conception of the negation of the will in the face of tragic pessimism. Daniel Breazeale offers an appropriate summary of Nietzsche's thoughts on tragic pessimism where he states the following:

> "Tragic knowledge" is that knowledge which penetrates the illusions and the *principium individuationis* and thereby provides one with a vision of the suffering character of existence. For this reason it "kills action" and demands the new saving illusions of tragic art ("returns to art its rights"). [177]

The point is that pessimism need not end in the negation of the will where tragic art can offer a redemptive myth of beauty through which man might sustain his desire to know and overcome the negation of the will.

With this same understanding of the relationship between tragic knowledge and illusion, Nietzsche re-considers the myth-based nature of philosophy itself. Along these lines his attempt to articulate "the tragic" in *The Birth of Tragedy* is projected on to his

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[177]Daniel Breazeale, *Philosophy and Truth*, written by Friedrich Nietzsche, edited and translated by Daniel Breazeale (New Jersey and London: Humanities Press International, 1979), p. 12, n. 24.

characterization of the pre-Socratic philosophers in the unpublished essay *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks,* which was written at approximately the same time as *The Birth of Tragedy*. In this essay, as Marianne Cowan suggests, "the philosophers are dealt with as though they were tragic heroes, or at least heroic figures in a time that was presented upon the world stage as a tragic drama".[178]

In the notes from this period Nietzsche has a lot to say about philosophy and the philosopher and he describes the relationship between the philosopher and truth as "anthropomorphic". He writes:

> What the philosopher is seeking is not truth, but rather the metamorphosis of the world into men. He strives for an understanding of the world with self-consciousness. He strives for an *assimilation*. He is satisfied when he has explained something anthropomorphically. Just as the astrologer regards the world as serving the single individual, the philosopher regards the world as a human being. (PT 62)

What this means with respect to tragic knowledge and illusion is that the philosopher "creates" truth where he creates the illusions he needs in order to live his particular life. In this way his knowing is not the product of stripping away the veils of anthropomorphic illusion to get at the eternal truth but instead it is a process of generating more illusion in the service of greater knowledge of life. Nietzsche describes the process in the following way and with specific reference to the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus:

> Philosophy is a form of artistic invention. There is no appropriate category for philosophy; consequently, we must make up and characterize a species [for it]. *The natural history of the philosopher*. He knows in that he invents, and he invents in that he knows. He does not grow: I mean, philosophy does not follow the course of the other sciences, even if certain of the philosopher's territories gradually fall into the hands of science. Heraclitus can never be obsolete. Philosophy is invention beyond the limits of experience; it is the continuation of the *mythical drive*. It is essentially pictorial. (PT 19)

The mythical drive captures the way in which the pre-Socratics *knew*. Heraclitus is Nietzsche's favourite pre-Socratic philosopher but the mythical drive begins with Thales who posited the claim that "all is water" (PTG 41). For Nietzsche, the interesting thing

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[178]Marianne Cowan, "Introduction" in *Philosophy and the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, written by Friedrich Nietzsche, edited and translated by Marianne Cowan (Washington: Regnery Publishing Ltd, 1996), p. 19.

about Thales's proposition is that it represents the mythical drive but it is meant "non-mythically and non-allegorically" (PTG 41). For Thales there is no understanding of his proposition as metaphorical or conceptual. He posits his ideas as literal. Thus, the pre-Socratics had no concept of "concepts". What Nietzsche celebrates in Thales, therefore, is not the truth value of his claims, in terms of their correspondence to "reality", but the "life" value of his claims. The proposition that "all is water" expresses Thales's absolute faith in the unity of being. In other words, it is an example of the mythical drive which predates the two world theory.

By referring to the pre-Socratics, and in emphasizing the mythical drive that describes their process of knowing, Nietzsche distinguishes them apart from Socrates and all later thinkers according to "how beautiful they were" (PT 144). This is one of the most significant elements of Nietzsche's revaluation. By judging the pre-Socratics according to their aesthetic value rather than the truth value of their claims, Nietzsche places the mythical drive at the centre of knowing and makes the anthropomorphic analogy complete. The value of philosophy is judged according to the particular philosophical life lived rather than the value of a "concept" in the service of the various ends to which Socratism has since been directed:

> Compare the thinkers of other ages and peoples with that series of figures which begins with Thales and ends with Democritus - yes, just compare Socrates and all the later leaders of Greek sects with these ancient Greeks ... "how beautiful they are!" I see among them no deformed and ruined figures, no priestly faces, no scrawny desert hermits, no fanatics looking at the world through rose-coloured glasses, no theologizing counterfeiters, no depressed and pale scholars ... I also fail to see any among them who consider the "salvation of the soul" or the question "what is happiness?" so important that they forget the world and men on that account. If only someone could rediscover "*these possibilities of life*"! (PT 144)

Thus, what Nietzsche became obsessed with at an early stage was liberating philosophy from its service to life-denying impulses.

Liberating philosophy from its service to eternal truth, happiness, and the improvement of mankind returns it to the pessimism of tragic knowledge wherein suffering and struggle

need to be affirmed anew through alternative redemptive myths. Thus, a return to tragic knowledge might usher in a new opportunity to produce a culture that would set its sights once again on "the world and men" and therefore constitute a life-affirming culture. However, Nietzsche's emphasis on myth and illusion fails to overcome the two world theory at this early stage. Although he clearly wants to get past it, he focuses on life-affirmation and fails to come up with a way to overcome the language of metaphysical correspondence within his own positive formulations. Therefore, I turn now to an illustration of how he continues to develop the idea of life-affirmation, from the early to the middle writings, without clearly resolving the problem of the two world theory in his own assertions.

life-affirmation and the problem of the two world theory

In the early essay *On the uses and disadvantages of history for life* Nietzsche states the following with respect to the accumulation of knowledge and its ends:

> Knowledge, consumed for the greater part without hunger for it and even counter to one's needs, now no longer acts as an agent for transforming the outside world but remains concealed within a chaotic inner world which modern man describes with a curious pride as his uniquely characteristic 'subjectivity'. It is then said that one possesses content and only form is lacking; but such an antithesis is quite improper when applied to living things. This precisely is why our modern culture is not a living thing: it is incomprehensible without recourse to that antithesis; it is not a real culture at all but only a kind of knowledge of culture; it has an idea of and feeling for culture but no true cultural achievement emerges from them. (UM 78)

It is evident in this passage that for Nietzsche form and content are a unity when it comes to culture and therefore the modern idea that the form may be missing but the content is intact is a lie. For Nietzsche, the democratic form of modern culture is an expression of its bankruptcy as a substantive culture that can produce greatness. For him the form which democratic institutions adopt produces a particular type of freedom that is incapable of producing uniquely great individual lives. I claim that, in the early writings, Nietzsche begins to develop the elements of what he will eventually need to re-configure knowledge

and the philosophical drive in line with the structure of a genuine culture that is capable of producing an "outside world" of philosophical life-affirmation. However, it must be acknowledged that at this stage he has as yet to offer a clear explanation of what *he* thinks constitutes an "inner" and "outer" distinction with respect to knowledge and subjectivity.

In *Human All Too Human*, Nietzsche's first "middle period" work, his evaluation of the pre-Socratics is applied directly to the idea of a new and highest philosophical type:

> It is no idle question whether, if he had not come under the spell of Socrates, Plato might not have discovered an even higher type of philosophical man who is now lost to us for ever. We gaze into the ages that preceded him as into a sculptor's workshop of types. The sixth and fifth centuries seem, however, to promise even more and higher things than they actually brought forth; it remained only a promise and proclamation. And yet there can hardly be a more grievous loss than the loss of a type, of a new, hitherto undiscovered highest *possibility of the philosophical life*. (HAH 261)

What Nietzsche marvels at is the success of the mythical drive amongst the pre-Socratics but he understands that success to be preconditioned by the kind of life-affirming culture the Greeks of the tragic age enjoyed. Socrates, by contrast, was a decadent, according to Nietzsche, and Plato lived in a period of cultural decline. Therefore, Nietzsche associates the loss of a new type with the influence of Socrates and the decline of cultural institutions in ancient Greece. But he still is unable to explain what he means by a philosophical life, a philosophical subjectivity, that would represent an overcoming of the inner/outer distinction Socrates introduced.

In his next book *Daybreak* Nietzsche develops his scepticism about the two world theory further by incorporating his thoughts on truth within an emerging critique of moral psychology. With reference to the Greek ideal, as it is represented in the Homeric figure Odysseus, Nietzsche observes that "[t]he most remarkable thing about it is that the antithesis of appearance and being is not felt at all and is thus of no significance morally" (D 306). The antithesis of appearance and being refers to the separation of body and spirit that began with Parmenides and its greatest champion, on Nietzsche's view, was the

Platonic Socrates (PTG 79-80). In this way, the body/spirit split became the separation of the real world (of the Forms) from the world of appearances (of the senses) that I have been referring to as the two world theory. This two world theory, on Nietzsche's view, became the blueprint for the Christian ascetic ideal and slave will to truth. What is important at this stage is that Nietzsche celebrates the Greek ideal as a noble ideal of life-affirmation, free of what he will eventually describe as slave moral psychology. Slave moral psychology represents the metaphysical faith in a real world behind the world of appearances. In *Daybreak*, however, the noble ideal still lacks a clear Nietzschean overcoming of the two world theory.

Nietzsche's last middle period work, *The Gay Science*, was written in 1882 but in 1886 he added a new preface and book to it just as he added new introductory sections to *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Human All Too Human*, and *Daybreak*. In this new preface Nietzsche makes it clear that he wants to re-introduce the idea of the tragic in the sense that he wants to re-introduce a mode of philosophizing that predates the two world theory but within the context of overcoming what is *modern*. In this way, he wants to re-introduce the mythical drive at the level of the philosophical life lived because doing so returns philosophy to the aesthetic realm of "the world and men" where it belongs as tragic philosophy rather than as "theoretical" philosophy. Nietzsche writes:

> Oh those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial - *out of profundity*. And is not this precisely what we are again coming back to, we daredevils of the spirit who have climbed the highest and most dangerous peak of present thought and looked around from up there - we who have looked *down* from there? Are we not, precisely in this respect, Greeks? Adorers of forms, of tones, of words? And therefore - *artists*? (GS, preface, 4)

Being "superficial out of profundity" describes the tragic world view because it recognizes the need for a veil of beauty in the face of tragic knowledge and this is the significance of the pre-Socratic philosopher whose mythical drive provided him with the necessary

illusions to sustain the desire to know. But what is especially important concerning the 1886 preface to *The Gay Science* is that it comes out of Nietzsche's mature period.

In 1886 Nietzsche was on the verge of overcoming the two world theory, by denying the possibility of a non-perspectival perspective, and he was very aware of the problem of affirming the so-called world of appearances, or the senses, without falling back into the trap of representationalism himself. Therefore, his interest in remaining at the "surface" or "within the whole Olympus of appearance" is about to be legitimized properly by his "perspectivism" in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. As a cognitively superior position to representationalism, or correspondence, perspectivism overcomes the problem of justifying a non-perspectival perspective and denies the distinction between the real world and the world of appearances altogether.

I illustrate the development of life-affirmation according to Nietzsche's overcoming of representationalism in the next chapter but, to conclude my exegesis of Nietzsche's early and middle periods, I turn now to a presentation of Nietzsche thoughts on herd consciousness and the liberation of philosophy in terms of the liberation of a unique philosophical type. I conclude this chapter with a focus on "consciousness" and "philosophy" because it is the relationship between these two elements that establishes the foundation of Nietzsche's political thought according to my interpretation of it.

consciousness, the herd, and the liberation of philosophy

Nietzsche's revaluation of philosophy issues from more than just sentimental reflections on the stature of the pre-Socratic Greeks. What must be recognized, in the early and middle periods, is his belief that the truth of the self and of the world, of subject and object, is unknowable in an important sense. And although this represents an important step in overcoming a Cartesian form of metaphysical realism, Nietzsche has yet to

overcome the metaphysical correspondence theory of truth altogether because he remains within the Kantian stage of simply denying our ability to know the objective world. Therefore, in his early and middle periods he appears to think that human beings have knowledge only insofar as they are able to make unique things seem the same in conceptual terms. What this means is that human consciousness functions in a way that limits our ability to know unique things *as unique things* and this includes our knowledge of the self.

In this way, we may interpret Nietzsche as developing the idea of individual uniqueness without as yet being able to explain uniqueness in a way that overcomes representationalism. As Nietzsche puts it, consciousness demands the conceptualization and categorization of sense data and once a concept is arrived at "[w]e presuppose that nature behaves in accordance with such a concept"(PT 51). This constitutes Nietzsche's claim that consciousness falsifies and therefore merely "represents", in general and conceptual terms, what is fundamentally unique with respect to individual actions and the knowledge of the senses.

What occurs in the process of knowing, therefore, is that abstractions are established as truths. Nietzsche suggests that "[k]nowing is nothing but working with the favourite metaphors, an imitating which is no longer felt to be an imitation" (PT 51). Breazeale offers an excellent summary of Nietzsche's epistemological position at this stage where he states the following:

> (1) There is no immediate knowing; knowledge always involves a transference (*Übertragung*) between the different spheres of subject and object, and is therefore always indirect or mediated. (2) Truth as an ideal requires an immediate and direct grasp of the object by the subject. (3) Consequently, the *truth* about things cannot be *known*, for this would require a self-contradictory mediated immediacy.[179]

For my purposes here it is interesting to consider Nietzsche's thoughts on consciousness in

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[179]Breazeale, *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 51, n. 98.

light of his appreciation of the mythical drive amongst the pre-Socratics since in both cases Nietzsche seems to think that the process of knowing, which represents the relationship between subject and object, is one that requires "illusion".

On Nietzsche's view, consciousness and the formation of truth suggests a struggle between our different "metaphorical worlds". He offers the following example in his notes:

> The pathos of the truth drive presupposes the observation that the various metaphorical worlds are at variance and struggle with one another. Eg. the world of dreams, lies, etc. and the ordinary usual view of things: the first type of metaphorical world is rarer; the other is more frequent. Thus the rule struggles against the exception, the regular against the unaccustomed: hence the higher esteem for everyday reality than for the dream world. Now however, what is rare and unaccustomed is *more attractive*: the lie is felt as a stimulus. Poetry. (PT 51)

The important elements of Nietzsche's example in this passage include his appreciation of what is rare in the context of competing metaphorical worlds and the idea that what is rare is "more attractive". In his appreciation of "the lie" and "the poetic" Nietzsche voices his interest in challenging the metaphorical world of "the ordinary usual view of things". Therefore, challenging accepted tautologies of consciousness with alternative metaphorical modes of truth is an aesthetic undertaking as much as it is an epistemological one and this way of thinking about the challenge to consciousness resonates with Nietzsche's appreciation of the mythical drive amongst the pre-Socratics.

In an effort to test the limits of anthropomorphic knowing, Nietzsche sees the philosopher as the only type able to experiment with knowing in new ways. What is crucial to experimenting with knowledge, therefore, is that the philosopher liberate himself as much as possible from the ordinary usual view of things. This kind of liberation requires that the philosopher identify the experience of the self as the most significant and immediate site of liberation. In other words, the truth of the individual self is unknown in the sense that consciousness makes it difficult for us to know unique things as unique things but we can experiment with the limits of our own conscious knowledge of self by experimenting with new metaphorical worlds that challenge the ordinary usual view of

things. Of consciousness, the self, and the desire to see further, Nietzsche makes the following comments:

> Does he (man) not actually live *by means of* a continual process of deception? Does nature not conceal most things from him, even the nearest things - his own body, for example, of which he has only a deceptive "consciousness"? He is locked within this consciousness and nature threw away the key. Oh, the fatal curiosity of the philosopher, who longs, just once, to peer out and down through a crack in the chamber of consciousness. (PT 65)

In this passage Nietzsche's immature position with respect to the two world theory is obvious but he also reveals the first clues to the way in which he wants to develop philosophy. As a challenge to the accepted metaphorical world and as an experiment with the self, Nietzsche begins the project of liberating philosophy from theoretical optimism and he establishes the foundations for his later conception of philosophy as value creation.

Tracing the development of these ideas requires associating Nietzsche's thoughts on consciousness with his thoughts on the people, the masses, or "the herd". In fact the best way to describe consciousness, in this context, would be as "herd consciousness". It is the goal of re-thinking philosophy as the mythical drive, beyond herd consciousness, that requires a critique of herd morality. Thus, the problem of getting beyond herd morality, beyond good and evil, is the problem of getting beyond a metaphorical world that merely serves herd self-preservation or "utility" as I have consistently referred to it. The kind of life that herd consciousness produces is the life of the herd animal. And the life of the herd proceeds according to an ascetic ideal of truth that denies tragic knowledge and the instincts of life-affirmation. Therefore, Nietzsche must find a way to replace the ascetic ideal of truth with an alternative life-affirming ideal. For "life" to replace "truth" as the reigning ideal the mythical drive must serve life-affirmation and not herd self-preservation. Concerning the knowing self, this means that the philosopher must be liberated from herd consciousness at least to the degree that this is possible and Nietzsche comes to think that it *is* possible where he eventually conceives of philosophy as independent value creation.

Finding evidence of an early attempt to bracket out a particular philosophical self from the herd is not an impossible task. However, Nietzsche develops his ideas on this subject very gradually. In his *Untimely Meditations* Nietzsche begins the process with a critique of the truth-seeking self. What is of most significance in the following passage is the way in which Nietzsche yearns for a conception of the knowing self that is "active" rather than "passive", or merely "contemplative":

> Fragmented and in pieces, dissociated almost mechanically into an inner and an outer, sown with concepts as with dragon's teeth, bringing forth conceptual dragons, suffering from the malady of words and mistrusting any feeling of our own which has not yet been stamped with words: being such an unliving and yet uncannily active concept-and word-factory, perhaps I still have the right to say of myself *cogito, ergo sum*, but not *vivo, ergo cogito*. Empty 'being' is granted me, but not full and green 'life'; the feeling that tells me that I exist warrants to me only that I am a thinking creature, not that I am a living one, not that I am an *animal* but at most a *cogital*. (UM 119)

By suggesting *vivo, ergo cogito* over and against *cogito, ergo sum* Nietzsche re-introduces the tragic mode of the truth-seeking self. And this simple reversal may be interpreted as affirming the drive to truth in the service of life-affirmation over and against the will to truth in the service of herd-preservation.

It is crucial to a better understanding of Nietzsche's political philosophy, therefore, that we see the emerging conception of the truth-seeking self as active rather than passive in terms of an emerging philosophical type to be distinguished apart from the rest of society. In conceiving of the possibility for an alternative conception of the truth-seeking self Nietzsche separates the philosopher out from the masses on the grounds that the philosopher is the only type capable of experimenting with the truth as a lived perspective that embodies an alternative metaphorical world to the world of the ordinary view of things. In this way, uniqueness distinguishes the philosophical type as great and elevates him above herd consciousness. The role of the masses then becomes one of forming the foundation for the production of the philosophical type. In his *Untimely Meditations*, Nietzsche offers the following view of the masses:

> The masses seem to me to deserve notice in three respects only: first as faded copies of great men produced on poor paper with worn-out plates, then as a force of resistance to great men, finally as instruments in the hands of great men; for the rest, let the Devil and statistics take them! (UM 113)

As faded copies of great men the masses exhibit Nietzsche's theory of herd imitation. As forces of resistance to great men the masses conform to the idea that certain metaphorical worlds compete with other more exceptional worlds. But what I want to emphasize is the last consideration that the masses may serve as instruments in the hands of great men. I argue, according to my thesis on the role of hierarchy, that it is this consideration that begins to ground Nietzsche's ideas on the uniqueness of the philosophical type more and more and especially as he begins to envision the philosopher beyond "moral" consciousness. Therefore, I argue that these associations take on new dimensions in his middle period.

In *Human All Too* and *Daybreak* Nietzsche begins to distinguish a new philosophical type from a moral type and in doing so he takes a few more steps toward philosophizing hierarchy. Hierarchy is, in this way, the condition for liberating philosophy from the morality of utility and custom. What Nietzsche does in his middle period is set up a framework in which certain "moral" types conform to the morality of custom and certain "evil" types transgress that morality:

> To be moral, to act in accordance with custom, to be ethical means to practise obedience towards a law or tradition established from old.
>
> To be evil is 'not to act in accordance with custom', to practise things not sanctioned by custom, to resist tradition, however rational or stupid that tradition may be ...
>
> How the tradition has *arisen* is here a matter of indifference, and has in any event nothing to do with good and evil or with any kind of immanent categorical imperative; it is above all directed at the preservation of a *community*, a people, every superstitious usage which has arisen on the basis of some chance event mistakenly interpreted enforces a tradition which it is in accordance with custom to follow; for to sever oneself from it is dangerous, and even more injurious to the *community* than to the individual (because the gods punish the community for misdeeds and for every violation of their privileges and only to that extent punish the individual). (HAH 96)
>
> We investigators are, like all conquerors, discoverers, seafarers, adventurers, of an audacious morality and must reconcile ourselves to being considered on the whole evil. (D 432)

Having established the difference between types according to the morality of custom, Nietzsche takes one more crucial step in *Daybreak* and *Human All Too Human*. What he re-values in these books is the status of the transgressor. As is evident in the passage from *Daybreak*, Nietzsche sees the transgressor as an investigator or, rather, the investigator as a transgressor. Thus, Nietzsche turns this transgressor into an heroic or strongest type who is capable of acting and thinking independently. In *Human All Too Human* Nietzsche writes:

> The butterfly wants to get out of its cocoon, it tears at it, it breaks it open: then it is blinded and confused by the unfamiliar light, the realm of freedom. It is in such men as are *capable* of that suffering - how few they will be! - that the first attempt will be made to see whether mankind could *transform itself from a moral to a knowing mankind.* (HAH 107)

Although Nietzsche's language is not explicitly hierarchical in these passages, the movement from "a moral to a knowing mankind" foreshadows and prefigures the language of his mature books wherein the philosopher of the future is situated above "moral" man according to an active hierarchy of relations.

conclusion

Nietzsche imagines the philosopher of the future to have overcome the "bad conscience" of herd morality (GM II). Overcoming bad conscience represents the liberation of philosophy from its service to the herd. I argue that Nietzsche's genealogical account of moral psychology makes sense only in the context of the process of his thought from *The Birth of Tragedy* to *The Gay Science* because Nietzsche's genealogy is an attempt to philosophize beyond good and evil and the new metaphorical world of noble and slave, or active and reactive, is itself a product of the liberation of philosophy from its service to the herd.

Nietzsche's positive teachings from *The Gay Science* to *Ecce Homo* represent an integrated political vision built on the relationship between hierarchy and philosophy. It is

during the early and middle periods that Nietzsche wrestled with the ideas necessary to arrive at the position he came to in *The Gay Science.* The most important ideas from this period include the idea of the tragic view *versus* the theoretical view, the difference between Socratism and the pre-Socratic mythical drive, and the liberation of philosophy from herd consciousness. These elements combine to form the groundwork for a uniquely Nietzschean political philosophy. In the development of these ideas it is clear that one of Nietzsche's foremost concerns is to emphasize the unity of form and content in his work for the purposes of communicating a philosophical mode that might be said to exist beyond the theoretical mode. But the significance of the unity of form and content is best found in the mature relationship between hierarchy and philosophy that Nietzsche elaborates from *The Gay Science* onward. Therefore, it is to the mature rendering of hierarchy and philosophy that I now turn.

CHAPTER SIX - NIETZSCHE'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

Nietzsche's political commentators tend to force his ideas into familiar categories of thought be they democratic, Aristotelian, or poststructuralist categories. In the preceding chapters I have discussed the limitations of these interpretations in order to make room for my argument that the role of philosophy and hierarchy represents what is *uniquely* political in Nietzsche. At this stage, however, it is important to state that by adopting a purely critical attitude toward these other interpretations I do not mean to suggest that Nietzsche's unique status as a political thinker has been entirely overlooked. Indeed, such a claim would be inaccurate given the many valuable contributions to Nietzsche studies in political theory that have emerged over the last few decades. Therefore, in this chapter, I take a different tack and begin the chapter with a focus on those characterizations of Nietzsche's political thought, amongst his various interpreters, that help characterize his politics and identify the political framework of his overall experiment.

As I mentioned in the introduction to part two, this chapter is meant to serve as an exegesis of Nietzsche's mature political thought. Therefore, I begin with a discussion of how to develop a clearer political framework in Nietzsche. This discussion is presented in two parts. Following this discussion I illustrate the foundations of Nietzsche's political thought as he presents them in *The Gay Science*. This section serves as a bridge connecting the exegesis in chapter five to the exegesis of Nietzsche's later thought, which will follow the section on *The Gay Science* in this chapter. Thus, in the remaining sections, I offer an interpretation of Nietzsche's political philosophy as it is presented in the works of his mature period. In the last section of the chapter I summarize, briefly, the virtues and limitations of Nietzsche's political thought as I have presented it here in part two and throughout the thesis thus far.

developing Nietzsche's political framework - part I

Bruce Detwiler describes Nietzsche's political thought as "aristocratic radicalism". Thus, he refers to Nietzsche as "the first avowed philosophical atheist of the far Right".[180] Detwiler's characterization is helpful because it establishes the hierarchical aspect of Nietzsche's political framework and links it to "philosophical atheism". The will to power hypothesis is Nietzsche's very own self-conscious "anthropomorphism" and thus represents the ontological claim of a philosophical atheist. The only problem with Detwiler's description, however, is that it appears to identify Nietzsche on "the far Right" and it cannot be emphasized enough that what is uniquely political in Nietzsche exists beyond our familiar political categories. Nevertheless, Detwiler captures Nietzsche's distinctiveness as a political thinker where he states:

> If the goal of the political sphere is the enhancement of man in a Nietzschean sense, by negative implication the primary goal of politics cannot be the promotion of virtue in the classical sense, or morality, or public security, or prosperity, the rights of the individual, liberty, social justice, or the happiness of the greatest number.[181]

The "negative implication" of Detwiler's list here helps to emphasize just how removed Nietzsche's project is from the traditional foci of western political thought. It also directs us back to the question of what is "positively" political in Nietzsche's philosophy. Even if his thought exists beyond "the far Right", and beyond our familiar ancient and modern political goals, we should still be able to characterize his contribution in political terms.

The problem at hand, therefore, is how to describe Nietzsche's political framework. How do we go about characterising the setting for the enhancement of Nietzschean man as political according to Nietzsche's revaluation of values? Of course, I have already introduced the political in Nietzsche as the role of philosophy and hierarchy. I have presented his "politics" as hierarchy and his "philosophy" as value creation. But it may be

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[180]Bruce Detwiler, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism*, p. 77.

[181]Ibid, p. 66.

necessary to say more about these elements within the context of his revaluation of values if we are to develop a more comprehensive political framework in his philosophy.

Tracy Strong acknowledges the problem of identifying Nietzsche's political framework and he does so with reference to Nietzsche's anti-systematic method:

> [T]he most profound level of Nietzsche's political thought cannot then be concerned with the erection of systems in the manner of classical political theory. There can be no Nietzschean *Contrat Social*, because the unit of philosophy and politics (the "dominating philosophy") which would correspond to it does not (yet) exist. Nietzsche rather will be concerned to investigate the reasons why it is no longer possible to live a political-philosophical form of life.[182]

In this passage Strong claims that there is no political theory that would correspond to a Nietzschean social contract. He then identifies Nietzsche's interest in a "political-philosophical form of life" but sees this as something Nietzsche laments the passing of rather than something he hopes to re-introduce within an imagined post-modern setting. The significance of Strong's observations here is that they identify two crucial elements of Nietzsche's political thought, i.e. the absence of "theory" or "system" as well as Nietzsche's interest in a political-philosophical form of life. In this chapter, I describe Nietzsche's conception of value creation as a political-philosophical form of life. Therefore, Strong's observations help support my description of Nietzschean autonomy. The obvious limitation of Strong's description, however, is its failure to establish the link between an anti-systematic method and the promotion of a new political-philosophical form of life. But this may be the result of Strong's attempt to characterize Nietzsche's thought as politically under-determined and in need of democratising. Regardless of Strong's intentions, however, it is helpful enough that his observations give us further insight into Nietzsche's difficult political architecture.

Another commentator who appears to grasp important elements of Nietzsche's

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[182]Tracy Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, pp. 188-189.

"positive" project is Leo Strauss.[183] The great virtue of Strauss's essay on *Beyond Good and Evil* is the clarity with which it identifies the life of the philosopher of the future in the context of the uniquely anthropomorphic will to power hypothesis. Thus, Strauss captures the direction of Nietzsche's political project at the moment that Nietzsche overcomes the two world theory by denying it altogether. Strauss writes:

> Man reaches his peak through and in the philosopher of the future as the truly complementary man in whom not only man but the rest of existence is justified (BGE 207). He is the first man who consciously creates values on the basis of the understanding of the will to power as the fundamental phenomenon. His action constitutes the highest form of the most spiritual will to power and therewith the highest form of the will to power. By this action he puts an end to the rule of non-sense and chance (BGE 203). As the act of the highest form of man's will to power the *Vernatürlichung* (making natural) of man is at the same time the peak of the anthropomorphization of the non-human (cf. WP 614), for the most spiritual will to power consists in prescribing to nature what or how it ought to be (BGE 9). It is in this way that Nietzsche abolishes the difference between the world of appearance or fiction and the true world.[184]

What is most significant in this passage is that the *Übermensch*, the "complementary man", is the first man "who consciously creates values on the basis of his understanding of the will to power as the fundamental phenomenon". On Strauss's account it becomes clear that there is an important difference between the will to power as a revaluation of values and independent value creation as a future mode of life. The will to power is Nietzsche's claim about "life", his "anthropomorphism", and therefore it is *his* created value. But this created value is not the same as "independent value creation" because it is not the product of active hierarchy. In other words, Nietzsche's philosophy has not yet brought about a set of relations that would make the life of the highest type possible and that is why Nietzsche always refers to himself as a mere "free sprit" rather than as the embodiment of his value creating ideal itself. Strauss captures this in his description of the philosopher of the

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[183]Strauss's essay "Note on the Plan of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*" has been reproduced several times but I refer here to the version that may be found in the appendix of Laurence Lampert's book *Leo Strauss and Nietzsche*: Leo Strauss, "Note on the Plan of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*" in *Leo Strauss and Nietzsche*, written and edited by Laurence Lampert (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[184]Strauss, "Note on the Plan of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*", p. 203.

future's distinctiveness. What he acknowledges is that a revaluation of values must occur first, ushering in an active hierarchy, and only then may a new set of relations be expected to produce the first self-conscious and independent value creator. The crucial point is that it is only the incommunicable life of the independent value creator that establishes anti-universalism, as I introduced it in chapter one, and Nietzsche's hypothesis of will to power is not, as a philosophy, that which is incommunicable *per se*. In other words, it is the new vision of life as value creation/self-overcoming that is specifically "incommunicable".

However, it is important to stress that I am not claiming that Nietzsche fails to "create" a new metaphorical world in his texts for he does in fact do this. I am simply establishing the fact that his role as the creator of a new metaphorical world is not the same thing as the role of the independent value creator. In other words, Nietzsche presents his anti-theoretical philosophy as a *bridge* to the *life* of the philosopher of the future on the condition that an active hierarchy is the product of a revaluation of values. Importantly, independent value creation is something "active" or "lived" as opposed to something "philosophical", in a purely contemplative or literary sense. Independent value judgment has to do with valuing one's own unique *actions* and not simply revaluing values "passively" as Nietzsche does. The best way of explaining this difference is in terms of Nietzsche's praise of solitude, honesty, and courage which may be virtues that help to bring about the formation of an active hierarchy but could never be described in terms of virtues Nietzsche shares with his *Übermenschen*. Nietzsche's philosophers of the future create values in a radically independent way that defies categorization in terms of a universal table of values.

Nietzsche seems to develop an understanding of this difference out of an emerging critique of Plato's failure as a political-philosophical legislator. In *Daybreak* Nietzsche writes:

> *The evil principle* - Plato has given us a splendid description of how the philosophical thinker must within every existing society count as the paragon of all wickedness: for as critic of all customs he is the antithesis of the moral man, and if he does not succeed in becoming the lawgiver of new customs he remains in the memory of men as 'the evil principle'. From this we may gather what the city of Athens, tolerably freeminded and avid for innovation though it was, did with the reputation of Plato during his lifetime: is it any wonder if, filled with the 'political drive' as he himself says he was, he attempted three times to settle in Sicily, where at that time a Pan-Hellenic Mediterranean city seemed to be in process of formation? (D 496)

The point of comparing Nietzsche to Plato is that Plato's philosophy would eventually have an enormous influence on the Christian moral universe but Plato himself was unsuccessful as a "lawgiver", or political-philosophical "actor". The same may be said for Nietzsche, barring the fact that it is improbable that his philosophy will have a similar effect on world history. Regardless, the essential comparison is between conceptions of the political-philosophical form of life.

Now what I want to set up here is a way of distinguishing Nietzsche's future-based notion of political-philosophical autonomy as absolutely new. That is why I want to separate the philosopher of the future from Nietzsche himself and from the example of Plato. Yet, at the same time, I want to emphasize that Plato's failure is central to the development of Nietzsche's aims and the distinctions he makes between his own role and the incommunicable life of a new, highest type. For Nietzsche, the point is that a revaluation may, subsequently, produce a new *Nietzschean* version of the political-philosophical actor but the will to power is not in itself representative of a morally incommunicable table of values. Thus, Nietzsche may be said to present a new metaphorical world in terms of an eventual transformation that, like the Platonic metaphorical world, may have an influence on a revaluation of values in the future, producing a new type of humanity.

Although Nietzsche does not write about revaluation in these terms explicitly, on my reading of his aims I think it is fair to infer this type of framework where we need to make sense of the difference between Nietzsche's will to power hypothesis and the life of

independent value creation. I claim that we need to see these ideas as separate (but connected) in order to understand better just how removed Nietzsche's ideal is from how he understands his own role. The point, quite simply, is that Nietzsche appears to set up independent value creation as a unique and altogether new form of the political-philosophical life that exists somewhere beyond the notion of the Platonic lawgiver as well as the much less self-conscious process of revaluation Nietzsche identifies in the slave revolt in morality.

Therefore, what is most significant about producing active hierarchy is that noble values begin to mix with Zarathustra's virtues of solitude, honesty, and courage in an attempt to liberate philosophy from the ascetic ideal, and its service to theoretical optimism. Importantly, this is the most that Nietzsche appears to see himself as influencing. According to the example of Plato, Nietzsche appears to see himself as influencing a revaluation of values but that revaluation, like the slave revolt in morality, would not represent the kind of "direct" and "active" value creation his future types will be capable of experiencing because it exists within a realm of what might be described as "contemplative" valuing.[185]

Therefore, according to this process, solitude and honesty are not necessarily virtues of the highest type but merely necessary for the *liberation* of philosophy. Strauss offers support for this reading where he makes the following comments on the significance of Nietzschean probity:

> [P]robity is an end rather than a beginning; it points to the past rather than to the future; it is not the virtue characteristic of the philosophers of the future; it must be supported, modified, fortified by "our most delicate, most disguised, most spiritual will to power" which is directed toward the future. Surely our probity must not be permitted to become the ground or object of our pride, for

[185]Hannah Arendt accuses Nietzsche of forming purely "contemplative" values that fail to represent new values in the sense that his formulations fail to represent "active" judgments in the world. I take this up in the next chapter but it is important to state here that Nietzsche, although clearly guilty of philosophizing in the way Arendt claims, sets up the possibility of a future life that would move beyond a purely contemplative mode of valuing.

this would lead us back to moralism (and to theism).[186]

The point Strauss makes here is that universalizing "probity" would be tantamount to re-introducing the ascetic ideal since the ascetic ideal functions according to a nihilistic (theistic) will to truth. On this view, all that Nietzsche means by stressing the importance of honesty is that both the free spirit and the philosopher of the future need to be "conscious" of the new way in which they must value truth. In other words, the philosophical type will need to be honest with himself about who he is as, firstly, a transgressor and, later, an independent value creator.

The same thing can be said for the virtue of solitude. Solitude may be necessary for the free spirit in order to liberate himself from the morality of custom and utility, in the same way that it was certainly a virtue for Nietzsche throughout his life, but it need not be, and should not be, conceived of as a universally shared virtue of the philosophers of the future. What this also means is that the philosophers of the future may be described as independent types but not anti-social or anti-political types *per se*. Thus, Nietzsche's interest in honesty and solitude merely serves to liberate philosophy insofar as it forces the free spirit to recognize his "difference" from the herd and embrace the noble mode of self-reverence, courage, and commanding (cf. BGE 44).

Nietzsche's notion of noble nature is not therefore Greek or Roman *per se* but rather *his own* unity of noble traits that serves the liberation and re-configuration of philosophy. And this is especially true of Nietzsche's interest in "commanding". Nietzsche wants to re-introduce the instinct for commanding amongst his philosophical types but in a future, post-modern setting. What this means is that Nietzsche wants to re-introduce a drive to dominate in the context of a post-Christian psychology with its inherited self-conscious and self-disciplining qualities. Laurence Lampert captures the new hybrid quality of

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[186]Strauss, "Note on the Plan of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*", p. 202.

Nietzsche's conception of noble nature (*die vornehme Natur*) in the following way:

> It was precisely Plato's teaching that "the virtuous man is the happiest man" that eventually cured old Greeks of their scorn for justice and taught them to repudiate the drive to tyranny that every Greek of *vornehmer* origin felt within himself, the drive to dominate, to sacrifice everyone and everything to one's own arrogance and pleasure. Nietzsche grants that the Platonic teaching of happiness through virtue could not be planted too deeply into such wild natures, but he adds that our own long schooling in Platonic virtue has now made that virtue less necessary; our Vornehmheit now permits us virtues that are different from the domesticating virtues necessary in Plato's time and place.[187]

Despite Nietzsche's attack on the Platonic Socrates he holds Plato in high esteem and this is precisely because of Plato's "political" or "tyrannical" drive to legislate, ironically, less tyrannical virtues and customs. Therefore, what is vital to our understanding of Nietzsche's aims is that we grasp how he wants to develop a new conception of political-philosophical autonomy that would be informed by, but go beyond, both the ancient tyrannical drive and the modern instinct for a much more self-conscious and self-responsible mode of discipline.

developing Nietzsche's political framework - part II

Now this brings me back to the question of the political setting for the enhancement of Nietzschean man. Clearly, Nietzsche does not intend for his highest types to be legislators in the Platonic mould since they are meant to be entirely new types. Yet he does promote the tyrannical drive as the "political" drive and in *Beyond Good and Evil* he describes the philosophical drive as the tyrannical drive as well (BGE 9). Therefore, it may be reasonable to conclude that the political-philosophical form of life Nietzsche is interested in is the life of independent value creation and this represents a unique variation on the original Platonic model. Yet in order to derive an outline, however tentative, of a Nietzschean political "context" we need to distinguish more clearly between Nietzsche's approach to the relationship between politics and philosophy and Plato's approach to that

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[187]Laurence Lampert, *Leo Strauss and Nietzsche*, p. 113.

relationship.

Strauss claims that the relationship between politics and philosophy in Nietzsche is altered by the position of religion and therefore politics is demoted to a lower level of significance:

> Philosophy and religion, it seems, belong together - belong more closely together than philosophy and the city. The fundamental alternative is that of the rule of philosophy over religion or the rule of religion over philosophy; it is not, as it was for Plato or Aristotle, that of the philosophic and the political life; for Nietzsche, as distinguished from the classics, politics belongs from the outset to a lower plane than either philosophy or religion.[188]

Strauss is right insofar as Nietzsche launches his most sustained attack against the Christian religion but what Strauss ignores is the fact that politics is not "demoted" so much as it is re-aligned with morality and becomes a part of morality in a new sense. Strauss is right to point out that for Nietzsche there is a different relationship between politics and philosophy than there is for Plato or Aristotle but Nietzsche does not demote politics "to a lower plane" *per se*.

Instead, Nietzsche's criticisms of democracy and modern culture suggest that he sees political values as moral values and therefore political institutions reflect the moral structure of any given society. Tracy Strong identifies this Nietzschean conception of politics where he states:

> [O]n a deeper level, as the first essay in the *Genealogy* makes clear, moral systems and politics are codetermined. Since the very existence of moral categories depended on the desire to assert power over another group of people - and under slave morality to *control* and render them predictable - all morality is fundamentally a form of politics.[189]

According to Strong it is the will to power that "codetermines" moral systems and politics.[190] What this means with respect to the relationship between politics and

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[188]Strauss, "Note on the Plan of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*", p. 190.

[189]Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, p. 189.

[190]It could be argued that Strong is overstating "codeterminacy" here and that politics is surely less than morality. But I want to present "politics" according to Nietzsche's power relation conception and thus I think that Strong is correct to render politics and morality "codetermined" in Nietzsche. The point is that separating politics and morality leaves Nietzsche in a traditional framework that he appears to want to overcome.

philosophy is that if politics and morality are codetermined then extra-moral philosophy is, according to Nietzsche's new definitional framework, a new form of political autonomy. In other words, according to Nietzsche's notion of hierarchy, "extra-moral" autonomy would be "extra-political" autonomy but it would also be a new form of "moral" autonomy and, thus, a new form of "political" autonomy as well *because of the power relations framework*. It would, therefore, be inaccurate to describe this new form of autonomy as either anti-political or apolitical since such descriptions fail to capture the power relations operating in the hierarchical framework Nietzsche imagines.

The best way to explain this framework might be to compare it to Plato's framework. The political-philosophical form of life for Nietzsche differs from the original Platonic version because the Platonic model is circumscribed within a moral framework of service to the larger community or rather, in Nietzschean language, the herd. And this is the condition for philosophy's survival in Plato's *Republic*.

Lampert distinguishes between "political courage" and "philosophical courage" in the Greek context.[191] In doing so he suggests that the problem for Plato was that political courage implied loyalty to custom and "dyed in opinion" but philosophical courage implied the contrary.[192] According to this difference, Nietzsche's interest is in philosophical courage over and against political courage. For Nietzsche, as Lampert puts it, "[p]hilosophy's hidden first virtue becomes its open and avowed first virtue when nature is understood in its *Vornehmheit* (nobility), its appalling 'wasteful and indifferent magnificence'".[193] Lampert's observation is helpful because it reveals the fact that Nietzsche needs to replace political courage with philosophical courage and in doing so

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[191]Lampert, *Leo Strauss and Nietzsche*, p. 115.

[192]Ibid.

[193]Ibid.

reinterpret politics as morality.

What is important however, in developing Nietzsche's political framework, is the idea that philosophical courage is re-introduced according to active hierarchy or, rather, the noble will to power as Nietzsche defines it. Thus, where Plato forced the "wasteful and indifferent magnificence" of philosophical courage to serve "politics", or political courage, he was, on Nietzsche's view, merely forcing philosophy to serve the morality of custom in a way that would force philosophy to limp along as a pale shadow of its former pre-Socratic self. What Nietzsche wants to do is release philosophy from its service to the morality of custom and therefore re-ignite it as a "lived" or "active" life. In his *Untimely Meditations* Nietzsche writes:

> All modern philosophizing is political and official, limited by governments, churches, academies, customs and the cowardice of men to the appearance of scholarship; it sighs 'if only' or knows 'there once was' and does nothing else. Within a historical culture philosophy possesses no rights if it wants to be more than a self-restrained knowing which leads to no action ... One may think, write, print, speak, teach philosophy - to that point more or less everything is permitted; only in the realm of action, of so-called life, is it otherwise: there only one thing is ever permitted and everything else simply impossible: thus will historical culture have it. Are there still human beings, one then asks oneself, or perhaps only thinking -, writing- and speaking-machines? (UM 85).

This passage provides us with an excellent example of how Nietzsche associates "politics" with the realm of custom and demands that "philosophy" break out of its service to custom. Thus, rather than describing the virtue of political courage, of loyalty, as "noble" Nietzsche revalues it as slavish weakness. In this way, Nietzsche is very selective where he pieces together what *he* wants to describe as noble.

In liberating philosophy from its "Platonic" service to "politics" Nietzsche transforms philosophy from a contemplative mode of theoretical optimism to an active mode of value creation. This active mode is a political-philosophical conception of autonomy according to the way politics and morality are hierarchically codetermined in Nietzsche. In other words, an extra-moral form of autonomy is a political form of autonomy according to Nietzsche's active hierarchy.

In this way, what is "active" is "noble" and includes those elements deemed necessary to affirm life at the highest level. The life of Nietzschean political-philosophical autonomy represents the overcoming of the bad conscience and the creation of the "active" conscience which is the life-affirming conscience. Thus, the highest type will have an active conscience and this is best described in *On the Genealogy of Morals* where Nietzsche introduces his description of the sovereign individual (GM II, 2). I offered an account of the sovereign individual in chapter one but, for my purposes here, it is important to add that the active conscience may be described as "self-conscious" value creation because it represents the unity of self-consciousness and the "act" of legislating for oneself in terms of positing immediate, life-affirming value judgments.

It is now possible to return to the question of the political setting for the enhancement of Nietzschean man, and to conclude that Nietzsche's political framework does not yield any clear design for a political "sphere" *per se*. Active hierarchy establishes Nietzschean autonomy as a form of "political-philosophical" autonomy but Nietzsche never says anything concrete about the life of extra-moral autonomy in terms of an identifiable political "realm" or "sphere". Nevertheless, it is possible to identify a skeletal political "structure" in Nietzsche's thought. With the help of Nietzsche's interpreters it is possible to say that Nietzsche's political scaffolding includes the following elements: 1) re-defining politics as morality, 2) liberating philosophy from theoretical optimism and uniting it with a new conception of what is "noble", and therefore "active", according to the will to power hypothesis, 3) producing a new form of political-philosophical autonomy ("self-conscious" and "independent" value creation) within the framework of an active hierarchy of power relations.

The Gay Science and the foundations of Nietzsche's political philosophy

In *The Gay Science* all the elements of Nietzsche's revaluation are presented in a clear and concise aphoristic structure but without the specific metaphorical language of the mature books. In other words, all the elements that form the substance of his concepts of will to power, noble and slave, eternal recurrence, and value creation are in evidence and are explained according to the trajectory of his early intuitions about philosophy, consciousness, and the limits of self-knowledge. Therefore, *The Gay Science* is the most important book to refer to where it is necessary to establish the link between Nietzsche's early work and his positive teachings. The movement that needs to be mapped in *The Gay Science* is the movement from Nietzsche's early recognition of the problem of herd consciousness to the idea of independent "legislating" as a mode of life that requires a rare and "noble" capacity for discharging one's strength in a self-disciplined way.

In the following passage Nietzsche offers his mature position on the nature and limits of consciousness with respect to self-knowledge:

> My idea is, as you see, that consciousness does not really belong to man's individual existence but rather to his social or herd nature; that, as follows from this, it has developed subtlety only insofar as this is required by social or herd utility. Consequently, given the best will in the world to understand ourselves as individually as possible, "to know ourselves," each of us will always succeed in becoming conscious only of what is not individual but "average." Our thoughts themselves are continually governed by the character of consciousness - by the "genius of the species" that commands it - and translated back into the perspective of the herd. Fundamentally, all our actions are altogether incomparably personal, unique, and infinitely individual; there is no doubt of that. But as soon as we translate them into consciousness *they no longer seem to be*. (GS 354).

The movement in this passage is away from *herd* nature and toward *individual* nature. The movement is thus also away from herd consciousness and toward individual actions. Therefore, what Nietzsche establishes in this passage is the significance of what is unique and he locates what is unique in human actions. His interest in what is unique is thus consistent with his earliest claims about the limitations of consciousness and the philosophical urge to get beyond such limitations.

The most important aspect of Nietzsche's formulations here is his concern to improve

the possibilities for self-knowledge while recognizing the limitations of human consciousness. In other words, Nietzsche attempts to focus the philosophical desire for self-knowledge on the uniqueness of actions but he does so within the framework of consciousness and therefore within the realization that to whatever extent individuals may be said to break with herd nature they are nevertheless imprisoned within consciousness and thus forced to represent their own actions *to themselves* indirectly and "conceptually". But Nietzsche pushes the notion of "conscious" individuality to its limits where he begins to conceive of self-knowledge in terms of self-creation. In the following passage it becomes more clear how he develops the idea of self-creation out of the attempt to see individual actions strictly in terms of individual "values":

> Anyone who still judges "in this case everybody would have to act like this" has not yet taken five steps toward self-knowledge ... That our opinions about "good" and "noble" and "great" can never be *proved true* by our actions because every action is unknowable; that our opinions, valuations, and tables of what is good certainly belong among the most powerful levers in the involved mechanism of our actions, but in any particular case the law of their mechanism is indemonstrable. Let us therefore *limit* ourselves to the purification of our opinions and valuations and to the *creation of our own new tables of what is good*, and let us stop brooding about the "moral value of our actions"! (GS 335)

Legislating for oneself requires living outside the "moral value of our actions" in the sense that it requires valuing actions as unique and therefore as radically individual.

It is this new relationship between consciousness and the individual valuing of actions that constitutes the meaning of self-creation or what Nietzsche would later, in *Ecce Homo,* elaborate as the process of "becoming who we are" (EH, *Why I am so Clever*, 9). Here in *The Gay Science* it is clear that what makes the process unique and at the same time difficult to imagine is the incommunicable nature of such a radically individual framework of consciousness. Nevertheless, Nietzsche describes this new relationship between consciousness and individual actions as the domain of "conscience":

> What does your conscience say? You shall become the person you are. (GS 270)

In terms of the political framework underlying Nietzsche's new conception of conscience,

it is important to acknowledge the fact that he establishes the self-creating process within a hierarchical framework separating higher "individual" types from lower "herd" types. The higher types are described as philosophical types but in a new way that unites a former contemplative mode of being with a creative mode to establish what Nietzsche describes as a creative mode of being or "becoming" in the sense that we "become" who we are:

> What distinguishes the higher human beings from the lower is that the former see and hear immeasurably more, and see and hear thoughtfully - and precisely this distinguishes human beings from animals, and the higher animals from the lower ... The higher human being always becomes at the same time happier and unhappier. But he can never shake off a *delusion*: he fancies that he is a *spectator* and *listener* who has been placed before the great visual and acoustic spectacle that is life; he calls his own nature *contemplative* and overlooks that he himself is really the poet who keeps creating this life. Of course, he is different from the *actor* of this drama, the so-called active type; but he is even less like a mere spectator and festive guest in front of the stage. As a poet, he certainly has *vis contemplativa* and the ability to look back upon his work, but at the same time also and above all *vis creativa*, which the active human being *lacks*, whatever visual appearances and the faith of all the world may say. (GS 301)

In this passage Nietzsche describes the process of self-creation in terms of the unity of the contemplative and creative modes of life and it may be concluded that it is the active "conscience" that embodies a unique self-consciousness of such unity.

In chapter one I introduced the evolution of conscience in terms of the overcoming of the bad conscience in a post-Christian setting. Nietzsche describes this conscience as an extra-moral conscience insofar as it is a conscience appropriate to someone who enjoys extra-moral autonomy (GM II, 2). Since the extra-moral conscience represents a unique unity of thought and action it may be appropriate to distinguish it within Nietzsche's active hierarchy as "active" conscience.

Another important association Nietzsche makes in *The Gay Science* is the link between active hierarchy and philosophical courage. In the following passage Nietzsche characterizes his philosophical type as a courageous type who affirms the exploitative power relations of active hierarchy:

> We "conserve" nothing; neither do we want to return to any past periods; we are not by any means "liberal"; we do not work for "progress" ; we do not need to plug up our ears against the sirens who in the market place sing of the future: their song about "equal rights," "a free society," "no more masters and no servants" has no allure for us. We simply do not consider it desirable

> that a realm of justice and concord should be established on earth (because it would certainly be the realm of the deepest levelling and *chinoiserie*); we are delighted with all who love, as we do, danger, war, and adventures, who refuse to compromise, to be captured , reconciled, and castrated; we count ourselves among conquerors; we think about the necessity for new orders, also for a new slavery - for every strengthening and enhancement of the human type also involves a new kind of enslavement. (GS 377)

Nietzsche's position in opposition to the levelling framework of reactive hierarchy is clear in this passage. Politics and morality are united here in the associations Nietzsche makes between the liberal politics of equal rights and the improvement of mankind as moral evolution. The courage of Nietzsche's philosophical adventurers may be described as a kind of discharging of strength in the sense that such types refuse "to be captured, reconciled, and castrated" (cf. BGE 188). This discharging of strength and refusal to be "reconciled" represents the liberation of philosophy from its service to theoretical optimism and the politics/morality of utility.

In *The Gay Science* Nietzsche also describes the artistry required for self-creation and in doing so he illustrates how the discharging of strength of the philosophical type constitutes a release from its service to the herd which demands, in turn, a strong and fiercely self-disciplined aesthetic mode of self-responsibility. For Nietzsche, there is no freedom beyond the constraints of form and style and this is as true for any culture writ large as it is for philosophy as a rare form of life. This means, for Nietzschean self-creation, that it only makes sense within the framework of active hierarchy. Nietzsche states:

> *One thing is needful* - To "give style" to one's character - a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye ... It will be the strong and domineering natures that enjoy their finest gaiety in such constraint and perfection under a law of their own ... Conversely, it is the weak characters without power over themselves that *hate* the constraint of style. They feel that if this bitter and evil constraint were imposed upon them they would be demeaned; they become slaves as soon as they serve; they hate to serve. Such spirits ... are always out to shape and interpret their environment as *free* nature: wild, arbitrary, fantastic, disorderly, and surprising. And they are well advised because it is only in this way that they can give pleasure to themselves. For one thing is needful: that a human being should *attain* satisfaction with himself, whether it be by means of this or that poetry and art; only then is a human being at all tolerable to behold. Whoever is dissatisfied with himself is continually ready for revenge, and we others will be his victims, if only by having to endure his ugly sight. For the sight of what is ugly makes one bad and gloomy. (GS 290)

Nietzsche, thus, interprets the illusion of "free nature", of negative freedom, as a slave illusion and the hatred of aesthetic constraint as a sign of life-denial or *ressentiment*. The way Nietzsche describes the resentful person as "ugly" and "bad" also reminds us of the noble way of interpreting the "good" as the beautiful and the "bad" as the ugly (GM I). Another important element here is the idea that self-discipline, in the service of self-creation, both demands and begets self-reverence. It is this self-reverence that the weak type is unable to draw on and I considered this at length in chapter one where I discussed the significance of slave vanity. The inability of the slave type to rely on a self-generated self-opinion makes it impossible for this type of person to embrace the constraint of style. In other words, the weak type suffers too much from bad conscience, since bad conscience undermines *independent* value judgments.

From my brief exegetical comments on *The Gay Science* it may be concluded that Nietzsche presents his ideas in this transitional book in a way that clearly establishes the foundations of his political framework and thus the basis for his positive teachings. In *The Gay Science* he transforms his early thoughts on consciousness and the liberation of philosophy into a positive conception of active hierarchy and active conscience. The foundations of Nietzsche's political philosophy are thus integrated and consolidated in the aphoristic structure of *The Gay Science* and in the mature works Nietzsche simply gives these ideas their fullest expression within a new metaphorical language of will to power, noble and slave, self-overcoming, and value creation.

Nietzsche's conception of what is "noble"

The framework of Nietzsche's political philosophy is based on the idea of "revaluation". Nietzsche claims that mankind has undergone only one revaluation of values in its history. Nietzsche describes that revaluation as the slave revolt in morality. In *Beyond Good and*

Evil and *On the Genealogy Morals*, Nietzsche presents the victorious slave morality as the morality of "good and evil". I introduced this basic framework in chapter one and described the morality of good and evil as "reactive hierarchy" according to Gilles Deleuze's insightful account of Nietzsche's ontology. However, at this point in my analysis, what needs to be explained more clearly is the specific way in which Nietzsche's conception of what is noble, the basis of his future "active" revaluation of values, represents *his* particular version of "noble nature". This is important because Nietzsche needs to construct his own conception of what is noble if he is going to be successful in establishing the preconditions for philosophical courage as a new form of political-philosophical autonomy.

Of course, the first thing Nietzsche needs to do is revalue "life" as will to power. He appears to do this quite effortlessly in *Beyond Good and Evil* where he states:

> Physiologists should think before putting down the instinct of self-preservation as the cardinal instinct of an organic being. A living thing seeks above all to *discharge* its strength - life itself is *will to power*; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent *results*. (BGE 13)

This new way of valuing life is the cornerstone of Nietzsche's revaluation. Specifically, the will to power hypothesis divides "willing" into a dualism that distinguishes a self-preserving will to power from a will to power that seeks to "discharge its strength" beyond mere preservation.

Nietzsche's interest in noble will to power as a discharging of strength follows from his earlier ideas about the need to liberate philosophy from the morality of custom, utility, or herd self-preservation as I have variously referred to Christian morality throughout the preceding chapters. Therefore, in *Beyond Good and Evil* and *On the Genealogy of Morals*, where he describes the noble type, he is specifically intent upon emphasizing one's capacity to discharge strength as the most important noble trait because it represents an ability to "act powerfully" and without concern for what a moral action is. Where

Nietzsche describes the noble races of antiquity, he is obviously looking back from the perspective of someone who wants to overcome the crippling passivity that the bad conscience has imposed upon the will ever more thoroughly over the course of the Christian and modern periods. For this reason it is essential that Nietzsche link the idea of doing philosophy differently to a conception of willing that is uniquely "active".

In *On the Genealogy of Morals* and *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche states:

> The knightly-aristocratic value judgments presupposed a powerful physicality, a flourishing, abundant, even overflowing health, together with that which serves to preserve it: war, adventure, hunting, dancing, war games, and in general all that involves vigorous, free, joyful activity. (GM I, 7)

> The noble type of man experiences *itself* as determining values; it does not need approval; it judges, "what is harmful to me is harmful in itself"; it knows itself to be that which first accords honour to things; it is *value-creating*. Everything it knows as part of itself it honours: such a morality is self-glorification. In the foreground there is the feeling of fullness, of power that seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of wealth that would give and bestow ... The noble human being honours himself as one who is powerful, also as one who has power over himself, who knows how to speak and be silent, who delights in being severe and hard with himself and respects all severity and hardness. (BGE 260)

Of course the noble type does not represent the kind of independent value creator that the philosopher of the future represents but Nietzsche must cultivate the idea that noble nature includes elements that may be seen as "value-creating" insofar as these elements embody "active" valuing rather than "passive" or "contemplative" valuing. In other words, Nietzsche needs to present noble nature as a mode of valuing that affirms individual actions regardless of their value to the herd. And for this reason Nietzsche emphasizes self-glorification, self-reverence, and severity toward oneself alongside the idea of discharging one's strength. Thus, I argue that every description of what is noble serves the promotion of philosophical courage as "active".

I suggest that noble nature is the precondition for independent value creation. But the problem with re-introducing an active hierarchy is that noble values are not necessary to either the survival of modern communities or how individuals in modern communities might understand themselves to "flourish". Any notion of flourishing that individuals in

modern communities might have is quite comfortably conceived of within the framework of the morality of utility. In other words, if we want to have a new active hierarchy we need to *will* that structure beyond the level of herd self-preservation or "utility", broadly speaking, as I have referred to slave morality throughout the thesis.

In the early essays *Homer on Competition* and *The Greek State* Nietzsche acknowledges the fact that the hierarchical and slavery-based structure of Greek culture was necessary to both the survival and flourishing of Greek city-states. However, in a post-modern or post-Christian setting this type of structure would be incoherent, since for us, unlike the Greeks, "survival" and "flourishing" are not linked in this hierarchical way. What Nietzsche needs to do, therefore, if he wants to re-introduce hierarchy, with new goals in mind, is to introduce a compelling new conception of willing that provides an ideal of flourishing *beyond* the morality of utility. This requirement explains the reasoning behind Nietzsche's unique description of what is noble and it explains why he sees revaluation as both a return to *and* re-configuration of noble morality (the morality of "good and bad") at the same time:

> Must the ancient fire not some day flare up much more terribly, after much longer preparation? More: must one not desire it with all one's might? Even will it? Even promote it? Whoever begins at this point, like my readers, to reflect and pursue his train of thought will not soon come to the end of it - reason enough for me to come to an end, assuming it has long since been abundantly clear what my *aim* is, what the aim of that dangerous slogan is that is inscribed at the head of my last book *Beyond Good and Evil* - at least this does *not* mean "Beyond Good and Bad." (GM I, 16)

In this passage Nietzsche presents his plan for revaluation clearly. He wants us to promote, will, and actually produce a high culture according to the framework of noble morality as he has described it. But this new culture must be able to transform the type who has philosophical courage into the *independent* value creating type. Therefore, what Nietzsche presents as noble must serve the enhancement of philosophical courage rather than political courage.

Political courage was the expression of political loyalty in the Greek context and was necessary for the Greeks in a way that philosophical courage was not. Therefore, political courage was a "noble" trait that Nietzsche needs to discard as an element of what is noble in order to make noble nature more "philosophical". In the mature works, unlike the early essay *The Greek State*, Nietzsche does not discuss the significance of political courage in the Greek context to any significant degree nor does he discuss it with respect to any of the so-called noble races to any great extent. And this may be why some commentators, like Strauss, suggest that Nietzsche simply demoted politics to a lower plane. On my view, however, it is more accurate to say that Nietzsche is relatively silent about "politics" in his mature period since he cannot afford to include political courage in what is "noble" if he wants to liberate philosophy from its service to the morality of custom and utility.

distance, internalization, and the soul

Now I have just described what is noble for Nietzsche as the discharging of strength combined with philosophical courage. But the discharging of strength, in a philosophical sense, is usually described by Nietzsche as an increased "internalization" or "spiritualization". For Nietzsche's philosophical types it is an expression of their strength that discipline becomes an inner necessity that allows their "souls" to "become what they are". Hierarchy is necessary to establish a distance between social strata and this distance is then translated internally, for the philosophical type, as the distance of "self-overcoming". In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche writes:

> Every enhancement of the type "man" has so far been the work of an aristocratic society - and it will be so again and again - a society that believes in the long ladder of an order of rank and differences in value between man and man, and that needs slavery in some sense or other. Without that *pathos of distance* which grows out of the ingrained difference between strata - when the ruling caste constantly looks afar and looks down upon subjects and instruments and just as constantly practices obedience and command, keeping down and keeping at a distance - that other, more mysterious pathos could not have grown up either - the craving for an ever new widening of distances within the soul itself, the development of ever higher, rarer, more remote, further-stretching, more comprehensive states - in brief, simply the enhancement of the type

> "man," the continual "self-overcoming of man," to use a moral formula in a supra-moral sense. (BGE 257)

At the end of the "moral" period, in which "man was actually *made* calculable" (GM II, 2), Nietzsche envisions a new mode of discharging strength that will not represent a simple guilt-based internalization of strength but, instead, an expression of strength in the form of an internal pathos of hierarchy as "self-overcoming". Thus, it is in this passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* that Nietzsche presents an explicit political framework uniting active hierarchy with philosophical self-overcoming.

According to the force of this passage, I argue that one of the most important elements of Nietzsche's conception of what is noble is his idea of the "pathos of distance" which I introduced in chapter one and again in chapter two. And it is important to note that the pathos of distance appears in all his mature books except for *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (cf. GM I, 2 & II, 14; TI, *Expeditions of an Untimely Man*, 37; AC 43; EH, "The Untimely Ones", 3). Specifically, what must be interpreted, with respect to the pathos of distance, is how the idea of the discharging of strength has both an internal and external manifestation. What I mean is that, once we acknowledge that political courage, or loyalty, is to be left out of what is noble, Nietzsche appears to be free to articulate noble nature according to both hierarchy and self-overcoming and in this way reinterpret politics as hierarchy and philosophy as extra-moral autonomy.

According to the framework for self-overcoming, outlined in the passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* above, "difference" is produced hierarchically and Nietzschean difference is "the enhancement of the type 'man'". What Nietzsche establishes clearly in this passage is the "becoming" quality of independent value creation. The process is one of continual "self-overcoming" which precludes the idea that Nietzschean autonomy is a fixed conception that may be communicated universally or known by the passive mind as a conception of universal autonomy. In making self-creation a process of "becoming"

rather than a fixed conception of "being" Nietzsche makes it impossible to conceive of the *Übermensch's* "difference" as a levelling one because a levelling conception of difference would be universally communicable to herd consciousness. Thus, for Nietzsche, it is only the framework of hierarchy and the continual process of experiencing that widening between higher and lower, and a pathos of distance which reflects this, that represents difference as "becoming".

However, this conception of becoming is linked to the "soul" and in this way the discharging of strength has an "inner" expression. Now the reference to "soul" may be appear to be misleading because the idea of a soul is usually associated with the metaphysical ideals of a Christian or Platonic moral *telos*. However, Nietzsche refers to the soul in many different instances and sometimes with derision, where he is contemptuous of these metaphysical interpretations, but at other times he employs the term within his own positive framework of "becoming". A good example of his positive usage is in the following passage from *Ecce Homo*:

> The soul that has the longest ladder and reaches down deepest - the most comprehensive soul, which can run and stray and roam farthest within itself; the most necessary soul that plunges joyously into chance; the soul that, having being, dives into becoming; the soul that *has*, but *wants* to want and will; the soul that flees itself and catches up with itself in the widest circles; the wisest soul that folly exhorts most sweetly; the soul that loves itself most, in which all things have their sweep and countersweep and ebb and flood -. (EH, *"Thus Spoke Zarathustra"*, 6)

In this passage Nietzsche is describing the philosophical soul. Unsurprisingly, the idea of soul is given multiple expressions in Nietzsche's work, according to types of souls, and it is important to distinguish the philosophical soul, specifically, apart from the noble soul more generally (cf. BGE 260, 265, 287). What Nietzsche captures is the "self-overcoming" nature of the philosophical soul that is never "at rest" but rather exploring the depths and heights of its "becoming".

Leslie Thiele offers the following characterizations of Nietzsche's use of "soul":

> Nietzsche's glorification of the will to power, often interpreted as a eulogy of domination, is essentially a tribute to self-overcoming. The greatest struggles are not to be witnessed on the

> battlefield or in the sociopolitical arena, but in the rule of the self. The greatest victory is a well-ordered soul.[194]
>
> The feeling or inspiration, of a heightened sense of power, is attainable only when the soul rises above itself. The will to power is always nourished by a state of hierarchy, a 'pathos of distance': and this, according to Nietzsche, as much within as without the self.[195]

In these passages Thiele captures, to a significant extent, Nietzsche's aim where he describes the soul in terms of self-overcoming as a "heightened sense of power". And this pathos is the effect of active pathos or the feeling of distance. However, Thiele's characterization emphasizes the "internal" pathos of distance and fails to acknowledge fully a corresponding "external" distance in the form of social hierarchy. Thiele is not wrong to emphasize Nietzsche's interest in the rule of the self, since Nietzsche's aim is to unite self-discipline with the discharging of strength in a unique way. Therefore, Nietzsche does appear to avoid placing his highest types within the context of the "battlefield" or the "sociopolitical arena", *as we know it*, but independent value creation is the most spiritual will to power and as such it is the product of an external discharging of strength manifesting itself in the form of active hierarchy. The point is simply that "active" or "noble" appears to apply to *both* an external discharging of strength and an internal process of self-overcoming or "spiritualization". I am not claiming that the philosophical type engages in an immediate physical domination of others but rather that the framework of social hierarchy may be interpreted as the "external" expression of the discharging of strength, providing the highest type with the opportunity to experience an "internal" pathos of distance as a result.

hierarchy as domination

Now I argue that the "active" nature of Nietzsche's revaluation is crucial to his political

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[194]Leslie Thiele, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of the Soul*, p. 65.

[195]Ibid, p. 67.

philosophy, since what is active represents the revaluation, and thus overcoming, of a moral universe that "separates strength from expressions of strength" (GM I, 13). Indeed, it is only according to this reversal of values in the first instance that Nietzsche can go further and re-think something beyond the simple reversal of values. Of course I have introduced this idea in previous chapters and described it in terms of Nietzsche's critique of the self. In the present context it must be understood as the doctrine of "becoming" that is meant to replace the doctrine of "being", particular to the ascetic ideal. In *On the Genealogy of Morals,* where Nietzsche claims that there is no "doer" behind the "deed", and therefore "the deed is everything", he is affirming his revaluation of life as the will to power *in action* or, rather, in terms of the "external" discharging of strength (GM I, 13). In other words, he is affirming the noble expression of strength through commanding. Although Nietzsche does not sanction a return to the "blond beast" it is, nonetheless, important to see Nietzschean autonomy in the context of the expression of hierarchy as domination.

In *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche describes his future-based conception of autonomy as a new conception of self-responsibility set against the backdrop of hierarchy. What is crucial to his conception of self-responsibility in this section is that it also entails a responsibility to maintain the will to power as "domination":

> For what is freedom? That one has the will to self-responsibility. That one preserves the distance which divides us. That one has become more indifferent to hardship, toil, privation, even to life. That one is ready to sacrifice men to one's cause, oneself not excepted. Freedom means that the manly instincts that delight in war and victory have gained mastery over the other instincts - for example, over the instinct for 'happiness'. (TI, *Expeditions of an Untimely Man*, 38)

In this passage Nietzsche sees the highest type as one who has *become free*. Nietzschean freedom requires self-responsibility. And this is reminiscent of the sovereign individual of *On the Genealogy of Morals* who has the "right to make promises" (GM II, 2). The right to make promises also gives one the right to mastery over "all short-willed and unreliable

creatures" (GM II 2). Thus, Nietzschean freedom is a great burden and not simply a return to the "discharging" of the blond beast. However, it remains a form of domination that includes an "external" expression of power. For Nietzschean man, injustice and suffering must be affirmed and *ressentiment* must be obliterated. And this kind of autonomy requires a unique post-modern self-consciousness of one's existential self-responsibility. But what goes along with this self-responsibility is a responsibility to preserve the distance between types.

Further, this unique freedom requires one to "sacrifice men to one's cause". The external expression of will to power is therefore clearly linked to domination and finds its clearest expression in the attempt to produce the pathos of distance. What it means to produce the pathos of distance in a specifically Nietzschean sense is to preserve distance in the service of the life of the independent value creator.

The life of independent value creation appears to require the creation of truths in the sense that being honest with oneself requires the strength to see one's judgments as *radically independent value judgments that affirm one's actions as unique actions*. In the Anti-Christ Nietzsche writes:

> Truth has had to be fought for every step of the way, almost everything else dear to our hearts, on which our love and our trust in life depend, has had to be sacrificed to it. Greatness of Soul is needed for it: the service of truth is the hardest service. - For what does it mean to be *honest* in intellectual things? That one is stern towards one's heart, that one despises 'fine feelings', that one makes every Yes and No a question of conscience! (AC 50)

And with this description of philosophical courage as greatness of soul I return once again to the incommunicable nature of Nietzsche's political ideal. The active conscience demands that the truth-seeker experiment with truth according to the new ideal of life-affirmation and this means, as Alasdair MacIntyre observes, that Nietzsche's *Übermensch* fails to "find any objective good with authority over him in the social world."[196]

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[196]MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 257.

To conclude my exegesis I now turn to a summary of what I believe constitute the virtues and limitations of what is uniquely political in Nietzsche's thought. In doing so I offer concluding remarks on what I have presented in part two as a whole as well as what I have presented in part one with respect to how I have distinguished the uniquely political in Nietzsche over and against democratic interpretations of his ideas. Therefore, I summarize the nature of Nietzsche's political philosophy with respect to what it compels us to consider beyond the usual concerns of political theory interpretations of Nietzsche.

the virtues and limitations of Nietzsche's political thought

In chapter four I outlined why Nietzsche's political philosophy is both anti-democratic and anti-universalist. In this chapter I have taken the time to offer an exegesis of Nietzsche's political framework as he presents it in his mature books. It must be concluded that Nietzsche's visionary philosophy of anti-universalist value creation is a unique contribution to the history of political thought. It must also be concluded that there is an important link between the role of philosophy and hierarchy in Nietzsche's political project that is not assimilable within our democratic and egalitarian structures of thought. But beyond these conclusions something more needs to be said about the virtues and limitations of Nietzsche's experiment as I have presented it.

What Nietzsche offers us is a political philosophy that attempts to undermine our efforts to make modern democratic culture seem less herd-like. In other words, his anti-theoretical position is a thorough-going anti-democratic critique and it assumes, according to Nietzsche's own categories of thought, that no modern democratic culture can be anything other than a levelling culture of mediocrity and herd self-preservation. I argue that this is a great virtue of Nietzsche's political thought and not something that should be overlooked in an effort to make Nietzsche more acceptable. Indeed, I argue that

Nietzsche's position challenges us to improve the philosophical arguments which underpin our egalitarian and democratic theories. Nietzsche's critique of moral agency, his critique of "being", as I have presented it in various contexts throughout the thesis, forces us to face up to the same nihilism that Nietzsche faced up to and attempted to overcome with his hypothesis of will to power and his doctrine of "difference" as hierarchical becoming. My point is that if we want to produce compelling theories of "difference" that are levelling theories of difference we still need to construct a "metaphorical world" that somehow overcomes the nihilism of the ascetic ideal. Nietzsche's attempt to do this "hierarchically" serves to remind us that we have not yet done so "democratically".

Of course it could be argued that authors like William Connolly have taken on just such a task. Yet I have presented my position on Connolly, and others, according to my belief that Nietzsche's metaphorical world is a uniquely anti-democratic world. What I am arguing, therefore, is that the democratic Nietzsche may be limited *because* of Nietzsche's uniquely anti-democratic metaphorical world. Thus, I am re-asserting Nietzsche's challenge to political theory beyond these limitations.

In this way, pinpointing what is uniquely political in Nietzsche, as I have done, helps illustrate just how important it is to offer an alternative "positive" political vision at the same time that one launches a critique of moral agency. What makes Nietzsche's political philosophy truly remarkable is the integrated combination of critique and positive construction. By presenting his positive teachings in the wake of his critique of the ascetic ideal (the two world theory), Nietzsche brings an integrity to his overall philosophical project that we can still learn a lot from.

Of course, there are important limitations to Nietzsche's political philosophy and thus to his relevance to political theory. Without even getting into the question of its practicability, which has not been a concern in this thesis, I suggest that the greatest limitation of his

political thought is his attempt to divide the will into two categories of life which, at the higher end of the philosophical will to power, separates the will, in an important sense, from the morality of utility broadly conceived. Indeed, this is more than just a slight limitation since a critique of Nietzsche's dualist ontology has ramifications for the entire political framework of his thought. Nevertheless, it needs to be pointed out that it is precisely Nietzsche's attempt to escape the metaphorical world of herd consciousness that gets him into trouble. It is not just the case that individual value creation is incomprehensible to us as egalitarians and democrats but as human beings it is counter-intuitive to think that we could be motivated to "discharge our strength" beyond a utility-based morality where the idea of flourishing becomes completely dissociated from that morality. And, thus, Nietzsche simply has no way of convincing us that we should/could *will* something as "unnecessary" as active hierarchy.

And yet, despite the thin political framework of Nietzsche's thought, what does seem promising is the idea of a new political-philosophical form of life that is not a purely contemplative form of philosophical expression. Indeed, Nietzsche's conception of a new conscience liberated from the bad conscience of the Christian moral universe is attractive because it represents the unity of thought and action which to some extent overcomes the problem of the two world theory. Overcoming the two world theory according to this unique unity of thought and action as self-creation allows us the opportunity to theorise a new conception of political autonomy that is free of the old metaphorical baggage of the "doer" behind the "deed". The challenge would then be to re-think political autonomy as "democratic" political-philosophical autonomy and this would require a new metaphorical world of "becoming" in which democratic political-philosophical autonomy might make sense. In an effort to give greater direction to such potential in Nietzsche, I now turn to a comparison of Nietzsche and Hannah Arendt and attempt to establish the resonances

between Arendt and Nietzsche on the issue of political autonomy, as the unity of thought and action.

PART III

Hannah Arendt argues that the *vita contemplativa* has dominated political thought since Socrates and she makes a bold attempt to re-think the significance of political action and judgment over and against philosophy .[197] Arendt's approach to the relationship between politics and philosophy is not the same as Nietzsche's but there are interesting and important resonances between their different approaches where Arendt attempts to affirm political thinking above philosophy as contemplative thought and Nietzsche attempts to affirm "active" philosophy above politics as the morality of utility. Therefore, in part three, I offer a consideration of Nietzsche's proximity to Arendt concerning the relationship between "politics" and "philosophy". In light of what I have presented as Nietzsche's unique political philosophy, I argue that even though Arendt and Nietzsche are opposed to one another on the issue of moral universalism they share some compelling ideas about "political" autonomy as a uniquely performative mode of being in the world. Thus, I argue that although their conceptions of autonomy are not identical they are similar insofar as they both describe a form of life that may be understood in terms of a unique unity of thought and action.

Nietzschean autonomy constitutes the unity of thought and action in the specific sense that it is a self-creating autonomy. The life of self-creation entails making independent value judgments that affirm individual actions. Thus, Nietzsche resolves to overcome a purely contemplative mode of philosophizing in order to re-think philosophy as an "active" expression of life-affirmation. What is "affirmed" by Nietzschean man is the uniqueness of his actions and the value of those actions to the further growth and expression of his will

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[197]Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1998), p. 14 (hereafter *HC*).

to power. Nietzschean autonomy may, thus, be said to unite a performative mode with a judging mode and in this way it is similar to Arendt's attempt to re-think political autonomy as the unity of performative action and political judgment.

But it must be admitted that the anti-democratic and anti-universalist elements of Nietzschean autonomy make it impossible to say that it is identical to Arendt's conception. Indeed, what is dissimilar, beyond the obvious anti-democratic structure of Nietzsche's hierarchy, is the fact that the Nietzschean individual's value judgments appear to be limited to his own actions and the Arendtian individual's political judgments are concerned with the perspectives and actions of others, according to a reflective mode Arendt describes as "representative thinking". In this way, Arendt promotes the idea that the unique truth of individuals is identifiable only in their performative actions but, unlike Nietzsche, she marries this idea of the performative self to the idea of judging actions "objectively" by establishing in one's mind a representative "consensus" of others' perspectives as participants in the political sphere.

However, I want to consider more than just the similarities and differences between Nietzschean and Arendtian autonomy. I want to discuss autonomy as the unity of thought and action within the broader context of the relationship between politics and philosophy. This requires a discussion of the underlying claims that Arendt and Nietzsche rely on to ground their different but similar conceptions of autonomy. I suggest that although Arendt's conception of political judgment is more familiar to us, and possibly more comprehensible, she, nevertheless, unlike Nietzsche, fails to remain internally consistent with the critique of the self, or moral agency, that they *both* share. I argue that Arendt grounds her conception of judgment in a traditional philosophical prejudice about the universality of "being" which she originally tries to overcome in an effort to establish the integrity of her performative model of action. Therefore, I argue that her unified

conception of autonomy as political action *and* judgment suffers from certain limitations.

I develop my analysis according to a critique of what Arendt's interpreters refer to as the "Nietzschean Arendt". The Nietzschean Arendt emphasizes the performative and agonistic elements of Arendt's theory of political autonomy. By situating my analysis within the discourse on the Nietzschean Arendt, one of my aims is to re-think the discussion of Nietzsche and Arendt in terms of the need to develop better philosophical arguments where we set out to theorize new possibilities for autonomy. Ultimately, however, my central concern in chapter seven is to illustrate the relevance of my thesis to modern issues in political theory by demonstrating its usefulness in understanding the limitations of Hannah Arendt's political vision.

Beyond chapter seven, I conclude part three by offering a short summary of the main points of the thesis followed by some thoughts on the significance of the performative model of the self I attribute to Nietzsche. Therefore, in chapter eight, I offer some musings about Nietzsche's potential beyond the immediate scope of my thesis. In this way, chapter eight represents a bridge, of sorts, to a future project that might be worth exploring, tentatively, given the reading of Nietzsche I have presented thus far.

CHAPTER SEVEN - NIETZSCHE AND ARENDT ON THE UNITY OF THOUGHT AND ACTION

The recent focus on the Nietzschean Arendt has helped to push the bounds of Arendt scholarship beyond the standard Aristotelian interpretation. In rough terms, a contemporary framework for Arendt scholarship may be perceived to be split along performative and dialogical lines. In this way, theorists such as Dana Villa and Bonnie Honig argue in favour of a Nietzschean Arendt over and against the neo-Kantian/consensus-based models advanced by authors like Jürgen Habermas and Seyla Benhabib.[198] Arendt's self-appointed task of confronting the unique evil of totalitarianism and its conditions places her in a fully modern context but this in itself does not guarantee that her conclusions about the value of political action, as she presents it, constitute an unambiguous answer to the modern problems she identifies. What this means is that interpretations of Arendt's political thought, with a stress on Nietzsche here and an emphasis on Kant there, must be convincing in their claims that Arendt is successful in confronting what she considers to be the foremost political problem of modernity - "the possible interconnectedness of non-thought and evil".[199]

The proponents of the Nietzschean Arendt claim to reveal the axiomatic elements of Arendt's theory by focusing on the performative nature of action and judgment in the public political sphere. In this way, the Nietzschean Arendt may be thought to escape both

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[198]See Dana Villa, "Beyond Good and Evil: Arendt, Nietzsche and the Aestheticization of Political Action," *Political Theory* 20 (1992); *Arendt and Heidegger* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996; "Democratizing the Agon," in *Politics, Philosophy, Terror* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999); Bonnie Honig, "Arendt, Identity, and Difference," *Political Theory* 16 (1988); "The Politics of Agonism," *Political Theory* 21 (1993); *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Jürgen Habermas, "Hannah Arendt on the Concept of Power" in *Philosophical-Political Profiles*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983); Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996).

[199]Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), I, p. 179 (hereafter *LOM*).

the Aristotelian concern for the "moral ends of community" and the Habermasian concern for a "dialogue aimed at understanding".[200] Although the Habermasian interpretation finds its modern character in the democratic element of moral and political universalism that underpins its concern for understanding, this is thought to derive from the kind of universalism that may be attributed to Kant's practical philosophy rather than his theory of aesthetic judgment. Since Arendt was as appreciative of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* as she was critical of his categorical imperative, it would appear to be the case that the Habermasian Arendt is in a less convincing position *prima facie* than the Nietzschean Arendt given the latter's emphasis on the performative nature of the political sphere.[201]

Therefore, in this chapter, I consider the Nietzschean Arendt. However, I offer a critique of the Nietzschean Arendt within a larger framework comparing Nietzsche's conception of philosophy and politics to Arendt's. This requires an examination of how both Nietzsche and Arendt conceive of autonomy as the unity of thought and action but from very different perspectives on what "politics" and "philosophy" mean. Since both Nietzsche and Arendt describe their conceptions of autonomy in terms of "conscience", I examine the idea of the unity of thought and action in terms of both "political" and "active" conscience. I refer to the unity of thought and action in Arendt as "political" conscience and in Nietzsche as "active" conscience. I do so in order to distinguish one from the other but also to acknowledge the fact that Nietzsche does not think about conscience in the exact same terms that Arendt does. Therefore, my analysis implies thinking about Nietzsche's version of conscience "in Arendtian terms" to a certain extent. In other words, I consider Nietzsche's project to be as political as Arendt's but I want to make use of it as a

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[200]Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger*, p. 77.

[201]Ibid, pp. 59-60; Cf. Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), pp. 219-220 (hereafter *BPF*).

comparative analytical tool in this context rather than as a straightforward alternative to Arendt's project. Specifically, I focus on the tension between Nietzsche's unique project and the Kantian and Socratic influences in Arendt. I conduct my analysis along these lines in order to point out that the Nietzschean Arendt, developed in the work of Dana Villa and Bonnie Honig, is a product of Arendt's interpretation of Nietzsche which has certain limitations *because* of the Kantian and Socratic positions that underlie it.

Arendt describes Nietzsche's philosophy as an anti-political "inverted Platonism".[202] I argue that this is a misleading characterization of Nietzsche's aims because he actually attempts to re-think philosophy beyond the contemplative mode that typifies the anti-political Platonism Arendt is so scornful of. I suggest that Arendt's adaptation of Kant's aesthetic formula for political judgment and her Socratic characterization of the two-in-one of conscience prevents her from escaping the prejudices of the so-called contemplative mode because the demands of these influences in her work make it extremely difficult for her to theorize a clean break from the Platonic prejudice against the *vita activa* as she presents it.

I claim that at bottom it is Arendt's commitment to the separation of philosophy and politics that hinders an attempt to theorize the unity of thought and action because her conception of conscience remains bogged down in the rigidly defined categories of this conceptual reification. She is unable to elevate *political* thinking above *philosophical* thinking because she is unable to maintain her attempts to theorize freedom as performativity. What is interesting is that Nietzsche and Arendt share a certain "active" or "performative" conception of the self "beyond good and evil" but Arendt is unable to sustain this model in her work where she develops a Kantian/Socratic universality of conscience. Nietzsche is able to avoid Arendt's problems because his anti-universalism

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[202] Arendt, *BPF*, p. 37

does not contradict the anti-Platonist critique of the self both he and Arendt employ. It is important to emphasize, however, that I am not claiming that Nietzsche's philosophy offers an adequate response to the threat of totalitarian evil in place of Arendt's theory. What I do suggest is that Nietzsche's anti-democratic and anti-universalist philosophy helps reveal, in a new and interesting way, the fact that Arendt's theory is limited due to certain inconsistent claims about the performative model of the self.

I realize that it is controversial to suggest a unity of thought and action in Arendt's work, since she explicitly states that where acting begins thinking ceases.[203] Indeed, Dana Villa has been at pains to remind us of the essential separation of thinking, judging and acting in Arendt's theory.[204] Yet I argue that if we take Arendt seriously on the issue of political judgment, we must see her as attempting to produce a conception of political thinking that justifies her conception of freedom as performativity in terms of one underlying and consistent philosophical premise about the self in the public political sphere. Furthermore, we must see her as failing to take this premise seriously where she maintains an allegiance to Kantian and Socratic forms of universalism.

acknowledging some tensions in the comparison of Nietzsche and Arendt

Although Arendt was unable to complete *The Life of the Mind* it is evident from her lecture notes and other essays that the faculty of judgment she hoped to explore and define was intended, in part, to provide a justification for her revaluation of opinion over truth. In this way, her revaluation of political action is accompanied by a revaluation of political opinion. This process of revaluation involves an overturning of the Platonic prejudice

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[203]Arendt, *LOM* I, p. 6.

[204]See Dana Villa, "Thinking and Judging" in *Politics, Philosophy, Terror* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999).

against *doxai* and is aided, as Arendt acknowledges, by Nietzsche's efforts to articulate the decline and death of the distinction between the true world and the world of appearances.[205]

The abolition of the two world theory creates a space for the affirmation of the plurality of opinion in the absence of faith in the truth behind all appearances. This affirmation of opinion over truth involves a corresponding affirmation of the active life over the contemplative life with respect to an alternative mode of thought. Thus, Arendt affirms the significance of both the political actor and the political spectator who exercises his/her judgment as opinion. As Ronald Beiner puts it, "Arendt begins her account of this idea of spectatorship by calling attention to the plurality presupposed in judgment as opposed to the solitary nature of thought."[206] By liberating thought from the solitude of contemplation both the spectator and the actor participate in the plurality of the public political sphere. Dana Villa supplements Beiner's observations where he states that the "concern with the judging spectator is simply the extension of Arendt's definition of politics in terms of virtuosity or performance".[207] What Villa suggests is that judging and acting become equally associated with performing in the public sphere.

On this view it appears as though Nietzsche's anti-Platonism supports and informs Arendt's political ontology in two important ways. Firstly, it allows for the consideration of a plurality of opinion and secondly it recommends the flourishing of a plurality of performance. However, Nietzsche has no conception of "spectatorship". In fact, Nietzsche is critical of the idea of spectatorship where he disparages Kant's approach to aesthetic judgment (GM III, 6, 12). Nietzsche's "perspectivism", as I argued in chapter one,

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[205]Arendt, *LOM* I, p. 11.

[206]Ronald Beiner, "Interpretative Essay" in *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, written by Hannah Arendt and edited by Ronald Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 104.

[207]Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger*, p. 81.

provides him with the opportunity to set up his model of hierarchy and therefore the pluralism in Nietzsche's approach to "judgment", generally speaking, does not yield the kind of "spectatorship" Beiner observes in Arendt's work, since the pathos of distance that underpins Nietzsche's framework of power relations affirms an anti-universalist approach to judgment that would appear to foreclose on the kind of "shared" political setting "spectatorship" requires.

In contrast to Arendt, who wants to escape the solitary nature of contemplative thought, in the idea of political spectatorship and judgment, it is unclear exactly how to read Nietzsche on the question of judgment in terms of what might constitute an appropriate setting or context for "active" judgment. I argued, in the last chapter, that solitude must be distinguished as something separate from independent value judgement in Nietzsche's framework. Thus, I concluded that there is no evidence that Nietzschean man *must* live a solitary life and remove himself from the world of men altogether. All that he is required to do is provide himself with a table of values that affirms his own unique actions.

At this point I re-assert the open-ended nature of Nietzsche's conception of independent judgment and add only that his device of "perspectivism" itself, as opposed to his hierarchical conception of power relations, could be interpreted as being similar to Arendt's position on judgment as spectatorship. And this proximity to Arendt would have to be based on Nietzsche's curious notion of "objectivity" (GM III, 12). "Objectivity", as a kind of openness to the idea that one's perspective might be false, could be rendered similar to Arendt's position on the grounds that "openness" involves seeing things from another's perspective. However, I also see this as problematic because Nietzsche's perspectivism could never be interpreted as a "representative thinking" approach to judgment and, therefore, interpreting him too "democratically" would violate the spirit and substance of his unique political position. Thus, where I address Arendtian interpretations

of Nietzsche's approach to judgment below I am critical of them for this reason and, yet, with respect to appropriating "perspectivism", beyond the scope of this chapter, I recognize its potential usefulness.

However, it must be admitted that the limitations of Nietzsche's influence on Arendt are not discussed in these exact terms by Arendt's interpreters, although the limitations of Nietzsche's thought figures prominently in Arendt's formulations. In piecing together a new conception of political action and judgment, Nietzsche's influence is thought to require the complementary addition of a politicized Kantian aesthetics. Since, as I interpret it, Arendt's concern was to reconfigure the public realm according to the elements of politics that would bring about the unity of thought and action as political "thinking" or "conscience", it may be argued that the significance of Kant's formula for an "enlarged mentality", as found in his *Critique of Judgment*, lies in the fact that it provides a uniquely modern political sphere conception of universalism that would give an underlying commonality to a plurality of perspectives and opinions.[208]

Thus, Nietzsche's position appears to have been adapted by Arendt to suit the more Kantian-like political sphere she envisions. In *The Human Condition* Arendt describes objectivity in terms of a plurality of political perspectives.[209] The emphasis here is on the qualitative difference between public and private lives in terms of the relationship between an individual's identity and the presence/absence of others or, rather, spectators. Over and against the private individual whose identity is made up of "the prolongation and multiplication of one's own position with its attending aspects and perspectives", Arendt affirms the public individual whose perspectival identity is formed in participation with a

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[208]Arendt, *BPF*, p. 241. I refer directly to Kant's *Critique of Judgment* later in the chapter.

[209]Arendt, *HC*, p. 54.

"multitude of spectators".[210] In this way, a plurality of actors/spectators provides a perspectivism that may be thought of in terms of the formation of "objective" judgements based on opinion as opposed to the idea of a unity of truth which may be presupposed in thought. Thus, political perspectivism is said to provide a truly reliable "worldly reality" because it escapes the conceptual opposition between a so-called real world and a world of appearances.[211]

Elsewhere, Arendt describes this political perspectivism in terms of the capacity for an "enlarged mentality".[212] Arendt suggests that Kant did not recognize the political and moral value of his aesthetic conception of an enlarged mentality and in appropriating it for politics she presents the concept as the view that "[t]he more people's standpoints I have present in my mind while I am pondering a given issue, and the better I can imagine how I would feel and think if I were in their place, the stronger will be my capacity for representative thinking and the more valid my final conclusions, my opinion."[213] According to the proponents of the Nietzschean Arendt, it is in the proximity of Nietzsche's position to the "enlarged mentality" that Arendt's Nietzschean influence is married to her Kantian influence. Of course on my interpretation this would have to be seen as constituting a rather unhappy marriage since Kant's framework is a universalist framework of judgment and Nietzsche's is a hierarchical and anti-universalist framework of independent value judgment. However, for my immediate purposes, it is merely necessary to acknowledge the fact that the two influences are meant to converge in the idea that there is a type of political thinking, a type of political conscience, that represents a "performative" but

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[210]Ibid, p. 57.

[211]Ibid.

[212]Arendt, *BPF*, p. 241.

[213]Ibid.

"objective" process of judging in the public sphere. As mentioned above, this conception is meant to celebrate an impartiality or objectivity derived from the plurality of opinion rather than the unity of truth. As Villa puts it, "Arendt's politics of opinion and her antipathy to truth can thus be seen as a specifically political version of Nietzsche's perspectivism."[214] Having acknowledged some obvious tensions in the comparison of Nietzsche and Arendt, in light of my conclusions about Nietzsche's philosophy, I now turn to a further analysis of Nietzsche and Arendt with a focus on the "Nietzschean Arendt".

the Nietzschean Arendt

For Arendt, the "*raison d'être* of politics is freedom, and its field of experience is action".[215] The heritage of Arendt's notion of freedom is Roman and Greek but may be thought to transcend any particular historical ethos, as a conception of freedom, due to the emphasis placed on the immortality of performance. As Arendt puts it, "[a]ction, to be free, must be free from motive on one side, from its intended goal as a predictable effect on the other."[216] She qualifies her description here by adding that, "[t]his is not to say that motives and aims are not important factors in every single act, but they are its determining factors, and action is free to the extent that it is able to transcend them."[217] Thus, the transcendent quality of political action would appear to exceed the morality of custom and utility and is, as a conception of freedom, quite the opposite of "'inner freedom,' the inward space into which men may escape from external coercion and *feel* free."[218] This

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[214]Villa, "Beyond Good and Evil," p. 286.

[215]Arendt, *BPF*, p. 146.

[216]Ibid, p. 151.

[217]Ibid.

[218]Ibid, p. 146.

"inner freedom" represents the realm of moral and philosophical freedom as it has traditionally been conceived and on Arendt's view just such a *contemplative* conception of freedom is "politically irrelevant".[219] Thus, freedom as action distinguishes the active life over and against the contemplative life and insofar as freedom transcends a moral realm and the realm of the intellect alike it may be thought to exist as Nietzsche might put it "beyond good and evil".[220] The difference between transcendent freedom as action and inner freedom as contemplation is crucial for Arendt because transcendence implies escaping accepted rules and norms, and it is these rules and norms which may all too easily prevent the kind of active political conscience she promotes in her concern about totalitarianism. In this way, her performative conception of freedom appears to match Nietzsche's hypothesis of the will to power, both with respect to its transcendent quality and its attempt to escape the herd conformity of the morality of custom and utility.

But, at this point, it is crucial to emphasize the fact that Arendt wants to direct us toward a new kind of thinking rather than activism *per se*. As she explains in the prologue to *The Human Condition*, her re-consideration of the value of action over and against contemplation is meant to make us think about "what we are doing".[221] What she wants to encourage is *political* thinking over and against *philosophical* thinking. This requires thinking about opinions and actions rather than contemplating abstract concepts and purely philosophical values. As Villa puts it:

> Political (as opposed to philosophical) thinking is characterized not by the rigorous logical unfolding of an argument, but rather by imaginative mobility and the capacity to represent the perspectives of others. The (rational) formation of an opinion hinges upon this capacity for what Arendt calls "representative thought".[222]

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[219]Ibid.

[220]See Arendt, *HC*, p. 205.

[221]Ibid, p. 5.

[222]Villa, "Thinking and Judging," pp. 96-97.

Political thinking is active in the sense that it is said to be both performative and representative rather than contemplative. One who is thinking politically is in a sense *performing* a political judgment that establishes a position in the world which may ultimately oppose general rules, accepted values, and the so-called wisdom of philosophical truth but nevertheless serves as a "representative" account of perspectives or opinions.

Another potential element of the performative political actor is his/her agonism. Arendt describes the "agonal spirit" as "the passionate drive to show one's self in measuring up against others that underlies the concept of politics prevalent in the [Greek] city-states."[223] Hence, agonism is a term applied to the competition between political actors for the sake of *revealing* who they are in word and deed.[224] In chapter three I explained how Nietzsche's so-called agonism is limited to a philosophical agonism that only roughly corresponds to his presentation of agonism in the early essay *Homer on Competition.* Therefore, it must be acknowledged that Arendt's interpreters are attributing to Nietzsche, yet again, a position that is not uniquely Nietzschean but a combination of Greek agonism and its Foucaultian variant developed *through* Nietzsche. Nevertheless, establishing the agonistic nature of the "Nietzschean Arendt" is helpful in illustrating the overall position the proponents of the Nietzschean Arendt adopt.

An important condition of agonism, in the Arendtian context, is that the actor leave behind a concern for "life" in terms of its private sphere interests, necessities, and

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[223]Arendt, *HC*, p. 194.

[224]I associate the self-revealing nature of transcendent freedom with the Nietzschean notion of self-creation and/or self-overcoming. Although I recognize that it is not an exact fit what I emphasize in the association here is the idea that the self that is "revealed" is beyond good and evil insofar as for both Nietzsche and Arendt there must be a notion of freedom that is active and independent in the particular sense that an utterly unique self appears for the first time as a performance rather than as a passive *cogito*. In any case, what "self-revealing" does not represent is some kind of peeling away of layers to get to a so-called "true" or "deep" self.

comforts. Now this is not the same as overcoming the morality of utility, as in Nietzsche's case. However, it is like that to a degree insofar as the performative self is not meant to be representing "utility-based" concerns directly but rather he/she is meant to be revealing who he/she is and thus *creating* a spontaneous public political "reality". Another vital element is the emphasis on keeping the contest between individuals going by preventing an ultimate victor from destroying the incentive to compete amongst the other actors. The Greek mechanism for ensuring this competition was the practice of *ostracism*. As introduced above in chapter three, Nietzsche describes the practice of ostracism in terms of keeping the institution of political agonism afloat (HOC 191). But what is noteworthy in Nietzsche's account is the emphasis he places on the ethos of competition across Greek society including areas of cultural expression beyond the political. Greek agonism was prevalent amongst poets, artists, and philosophers alike. On Nietzsche's account, the agonism of Greek culture writ large was a product of the conditions of life the Greeks faced. Directing their savagery into an institutionalized framework for competition was the only way to defend against the alternative, chaos as destruction. And, as I presented it in chapter three, Nietzsche's view is that such conditions separate us absolutely, as moderns, from the Greek ethos of competition (HOC 192-3).

Now Arendt's interpretation reveals the volatility of Greek agonism by acknowledging the contingent nature of political action. But rather than making sense of agonistic performativity as historically contingent, Arendt's rendering focuses narrowly on the self-revealing nature of action and claims that this in itself is the essential and, once again, "transcendent" element of political freedom.[225] Of course Nietzsche is also interested in the ethical life of the Greeks but he sees transcendent freedom as the product of hierarchical power relations in the Greek context writ large and in his mature thought he derives an

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[225]Arendt, *HC*, p. 197.

ontological hypothesis of the will to power, in part, from conclusions he makes about the role of exploitative institutions across Greek society.[226]

Bonnie Honig eschews this difference in her description of the Nietzschean Arendt and claims that "[t]he agon provided the plurality, equality, and commonality - the freedom from domination - that both Nietzsche and Arendt posit as the necessary conditions of virtuosic action."[227] Honig's focus here is on freedom *from* domination and it may be determined from this characterization of Nietzsche that the Nietzschean elements of Arendt's thought do not derive from Nietzsche's particular conception of power relations with its emphasis on the link between performativity and power as exploitation. Thus, her "Nietzschean Arendt" draws on Nietzschean influences that are separated out from his hierarchical philosophy of power emphasizing only those Nietzschean elements that Arendt endorsed herself.

Yet what the proponents of the Nietzschean Arendt emphasize most of all is the significance of Nietzsche's critique of the self. For Nietzsche the self, prior to action or the expression of strength, is a multiplicity of competing drives and instincts. The multiple self, therefore, can never be reduced to a unity prior to the discharging of strength (cf. BGE 19). And this may appear to correspond roughly with Arendt's framework for discussing political action and conscience.

On Arendt's view the dialogue between me and myself represents the original Socratic conscience or dialogue that presupposes an "other" with whom I converse. Arendt refers to this as the two-in-one of conscience. However, the two-in-one of conscience is not yet the "performative/representative" political conscience she eventually theorizes. Instead, it is the contemplative conscience. Arendt claims that, since the self is a multiplicity and at

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[226]See GM I. The particular exploitative institution Nietzsche affirms in the Greek context is slavery.

[227]Honig, "The Politics of Agonism," p. 530.

the very least a duality, it can never be said to achieve a unity as a purely contemplative self or contemplative conscience. Of course this characterization of the thinking ego as a "Socratic" multiplicity should not, as I argue below, be seen to represent the multiplicity of the self prior to action in the same way that Nietzsche would understand the multiple self. Regardless of this comparison, however, Arendt suggests that unity can only be conferred upon an individual within the public political sphere. As Honig puts it, "[t]he actor's momentary engagement in action in the public realm grants him an identity that is fixed".[228] Therefore, conscience prior to action may not be identified as constituting selfhood, since the self prior to action is unknowable as a unity.

This performative identity is crucial to establishing a shared reality of experience. Arendt clearly states that "[o]nly where things can be seen by many in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably appear."[229] This conception of identity is meant to be synonymous with a conception of freedom and political judgment. The Nietzschean Arendt, therefore, draws approximately on the Nietzschean model of the multiple self who achieves unity, or identity, only in the discharging of strength. This performative self appears to be affirmed by both Nietzsche and Arendt over and against the notion of the self as "knower/doer" representing freedom in terms of the freedom "not to act".[230] Although I illustrate why Arendt is unable to

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[228]Honig, "Arendt, Identity, and Difference," p. 87.

[229]Arendt, *HC*, p. 57.

[230]Arendt's position on "inner freedom" appears to be somewhat similar to Nietzsche's position in *GM* where he describes the way in which the noble type is forced to become responsible for his strength under the influence of the slave revolt in morality and according to the "bad conscience" (GM I, 13; GM II). However, I should also state that it is not only as bad conscience that the choice not to act manifests itself. Indeed, the noble type may choose not to act for perfectly good reasons, in terms of ascetic practices of self-discipline and conscience, that are not associated with the influence of "bad conscience".

sustain this position below, it is important to note that the proponents of the Nietzschean Arendt claim that she does sustain this position. Thus, Villa offers a summary of the Nietzschean Arendt where he writes:

> Freedom, according to Nietzsche and Arendt, is not found in the choice not to act, nor is identity something that precedes or is separable from action. Only the performing self knows freedom, and only through performance can an otherwise dispersed or fragmented self be gathered together and display its uniqueness. Men become who they are, as Nietzsche would say, through action and the achievement of a distinct style of action. Arendt makes a parallel point when she claims that men show who they are in virtuosic action.[231]

In this summary it is clear that the proponents of the Nietzschean Arendt seek to adapt Nietzsche's notion of self-creation, or "becoming", to an Arendtian framework of the political. In this way, the "Nietzschean Arendt" represents a politicization of Nietzsche's thought that overlooks the significance of hierarchy to the ideas that are selectively appropriated. And, for the purposes of making better sense of Nietzsche's proximity to Arendt, it may be helpful to identify the reasoning behind this selective approach.

the politically under-determined Nietzsche

Although Nietzsche explicitly states that ostracism was used by the Greeks to keep the agon going, he does not dwell on the idea that the institution of agonism itself might have been excessive or prone to collapsing into chaos. The only excess and chaos Nietzsche comments on explicitly is the excess and chaos that men fall into in the absence of the institution of agonism. Arendt, on the other hand, emphasizes the volatility of agonism itself and Villa picks up on this by characterizing Nietzsche's interest in agonism as anti-political and predisposed to radical subjectivism as a result of its narrow and politically under-determined direction. It is in "taming" the volatility of the agon, on this view, that warrants and justifies Arendt's political adaptation of Kant's aesthetic judgment. As Villa puts it, "she [Arendt] broadens the Nietzschean focus on the agonistic quality of action by

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[231] Villa, "Beyond Good and Evil," p. 282.

reasserting the deliberative element present in both action and judgment."[232] Thus, the deliberative nature of the universal standpoint of Kant's enlarged mentality appears to compensate for the radical subjectivism of Nietzsche's position.

In turn, Honig's reading sees the political quality of Nietzsche's philosophy in terms of a preparation for Arendt's.[233] In this way, she sees Nietzsche's political philosophy as under-determined as well. Honig writes:

> Arendt agrees with Nietzsche that there is no essential self, no given unity awaiting discovery or realization. There is no being behind doing. But she departs from Nietzsche in focusing exclusively on the political actor. She allows the herd its victory in the private realm, resisting only its usurpation of the spaces of *political* action in the contingent public realm. Only in the public realm of action, on Arendt's account, is it the case that there is no doer, that the deed is everything.[234]

The claim here is that Nietzsche's aesthetic attitude does not go far enough in considering the distinctive elements of politics. Although Honig refuses to characterize Nietzsche's philosophy as anti-political *per se*, her interpretation, like Villa's, relies on a politically under-determined Nietzsche. Furthermore, since Nietzsche's position appears to be limited in political terms, Honig's interpretation is as faithful to Arendt's politicized Kantian position as Villa's is.

As I argue below, this inevitable reliance on her Kantian influence ultimately undermines Arendt's conception of the performative self that she is thought to share with Nietzsche. What I suggest is that the proponents of the Nietzschean Arendt fail to see the scope of this tension, in part, because they see Nietzsche's thought as politically under-determined. Given my thesis on the link between hierarchical power relations and Nietzsche's critique of the self, the proponents of the Nietzschean Arendt, like Arendt herself, fail to see Nietzsche's conception of the performative self as uniquely consistent with an overall anti-

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[232]Ibid, pp. 287-288.

[233]Honig, "The Politics of Agonism," p. 532.

[234]Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*, p. 78.

democratic and anti-universalist political philosophy that may be partially incomprehensible but is neither simply nor best understood as politically under-determined.

The unity of thought and action

It has been suggested that the aesthetic repudiation of morality carried out by Nietzsche is antithetical to the moral concerns Arendt maintained in her focus on totalitarian evil and the indisputable guilt of Adolf Eichmann.[235] However, as I have tried to show, the Nietzschean Arendt includes a Kantian check on Nietzsche that attempts to make up for his apparent indifference to the political and, by association, the moral. Indeed, Arendt tries to preserve the moral by affirming the political. She needs to politicize Kant's aesthetics in order to ensure an underlying universalism in the public sphere. Yet, in theorizing universalism, she must avoid *a priori* moral principles in order to escape the purely contemplative mode of thought and the unity of the self as "knower/doer". Villa states:

> Kant's aesthetic theory proves superior to his practical philosophy in this regard, because it eschews the monology of the categorical imperative and places the quest for a "universal," objective judgment within the three-dimensionality of the public sphere and its plural perspectives. "Intersubjective validity" replaces a priori certainty or the subjectivism of mere preference.[236]

Now I argue that Kant's aesthetic theory fails to escape the *a priori* unity of the self prior to performance and, therefore, it fails to be "intersubjective" in terms of an active mode of being in the world. But before I present my case, we need to understand exactly what Arendt envisions.

Arendt appears to satisfy her moral concerns by establishing the unity of thought and

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[235]Lawrence Biskowski, "Politics Versus Aesthetics: Arendt's Critiques of Nietzsche and Heidegger," *The Review of Politics* v. 57, n. 1 (1995): pp. 87-88.

[236]Dana Villa, "Hannah Arendt: Modernity, Alienation, and Critique," in *Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of Politics*, ed. Craig Calhoun and John McGowan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 196.

action as political conscience in the public sphere. She concludes that the *a priori* certainty associated with Kant's practical philosophy is no defense against unthinking rule-bound obedience and that it may in fact be seen to encourage the non-thinking adherence to general rules derived from abstract concepts. Instead, the intellectual or purely contemplative conscience needed to be given public expression as political conscience.[237]

The problem with Kantian moral judgment is that its structure is, as Villa points out, "monological" and therefore given to the legislation of general rules from the vantage point of a supposedly unified and autonomous ego. By replacing Kant's categorical imperative with his formula for aesthetic judgment, Arendt attempts to theorize the public political expression of conscience. Importantly, her attempts in this direction include both a Kantian and Socratic influence. Socrates' midwifery, "which brings out the implications of unexamined opinions and thereby destroys them", is seen, on Arendt's view, as an essential element of politics once it is institutionalized within the so-called three-dimensional public sphere.[238] As axiomatic elements of politics, Socratic midwifery and Kant's enlarged mentality are combined to provide us with political judgment as "the faculty that judges *particulars* without subsuming them under general rules".[239]

The difference between contemplative thought and political thought, therefore, is the difference between producing general rules from abstract concepts and making "objective" judgments based on the development of an enlarged mentality with respect to the plurality of political opinions. On this view there can be no unity of thought and action where thought is of the contemplative kind since the self as an isolate is a solitary multiplicity. The only way to realize conscience as a unity is in the form of political judgment. In

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[237]Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), pp. 135-137.

[238]Arendt, *LOM* I, p. 192.

[239]Ibid, pp. 192-193.

judgment, the enlarged mentality of representative thought recreates the dialogue of the two-in-one at the level of judging particular actions and perspectives and is expressed as a unity according to the self-revealing logic of freedom as performativity. Thus, Arendt writes:

> If thinking -the two-in-one of the soundless dialogue - actualizes the difference within our identity as given in consciousness and thereby results in conscience as its by-product, then judging, the by-product of the liberating effect of thinking, realizes thinking, makes it manifest in the world of appearances, where I am never alone and always too busy to be able to think.[240]

In this passage, however, it is obvious that Arendt continues to maintain an allegiance to the two world theory of "being" and "appearances" where she theorizes the movement from a contemplative "self" to the "self" of the political conscience. Nevertheless, this is the basis of political thinking for Arendt and, thus, it represents her notion of the unity of thought and action in the performative self. Having outlined Arendt's idea of political conscience as the unity of thought and action, I now turn to a critique of her appropriation of Kant's aesthetic theory of judgment.

Nietzsche and Kant

There is significant tension between the Nietzschean influence in Arendt and the Kantian influence. The tension is between what may be reasonably derived from Nietzsche's approach to judgment and what Kant means by an enlarged mentality. Villa sees Nietzsche's agonism as radical subjectivism, yet describes Arendt's politics of opinion as a "political version of Nietzsche's perspectivism."[241] Of course what is being confused here is the difference between agonism and perspectivism. Villa presents Nietzsche's so-called agonism as a radical subjectivism of freedom "beyond good and evil" and at the same time

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[240]Arendt, *LOM* I, p. 193. Villa re-affirms Arendt's focus on the self-revealing nature of action as political thinking rather than action as activism where he states that "[w]hat is called for in such situations is not activism but independent judgment." Villa, "Thinking and Judging," p. 100.

[241]Villa, "Beyond Good and Evil," p. 286.

he presents Nietzsche's perspectivism as somewhat similar to the kind of opinion-centred "Kantianism" Arendt needs in order to ground her notion of political judgment.

Now I have established my position on both agonism and perspectivism in previous chapters and I have also explained my approach to perspectivism in this chapter, above. But what I want to emphasize and address at this point is that the tension between the Nietzschean and Kantian influences in Arendt are made worse by Villa's Nietzschean Arendt. Therefore, I want to focus on the limitations of uniting Nietzsche and Kant in the idea of performative judgment, specifically, and leave a more open discussion of "perspectivism" for another occasion. What I am doing, therefore, is comparing what may be considered Nietzsche's position on judgment, generally speaking, while at the same time by-passing the specific instrumental and rhetorical meaning of "perspectivism" to his overall epistemological development. Thus, I refer to Nietzsche's approach here as "perspectivist judgment". This is necessary, on my view, in order to flesh out the contradictions in Villa's presentation of the performative model and it causes few problems, I believe, *because* Villa himself fails to distinguish clearly between "perspectivism" as a rhetorical device and perspectivism as Nietzsche's approach to judgment in general.

What is most significant for my immediate purposes is the fact that Arendt turns to Kant rather than Nietzsche to give her theory of political conscience a more robust footing. What this tells us is that Arendt is interested in a Nietzschean conception of freedom "beyond good and evil" but would like to temper that freedom by employing a politicized version of Kant's aesthetic formula for an enlarged mentality. This combination, on Arendt's view, would appear to privilege political *thinking* over *activism* and this is how the proponents of the Nietzschean Arendt present her aims. But what needs to be understood is why Villa describes Arendt's politics of opinion in terms of perspectivism

when Arendt herself clearly looks to Kant to inform her project at this stage.

Where Nietzsche describes perspectivist judgment in *On the Genealogy of Morals* he does so in opposition to Kant's attempt to establish a universal standpoint of disinterestedness with respect to the object of beauty. I introduced Nietzsche's anti-Kantian position on aesthetic judgment in chapter one. It is clear in Nietzsche's position on perspectivist judgment that it is meant to say something quite different and even opposite to Kant's attitude of "contemplation without interest".[242]

Indeed, judgment implies affective interpretations as opposed to the kind of Kantian disinterestedness that Nietzsche is scornful of (GM III, 12). Thus, Nietzsche's approach appears to be active and affective whereas Kant's appears to be passive and impartial. And this opposition between Nietzsche and Kant would suggest a tension between a Nietzschean perspectivist actor and a Kantian impartial spectator. Yet Villa insists that:

> If we view Arendt's thoughts on judgment in terms of a broader perspectivism, the standpoints of the actor and the spectator emerge not as two radically different species of judgment (engaged and political vs. detached and historical), but rather as two poles of the more inclusive phenomenon of independent judgment.[243]

The point of forcing the unity of actor and spectator is to remain consistent with the model of the performative self. On Villa's rendering of her position, Arendt's conception of independent judgment is meant to be both "active" and "impartial" and therefore "universal" yet "performative". Villa states that, "[i]mpartial judgment, as conceived by Arendt, remains perspectival in character: it is opinion in its highest form."[244]

Now what can be seen more clearly at this stage is that perspectivism is emphasized by Villa in order to ensure performative unity rather than "objectivity" or "impartiality".

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[242]See GM III, 12; Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner Press, 1951), §6.

[243]Villa, "Thinking and Judging," p. 103.

[244]Ibid.

However, the substance of Nietzsche's concerns does not involve a process of "representative thinking" at all. Indeed, Nietzsche is interested in promoting a performative mode of judging that enhances the individual's ability to create his own table of values. Thus, "conscience" for Nietzsche is never associated with a so-called universal standpoint.

I argue that Villa's emphasis on perspectivism represents an attempt to marry Nietzsche to Kant for the purpose of avoiding the problems of the contemplative mode which crop up in association with Kant's notion of contemplation without interest. Kant's idea that judgment is the faculty that judges particulars without subsuming them under general rules seems acceptable enough at first glance, yet aesthetic judgment for Kant involves a process whereby one recognizes the feeling of being free from one's satisfaction with the object of beauty *in judging* and thus one is thought to realize that judgments are subjectively universal insofar as they may be presupposed for everyone.[245] The problem with this is that there is a process of becoming disinterested that presupposes a "knower/doer" that the subject may retreat to when forming a so-called universal judgment. What this establishes is an *a priori* faculty of judgment that is disembedded and disembodied from the experience of satisfaction or desire.[246]

Although Kant claims that aesthetic judgment is non-conceptual, because aesthetic experience is not immediately discursive, he nonetheless posits the concept of an *a priori* faculty of judgment which separates the subject from the object and therefore the subject from his/her experience in the world. And this movement re-introduces the Platonic prejudice of a real world behind the world of appearances with respect to "being". Therefore, Kant's position must be seen as "contemplative" because it posits a conception of the self as a unity prior to "becoming" in the world. Although Kant claims that aesthetic

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[245]Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §6.

[246]Ibid, §40.

judgment is universal but non-conceptual, within the realm of opinion rather than truth, his argument is misleading because it necessarily implies something other than opinion where it demands an *a priori* universality of judgment.

Kant employs contradictory terms where he describes the universal standpoint of aesthetic judgment as the *sensus communis*.[247] He appears to associate a common sense standpoint with a process of disinterestedness that considers imaginatively the opinions of others and comes to a universal judgment on the basis of such a process. But any notion of "sense", as in spontaneous "feeling", is dismissed in favour of "disinterestedness". This process is then understood as an *a priori* mode of representing all other men in thought beyond "sense". Furthermore, there is no getting around what Kant describes as the purpose of the process of disinterestedness which is "to escape the illusion arising from the private conditions that could so easily be taken for objective".[248] Arendt, too, speaks of escaping the private sphere, but she does so in terms of a public performative self that precludes any conception of self as a unity prior to action in the public sphere. Kant, by contrast, speaks about escaping the "illusion arising from private conditions" with an altogether different emphasis that retains the conceptual language of the unity of the self attaching to the faculty of judgment prior to judgment itself in the public sphere.

I suggest that Villa's description of judgment as establishing a "highest form of opinion" reflects an attempt to draw attention away from the problems of Kant's model in Arendt's work. The claim is that a highest form of opinion is "perspectival" as opposed to "true". But I argue that this simply re-introduces the question of "hierarchy" with respect to perspectivist judgments. What this means is that judgment is to be understood either according to a hierarchical trajectory of truth or a Nietzschean trajectory of power

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[247]Ibid.

[248]Ibid.

relations. Given the fact that Arendt wants to overcome both the Platonic hierarchy of truth as well as the Nietzschean hierarchy of power relations, it is unclear exactly how we are to make sense of what Villa refers to as a "highest form of opinion". Is this conception of judgment Nietzschean or Kantian? By emphasizing the Nietzschean influence Villa obviously wants to make Arendt's notion of judgment more "performative" in a Nietzschean sense, but there is nothing in Nietzsche's approach to judgment that provides us with the notion of a "highest form of opinion". On the other hand, as I have argued above, Kant's attitude does not yield a "performative" mode of judgment because it is bogged down in the very conceptual language of contemplative thinking that Arendt wants to overcome where she is critical of Plato's influence and Kant's practical philosophy.

Of course it could be argued that any "judging" involves reflection, be it a Kantian or a Nietzschean "judging", and, therefore, the point is simply that reflection be a part of a performative political sphere as opposed to the realm of solitary thought. Yet what I am trying to pinpoint in this chapter is the question of a performative model of the self wherein the expression of strength in the world "creates" reality. If Arendt is intent on borrowing Nietzsche's conception of the performative self, which follows from his will to power hypothesis, then she must be able to illustrate the judging self in a way that makes sense within Nietzsche's framework of "becoming". I do not mean that she must accept the will to power hypothesis but she must find a way to theorize judging in a way that is less dependent on traditional conceptions of moral agency. I argue that her Kantian influence is flawed on the basis of Kant's "disinterested self". The disinterested self re-introduces the problem of truth and the hierarchy of truth within a "contemplative" mode of being typical of the traditional conceptions of moral agency Nietzsche and Arendt want to overcome. And, thus, I conclude that Villa's presentation of judgment in terms of the "highest form of opinion" merely serves to obscure the tensions in Arendt's work even

more.

At this point, however, it could be argued that Arendt's appreciation of opinion over truth stems more from her attempt to separate an independent Socratic approach to thinking from Plato's metaphysics of truth. Indeed, it could be argued that her position is more Socratic than Kantian and that my critique of Kant is rather obvious and irrelevant to the uniquely Socratic way in which Arendt wants to make use of Kant's aesthetic formula. For my purposes in this chapter such a contention demands some account of the differences between the Socratic and the Nietzschean influence in her work, which I shall provide below. However, before considering the Socratic Arendt, it may be helpful to make better sense of Arendt's critique of Nietzsche as well as the different interpretations of "politics" and "philosophy" at work in Arendt and Nietzsche.

Arendt's critique of Nietzsche

For Arendt, philosophy can never actually "create" anything new since it exists in the solitary realm of thought which turns perpetually back on itself in a self-referential cycle of competing first principles. On this view modern claims to value creation merely represent the replacement of one set of "values" with another in the same way that one political ideology may be replaced by another. Thus, Arendt refers to modern philosophies as "value-philosophies".[249] She explains that traditionally it was "ideas" as transcendental units that were imposed to measure all human activity but that "values" have replaced "ideas" and in modern society all transcendental standards have disintegrated "into relationships between its members, establishing them as functional 'values'".[250] Arendt writes:

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[249]Arendt, *BPF*, p. 34.

[250]Ibid, p. 32.

> Values are social commodities that have no significance of their own but, like other commodities, exist only in the ever-changing relativity of social linkages and commerce. Through this relativization both the things which man produces for his use and the standards according to which he lives undergo a decisive change: they become entities of exchange, and the bearer of their "value" is society and not man, who produces and uses and judges. The "good" loses its character as an idea, the standard by which the good and the bad can be measured and recognized; it has become a value which can be exchanged with other values, such as those of expediency or of power. The holder of values can refuse this exchange and become an "idealist," who prices the value of "good" higher than the value of expediency; but this does not make the "value" of good any less relative.[251]

Such "functional values" may order the private and social spheres but what remains forgotten and unrealised, according to Arendt, is the unique value of political action and judgment which might serve as a more authentic source of new beginnings in the world.

Arendt sees the attempts to overturn the philosophical tradition on the part of Marx, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche as failed attempts resulting in a reification of the Platonic prejudice against the *vita activa*.[252] Arendt states that:

> Self-defeat, the result of all three challenges to tradition in the nineteenth century, is only one and perhaps the most superficial Kierkegaard, Marx, and Nietzsche have in common. More important is the fact that each of their rebellions seems to be concentrated on the same ever-repeated subject: Against the alleged abstractions of philosophy and its concept of man as an *animal rationale*, Kierkegaard wants to assert concrete and suffering man; Marx confirms that man's humanity consists of his productive and active force, which in its most elementary aspect he calls labour-power; and Nietzsche insists on life's productivity, on man's will and will to power ... and Nietzsche understands his philosophy as "inverted Platonism" and "transformation of all values".[253]

Arendt interprets Nietzsche's revaluation of life as will to power strictly in terms of an inverted Platonism which does not escape the Platonic formula that posits knowledge in a conceptual hierarchy over opinion and political action. On Arendt's view the public political forum is the truly authentic (pluralistic) forum for the spontaneous creation of a community's value *judgments* as opposed to *values*. On this view, Nietzsche's concept of the will to power, representing the productivity of "life", serves as an oppressive philosophical first value that undermines the authority of the public political sphere in

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[251]Ibid, p. 32.

[252]Arendt, *HC*, p. 17; *BPF*, "Tradition and the Modern Age".

[253]Arendt, *BPF*, p. 35.

measuring human activity.

Arendt is of course correct about Nietzsche's will to power hypothesis being a first philosophical value with which he measures all human activity. But acknowledging the status of the will to power hypothesis in this respect is not the same as condemning Nietzsche for an "inverted Platonism", according to the implications of Arendt's category of the *vita contemplativa*. The will to power hypothesis might be thought of as a purely contemplative imposition with respect to the active life but it might, more accurately, be viewed as a concept that actually liberates opinion and action from a Platonic "will to truth". Indeed, Nietzsche's critique of the self is meant to liberate freedom as the expression of strength from the traditional philosophical conception of freedom as the freedom "not to act". And importantly, Arendt follows Nietzsche's critique of the self as well as his so-called agonism. Therefore, what must be considered more closely is Arendt's attack on Nietzsche's will to power hypothesis in light of her selective appropriation of other Nietzschean ideas.

On Arendt's view, the will to power is a concept that "was 'built' and decorated by the thinking as opposed to the willing ego."[254] Thus, she claims that Nietzsche's conception of eternal recurrence is equally flawed, as an attempt to "affirm" backward in time, and may be understood in terms of the contemplative mode which prevents us from thinking "politically". Referring to Nietzsche's early presentation of eternal recurrence in section 341 of *The Gay Science*, Arendt states the following:

> No later version of the eternal-recurrence notion displays so unequivocally its main characteristic, namely, that it is not a theory, not a doctrine, not even a hypothesis, but a mere thought-experiment. As such, since it implies an experimental return to the ancient cyclical time concept, it seems to be in flagrant contradiction with any possible notion of the Will, whose projects always assume rectilinear time and a future that is unknown and therefore open to change.[255]

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[254]Arendt, *LOM*, II, p. 158.

[255]Ibid, p. 166.

In this passage Arendt appears to discredit Nietzsche's mature rendering of eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.* This seems to be an exaggerated attempt to circumscribe the meaning of eternal recurrence within the self-referential framework of a "thought-experiment".

Honig suggests, correctly I think, that Arendt disregards the more open-ended nature of Nietzsche's presentation of eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.*[256] In *Zarathustra* Nietzsche writes:

> 'Two paths come together here: no one has ever reached their end. This long lane behind us: it goes on for an eternity. And that long lane behind us - that is another eternity. They are in opposition to one another, these paths; they abut on one another: and it is here at this gateway that they come together. The name of the gateway is written above it: "Moment". But if one were to follow them further and ever further and further: do you think, dwarf, that these paths would be in eternal opposition?' 'Everything straight lies,' murmured the dwarf disdainfully. 'All truth is crooked, time itself is a circle.' (Z, *Of the Vision and the Riddle)*

What is most important here is the gateway "Moment". Nietzsche does not *favour* the cyclical concept of time over the linear concept of time. Obviously, eternal recurrence is a thought-experiment but it addresses the spontaneity of the moment and is not simply or most importantly a matter of mentally affirming what has already been willed. Eternal recurrence is a thought-experiment which is meant to inform the willing of the moment as performance or the expression of strength and it therefore escapes Arendt's attempt to place it purely within the realm of contemplation. It reflects and affirms, as a thought-experiment, the unity of thought and action in the contingent world. As Honig suggests, "[t]o overlook the centrality of the moment in Nietzsche's account is to run the risk of underestimating the importance of acting and of willing to this drama."[257]

What Arendt tries to show is that Nietzsche's critique of the self is obscured as a theory of freedom and action due to a conception of cyclical time in which willing is a purely

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[256]Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*, p. 58.

[257]Ibid.

mental exercise. Her claim therefore is that Nietzsche successfully explains the "feeling of strength" of commanding in the will as an epiphenomenal illusion of consciousness, suggesting a "knower/doer" behind all action, but that he fails to remain consistent with this hypothesis where he posits eternal recurrence as a product of the purely thinking ego. Yet if we consider eternal recurrence as one more element informing Nietzsche's critique of the self then its significance lies in contributing to the meaning Nietzsche wishes to confer upon "becoming" and thus upon "performativity". This is Honig's view where she suggests that Nietzsche's attempt to confer meaning does not involve the passive "affirmation of everything that is" but instead arises out of the performativity of the self-revealing process of action. Thus, Honig concludes that Nietzsche's attempt to confer meaning upon the self-revealing process "is not terribly different from the task Arendt herself assigns to politics."[258] But this begs the question of what separates Nietzsche and Arendt on the meaning of "politics" and "philosophy" if, as Honig suggests, Nietzsche's vision is similar to Arendt's.

the conflicting meaning of "politics" and "philosophy" in Nietzsche and Arendt

Nietzsche's thought is hardly ever presented in terms of a unified political philosophy. I suggest that this may have to do with the fact that defining Nietzsche's mature thought in terms of a unified political project would make it difficult to appropriate certain ideas while leaving other less agreeable parts behind. Thus, the pluralist/agonist Nietzsche is separated out and divorced from the anti-democratic and anti-universalist Nietzsche. But if both Nietzsche's perspectivism and his critique of the self are intimately associated with hierarchy and anti-universalism in his thought then this would make incorporating those ideas into modern democratic theories of political action and judgment difficult to justify.

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[258]Ibid, p. 60.

What is seldom considered is that thinking about the elements of Nietzsche's thought in terms of a unified political philosophy might be just as fruitful as carving it up into disparate philosophical bits and pieces and this may be especially true in the case of Nietzsche's relevance to Arendt's project since she appears to be influenced by Nietzsche's thought in such a selective way. Indeed, the proponents of the Nietzschean Arendt help clarify just how selective her reading of Nietzsche is.

Unlike Arendt, Nietzsche believes that it is philosophy and not politics (as reactive hierarchy) that has been the victim of the western philosophical tradition since Socrates. But Nietzsche and Arendt do not conceive of either politics or philosophy in the same way. Arendt's approach to politics and philosophy operates according to the following framework:

> With the disappearance of the ancient city-state - Augustine seems to have been the last to know at least what it once meant to be a citizen - the term *vita activa* lost its specifically political meaning and denoted all kinds of active engagement in the things of this world. To be sure, it does not follow that work and labour had risen in the hierarchy of human activities and were now equal in dignity with a life devoted to politics. It was, rather, the other way round: action was now also reckoned among the necessities of earthly life, so that contemplation (the *bios theōrētikos*, translated into the *vita contemplativa*) was left as the only truly free way of life. However, the enormous superiority of contemplation over activity of any kind, action not excluded, is not Christian in origin. We find it in Plato's political philosophy, where the whole utopian reorganization of *polis* life is not only directed by the superior insight of the philosopher but has no aim other than to make possible the philosopher's way of life.[259]

The most important idea in this passage is that the *vita activa* was demoted to the level of "necessity" and this process began with Plato's elevation of the contemplative life as the "only truly free way of life". Nietzsche would agree with Arendt's claims here because he sees political life as having been demoted to the level of necessity as well. But Arendt moves on from this to her own revaluation of politics and philosophy wherein politics is elevated above the realm of necessity *and* contemplation and thus it is re-instated as the only truly free way of life. The only way to see this transformation actualized is to show how the philosophical life does not offer the same kind of "freedom" as the *vita activa*. In

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[259]Arendt, *HC*, p. 14.

other words, she needs to demote the philosophical life in order to elevate the new conception of political autonomy she envisions.

Now what is fascinating is that both Arendt and Nietzsche denounce the theoretical or contemplative mode of existence and its hegemony since Plato but they end up with opposite evaluations of "philosophy" and "politics". Arendt intends to revalue political action and judgment in a way that is similar to Nietzsche's revaluation of philosophy but she is unwilling to think about philosophy as anything other than a contemplative mode of existence. Like Arendt, Nietzsche sees modern politics as being too concerned with "functional values" but he does not concentrate his efforts on revaluing "politics" as the highest form of freedom because he sees the problem to be one of profound nihilism across society and with respect to moral values writ large. It is interesting to note, however, that, like in Arendt, his conception of the highest freedom is informed by the lives of the pre-Socratic Greeks. Arendt finds her inspiration in the pre-Socratic *vita activa* and Nietzsche finds his inspiration in the lives of the pre-Socratic philosophers.

However, what Nietzsche sees in the lives of the pre-Socratic Greeks is not only the unique freedom of philosophy but the unique "political drive" of the Greeks in general. Thus, in his early essay *The Greek State,* Nietzsche writes:

> We must, however, construe the Greeks, in relation to the unique zenith of their art, as being *a priori* 'political men *par excellence*'; and actually history knows of no other example of such an awesome release of the political urge, of such a complete sacrifice of all other interests in the service of this instinct towards the state - at best, we could honour the men of Renaissance in Italy with the same title, by way of comparison and for similar reasons. (TGS 181)

What is most important for Nietzsche in this essay, however, is the capacity the Greeks had to discharge their strength in the service of their instincts toward the state. And it is this discharging of strength which Nietzsche would later employ in his hypothesis of the will to power. Ironically, considering her interest in the political urge amongst the Greeks as well, Arendt remains steadfast in her view that Nietzsche's hypothesis of the will to

power contributes nothing to the notion of political performativity as she attempts to re-think it.

This is especially ironic given the fact that Nietzsche employs the idea of discharging one's strength in order to overcome the will that is a purely life-preserving will or rather one which operates according to the morality of utility. If the will is simply a will to herd self-preservation then Nietzsche has no way of philosophizing freedom beyond the nihilistic trajectory of the ascetic ideal and the utility-based morality of the improvement of mankind. Obviously the morality of utility is a term that applies only to Nietzsche's framework, since the scope of his critique of modernity is on a much more epic scale than Arendt's critique, however the point I want to make is that Arendt fails to see how Nietzsche's opposition to a utility-based morality resonates with her own opposition to the hegemony of private and social sphere concerns including the oppressive influence of so-called "functional values".

Nietzsche understood better than Arendt that we cannot maintain the categories of "philosophy" and "politics" as we have inherited them from Plato and the pre-Socratic Greeks if we want to think about new possibilities for a freedom beyond the morality of utility in a post-Christian world. In this way, Arendt fails to see why overcoming an inordinate concern for purely functional values demands something as extreme as the will to power hypothesis in Nietzsche's thought. Of course it could be argued that Arendt simply has a different theory of action than Nietzsche and that I am making too much of her shortcomings in this context. Yet it is important to my overall argument to emphasize the problem of the performative model of the self. Without a clear theory of her own, compelling us to put our faith in a new conception of the willing self as a performative, political self, her ideas about political autonomy remain circumscribed within the Platonic/Christian framework of freedom that she actually wants to overcome. All that I

suggest is that Nietzsche appears to see this problem more comprehensively than Arendt and that there are important connections to be made in Nietzsche's political thought, i.e. between overcoming a utility-based morality and promoting a performative model of the self, that Arendt appears to have overlooked.

What this suggests, returning to Arendt's interest in the pre-Socratic Greeks, is that she sees the inspiration for a new conception of political thinking and acting in the unique lives of the Greeks but she fails to appreciate the hierarchical preconditions for such a *vita activa*. And, in this way, she fails to see the philosophical life as a similar kind of freedom in the pre-Socratic context as well. Nietzsche, according to my interpretation, sees the political urge amongst the Greeks as both "political" and "philosophical". And it is from the political urge that Nietzsche derives his notion of self-creation. As I explained in the last chapter, the active life of self-creation represents the unity of the contemplative and the creative. The creative man, on Nietzsche's view, is not *homo faber* for he is never simply a working or fabricating man but rather a man who is creating himself. Since Arendt wants to re-think the active life beyond the sphere of *homo faber* and the *animal laborans*, I argue that Arendt's notion of "self-revealing" freedom is much closer to Nietzsche's notion of freedom as self-creation than Arendt was willing to admit.[260]

Nietzsche's early notes and essays represent his earliest attempt to move beyond the tension between "politics" and "philosophy" that Arendt's work never convincingly overcomes. In *The Greek State* Nietzsche writes:

> The actual aim of the state, the Olympian existence and constantly renewed creation and preparation of the genius, compared with whom everything else is just a tool, aid and facilitator, is discovered here through poetic intuition and described vividly. Plato saw beyond the terribly mutilated Herm of contemporary state life, and still saw something divine inside it. He *believed* that one could, perhaps, extract this divine image, and that the angry, barbarically distorted exterior did not belong to the nature of the state: the whole fervour and loftiness of his political passion threw itself onto that belief, that wish - he was burnt up in this fire. The fact that he did not place genius, in its most general sense, at the head of this perfect state, but only the genius of

[260]See Arendt, *HC*, chapters 3 and 4.

> wisdom and knowledge, excluding the inspired artist entirely from his state, was a rigid consequence of the Socratic judgment on art, which Plato, struggling against himself, adopted as his own. This external, almost accidental gap ought to prevent us from recognizing, in the total concept of the Platonic state, the wonderfully grand hieroglyph of a profound *secret study of the connection between state and genius*, eternally needing to be interpreted: in this preface we have said what we believe we have fathomed of this secret script. - (TGS 185-6)

The way Nietzsche separates the genius of wisdom and knowledge from the artist in this passage points toward his later realization that the contemplative/theoretical man is not the "genuine philosopher". Already, in *The Greek State,* Nietzsche sees Plato's mistake as the failure to make better sense of what the highest freedom requires. Plato, on Nietzsche's view, fails to unite philosophy with "life" and "art" according to the "political urge". Instead, he ends up with a Socratic "theoretical" type as his highest type. In this passage there is clear evidence that the unity of the contemplative mode and the active mode, the unity of philosophy and the world of men, is a very real part of Nietzsche's framework for revaluation. Indeed, there is no greater clue to this framework than where he emphasizes the connection between state and genius.

In his early notes Nietzsche writes:

> My general task: to show how life, philosophy, and art have a more profound and congenial relationship to each other, in such a way that philosophy is not superficial and the life of the philosopher does not become mendacious. It is a splendid thing that ancient philosophers were able to live so freely *without thereby turning into fools and virtuosos.* Their freedom of the individual was immeasurably great. The false opposition between *vita practica* and *vita contemplativa* is something Asiatic. The Greeks understood the matter better. (PT 134)

Of course in this passage Nietzsche is still thinking about philosophy as an aesthetic mode of life rather than as an extra-moral-aesthetic mode of life. Therefore, at this stage, he has not yet thought of how he needs to re-value morality (and politics). But what is important here is that he thinks of the pre-Socratic Greeks as those people who knew the value of the unity of thought and action in terms of the unity of the contemplative mode and the practical mode. Nietzsche does not speak about the *vita activa* as uniquely political here but nor does he mean the *vita practica* in terms of "labour" or "work", since he is thinking about the philosophical type in terms of his unique "freedom". Indeed, what he seems to be

saying is that the truly free way of life requires the unity of thought and action and the pre-Socratic philosophers, unlike their post-Socratic descendants, were uniquely capable of this type of autonomy.

Later in Nietzsche's mature period, where he attempts to re-value morality and politics, he sees politics as synonymous with herd morality but this does not preclude the likelihood that he admired the Greek *vita activa* as much as Arendt did and for similar reasons. In fact in *The Greek State*, as reproduced above, Nietzsche admires the Greeks for their political urge and this urge is appreciated by Nietzsche because it reflects a strong capability for independent action and judgment. Thus, Nietzsche does not promote philosophy over and against *Greek* politics. He promotes a new performative conception of philosophy over and against political life as he understands it in terms of the morality of utility and conformity. Therefore, Nietzsche attempts to liberate philosophy from its subservient role as handmaiden to a modern politics which relies on the philosophical prejudices of the Platonic tradition. Nietzsche's conception of philosophy, like Arendt's conception of political action, exists "at the *other* end from all modern ideology and herd desiderata" (BGE 44).

What is implicit in Nietzsche's project is the dissolution of politics and philosophy as binary opposites. Nietzsche's framework of revaluation dispenses with the categories that Arendt maintains and reifies in the process of theorizing a new conception of political freedom. Nietzsche's form of autonomy must be understood as a new form of political-philosophical autonomy that makes sense as such only within his revaluation of politics and philosophy according to the will to power hypothesis. The only worthwhile conception of "political" autonomy Nietzsche can imagine is an extra-moral autonomy, since living beyond good and evil requires living beyond the utility-based consciousness of modern democratic politics. From a Nietzschean perspective, Arendt wishes to go beyond the

realm of utility as well but not the realm of "herd consciousness". This is evident where she continues to describe judgment and conscience in Kantian and Socratic terms.

Where Nietzsche and Arendt also part company is on the question of re-thinking modern political institutions. They are both anti-modernists in the sense that they are both against the way that politics is generally conducted and understood within a modern context of "utility" or "functional values". However, Arendt needs to be a democratic thinker in order to provide an immediate answer to totalitarian evil and Nietzsche simply does not concern himself with anything other than the highest form of freedom. In Arendt, her new conception of political action and judgment is meant to solve the problem of totalitarianism which she sees as a lethal combination of non-thought and "evil" (evil actions). Therefore, unlike Nietzsche, there is an objective good which has authority over Arendtian man in the world and this explains why she *must* see the will to power hypothesis as unhelpful.

Having outlined the similarities and differences between Nietzsche and Arendt on the meaning of politics and philosophy, it may be helpful to conclude my comparative analysis by discussing Arendt's Socratic influence. This may be considered an appropriate way to finish given the very different ways in which Nietzsche and Arendt interpret Socrates' relevance. In presenting Arendt's Socratic influence, very briefly below, it may also help to make sense of her position against Nietzsche's so-called inverted Platonism.

the Socratic Arendt and Nietzsche's inverted Platonism

In her essay *Thinking and Moral Considerations* Arendt describes Socratic midwifery in terms of the search for meaning which operates so as to challenge and often destroy accepted opinion without imposing a Platonic law of truth. Arendt weighs the virtues and dangers of Socratic midwifery against the potential onslaught of nihilism but she determines in the end that nihilism "does not arise out of the Socratic conviction that the

unexamined life is not worth living but, on the contrary, out of the desire to find results which would make further thinking unnecessary."[261] On this interpretation Nietzsche's re-configuration of the philosophical mode is not very far removed from the examined life Socrates' midwifery presupposes. Yet Arendt accuses Nietzsche of giving in to an opposite desire - the desire to make further thinking unnecessary. Thus, she writes:

> The quest for meaning which relentlessly dissolves and examines anew all accepted doctrines and rules, can at every moment turn against itself, as it were, produce a reversal of the old values, and declare those as "new values". This, to an extent, is what Nietzsche did when he reversed Platonism, forgetting that a reversed Plato is still Plato.[262]

Arendt's claim here is a strong one and it is impossible to wholly refute. However, in order to create a space for an alternative rendering of Nietzsche's status as a political thinker, I suggest that Nietzsche is "Platonic" only in certain respects. He does introduce a hierarchy of human types and in elevating a new philosophical mode above the utility-based interests of the great majority of people he may also be seen to be "Platonic". However, Nietzsche is unique because of his "moral" anti-universalism.

Arendt, in her effort to force political thinking upon the likes of Adolf Eichmann, follows a universalist Socrates over and against an elitist Plato. Nietzsche clearly follows Plato in his elitism but not in the way Arendt claims he does. He does not intend to bring about the simple reversal of values which would render further thinking unnecessary. Instead, he hopes to elevate the unity of thought and action as active conscience above the conditions of modernity that breed non-thinking individuals.

Therefore, what is most significant, in distinguishing Arendt from Nietzsche and Nietzsche from Arendt, is the divergent characterization of the "political" or "active" conscience as grounded in either universalism or anti-universalism respectively. Furthermore, Nietzsche does not distinguish the same mental categories as Arendt. The

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[261]Hannah Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations," *Social Research* vol. 51 (1984): 26.

[262]Ibid, p. 25.

multiple self is, in an important sense, unknowable on Nietzsche's view and in this way he refrains from claiming comprehensive knowledge of how the faculties interact and divide up the labour of thinking, judging, and willing. All that Nietzsche claims is that the will, if it is efficient, involves commanding and obeying but we can only ascribe unity to thinking and willing in terms of a self-overcoming process that understands conscience as a unity with respect to value judgments affirmed performatively. In Nietzsche's case this involves living according to one's own table of values as performative judgments in the world. What makes this realm of active judgment possible is the hierarchy of types.

Where Arendt posits the universalism of the two-in-one at the level of consciousness, Nietzsche hesitates. He hesitates because, as he puts it, "our thoughts are continually governed by the character of consciousness - by the 'genius of the species' that commands it - and translated back into the perspective of the herd" (GS 354). What this means is that our performative uniqueness, as a unity, is not expressed in our consciousness *per se*. Our consciousness is an expression of our social or herd nature to a large degree. The two-in-one of the soundless dialogue is, on this view, part of our herd nature which cannot represent our individual uniqueness. In this way, Nietzsche conceptually divorces active conscience from "herd consciousness" and thus attempts to establish the anti-universalism of conscience. Arendt, by comparison, retains a traditional framework of moral universalism.

From a Nietzschean perspective, Arendt fails to follow the critique of the self through to its anti-universalist conclusion because she confers unity upon the self prior to the expression of "political"conscience where she claims that everyone has the potential to exercise the thinking faculty of the two-in-one at the level of consciousness. As Arendt puts it, the two-in-one is "not a prerogative of the few but an ever-present faculty of

everybody."[263] This claim about "being" compromises the overall meaning of unity and uniqueness in performativity.

The significance of performative "unity" is that, as a public, political expression of the self, it represents the expression of "uniqueness". But by establishing the universality of conscience prior to performative unity Arendt makes the performative self less strong than it is in Nietzsche. As long as there is a theory of moral universalism that grounds her model of performativity, *prior to performativity*, then her model of performativity is less convincing as a model which is intended to overcome Platonic and Kantian conceptions of the cognitive self and moral agency.

Nietzsche, *contra* Arendt, manages to remain more consistent with the model of the self as "multiplicity prior to action"/"unity and uniqueness in action" because this multiplicity is never theorized by Nietzsche in terms of a universally shared faculty. In other words, Nietzsche never gives the multiple self any real form or structure the way Arendt does. Arendt follows Socrates in assuming a universality of conscience and thus she thinks about plurality in a misleading way since she intends to follow Nietzsche's critique of the self, beyond good and evil, at the same time that she theorizes so as to undermine its anti-universalist implications. And, in this way, Arendt's Socratic influence weakens her position as much as her Kantian influence does.

conclusion

Arendt's theory of political action and judgment provides an excellent framework in which to illustrate the relevance of my thesis about the role of philosophy and hierarchy in Nietzsche's political thought. Although Nietzsche and Arendt have very different ways of proceeding they both envision a new possibility for autonomy in terms of the unity of

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[263]Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations," p. 35.

thought and action. However, if my argument is correct, Nietzsche's anti-democratic political framework remains more consistent with the critique of the self that both he and Arendt rely on to conceptualize a vision of the performative self "beyond good and evil". Arendt is unable to follow Nietzsche's doctrine of becoming because of her commitment to solving the problem of totalitarianism. Therefore, Arendt falls into the trap of theorizing the unity of the self beyond good and evil, while at the same time attempting to theorize the unity of the self according to the universality of moral conscience which, ironically, does not escape the traditional framework of moral agency that negated the pre-Socratic model of the self evident in the original *vita activa*.

Part of Arendt's problem is that the traditional categories of politics and philosophy maintain a hold on her imagination as binary opposites. Nietzsche collapses these categories and re-values philosophy as independent value creation and politics as hierarchy. This allows him the flexibility to shift from a traditional framework of "being" to a future-based framework of "becoming".

I suggest that the tensions and resonances between Arendt and Nietzsche help to illustrate how difficult it is to establish a successful theory of the relationship between philosophy and politics if we start from a position that denies the two world theory of being and becoming, as Nietzsche does. But this does not mean that I want to conclude by re-affirming a neo-Kantian position with respect to moral and political agency. All that I want to suggest is that political theorists who attempt to make use of Nietzsche without addressing this important problem, and its origins in nihilism, fail to address what is uniquely political in Nietzsche. The proponents of the Nietzschean Arendt, like the proponents of agonistic democracy, overlook the uniqueness of Nietzsche's unified political philosophy and thus its relevance to many of the issues they themselves would like to make better sense of.

CHAPTER EIGHT - THOUGHTS ON THE PERFORMATIVE SELF

summary

In part one I articulated the role of philosophy and hierarchy within a critique of the democratic Nietzsche. In doing so I discussed the limitations of poststructuralist and agonist readings of Nietzsche for the purpose of revealing the unique anti-democratic framework of Nietzsche's philosophy. In chapter four I concluded part one by illustrating how Walter Kaufmann's Aristotelian Nietzsche remains an important influence on our assumptions about Nietzsche's relevance within a contemporary theoretical context. And, in revealing the weaknesses of Kaufmann's interpretation, I introduced the idea that Nietzsche's *Übermensch* ideal represents a fundamental "anti-universalism" with respect to values, making his political framework particularly non-transmissible within a modern democratic context.

In part two I traced the development of Nietzsche's political philosophy from his earliest writings to his mature books. In doing so I offered an exegesis that emphasized the unity of form and content in Nietzsche's thought, the notion of tragic philosophy, and the peculiar movement of Nietzsche's ideas about herd consciousness within the context of overcoming the two world theory. By describing "philosophy" as a new vision of political-philosophical autonomy, I described how Nietzsche interprets "politics" as morality according to active hierarchy and, thus, how he advances a notion of extra-moral freedom that includes both an "external" discharging of strength in the form of social hierarchy and an "internal" discharging of strength in the form of self-overcoming.

In part three, thus far, I have developed a comparative analysis of Nietzsche and Arendt on the unity of thought and action. My analysis is meant to demonstrate the usefulness of the anti-democratic/anti-universalist reading of Nietzsche concerning issues in modern

political theory. Thus, I have emphasized the way in which Nietzsche interprets and re-values "politics" and "philosophy" and how he strives to overcome the limitations that moral universalism imposes on autonomy at the highest level of thought and action. One of the most interesting elements of this discussion, on my view, is the possibility of developing a better, more applicable, performative model of the self. Therefore, to conclude this thesis on Nietzsche's political philosophy, I now turn to some speculative thoughts on the significance of the performative model of the self as it may be elaborated beyond Nietzsche's vision of an anti-democratic political-philosophical autonomy.

the performative self.

Although I have argued that what is uniquely political in Nietzsche is not assimilable within modern democratic structures of thought, I also suggest, at this point, that the performative model of the self that issues from his thinking about moral agency might be of interest as the inspiration for a new conception of democratic autonomy, given certain provisos. Indeed, what is interesting is the idea of anti-universalism combined with the "political-philosophical" nature of performative judging and acting. Borrowing from Arendt to some extent, but remaining true to Nietzsche's anti-universalism, it may be possible to re-think anti-universal performativity in a democratic context without falling back on traditional philosophical prejudices about "being" that continue to plague theories of autonomy and our discussions of them.[264]

What is attractive about a new form of political-philosophical autonomy is that it moves beyond the idea of "difference" as expressing ethnic, gender-based, and socio-cultural identities, so-called competing conceptions of the good, and the like. By insisting that

[264]What I am thinking of here is the ongoing debate, broadly conceived, between so-called "difference" theorists and liberal-impartialist theorists like Rawls for example.

performativity is the best way of expressing difference as uniqueness, I suggest, tentatively, that Nietzsche's vision offers us a new way of thinking the political in a world where the demand for "universality" is becoming an ever-increasing, and potentially spirit-crushing, imposition on our political and philosophical imaginations. I suggest also, therefore, that accepted ways of thinking about "difference" are often misleading ways of achieving something truly unique in the world. I believe that Nietzsche's philosophy, in conceiving of difference "hierarchically" and "performatively", reveals a certain truth about how our recent attempts to theorize difference tend to offer only a superficial notion of non-conformity, obscuring the fact that, underneath these various "identities", we all share, broadly speaking, the same basic democratic values.

However, in making these observations I do not want to belittle the struggle, on the part of individuals and groups, to achieve greater degrees of social justice in the world. What I am interested in, beyond the framework of social justice, is the idea of political-philosophical "difference" which might be conceived of in an "anti-universalist" sense. Indeed, it might be possible to theorize a version of the performative self that begins with Nietzsche, taking bits and pieces from other thinkers, and offers us a conception of political autonomy that is both anti-universalist and democratic. What such a theory would require is getting beyond traditional prejudices about the universality of moral agency and at the same time getting beyond the idea that "identity" is a "social" construct. Indeed, what a new theory of political autonomy might establish is the idea that one's "identity" is revealed as being truly unique in its "political-philosophical" expression.

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