ABSTRACT

Untimely Meditations on the Need for Roots: Imagining a Culture of Human Need in

Nietzsche and Simone Weil

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This thesis identifies and examines similar conceptions of culture and education in Nietzsche's essay, "Schopenhauer as Educator" and Simone Weil's book, The Need for Roots. The two writers share the premise that culture, rightly understood and practiced, is oriented towards acquiring human metaphysical needs. I explore how both writers distinguish between such culture, understood as authentic, and various forms of "sham" culture. The thesis distinguishes between Weil and Nietzsche's respective understandings of such cultural debasement, suggesting that each writer shares an understanding of culture as rooted in and in pursuit of goodness, beauty, truth, and justice. A comparison with Plato's Republic suggests that Weil's account of culture differs most greatly from Nietzsche's account in its broad inclusion of political activity, suggesting that the unity of justice with beauty, truth, and goodness brings the political sphere into a meaningful account of culture alongside the fine arts, sciences, and education.

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UNTIMELY MEDITATIONS ON THE NEEDS FOR ROOTS:

IMAGINING A CULTURE OF HUMAN NEED IN NIETZSCHE

AND SIMONE WEIL

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INTRODUCTION

The French writer, philosopher, and theologian Simone Weil was born in 1909.

She attended school at Ecole Normale Supérieure before a brief but intense life of laborer

advocacy, teaching, unceasing writing, and resistance activities during the Second World

War. She died from complications arising from starvation, as she refused to eat more than

the French soldiers on the front lines. A short nine years earlier, the German philosopher

Friedrich Nietzsche was ending his tumultuous life as a classical philologist turned

philosopher. His final years of mental degradation and intellectual intensity are well

known. He died in 1900 in terrible health, the author of many poorly received texts that

would go on to profoundly shape the intellectual contours of twentieth century culture.

This thesis examines the critical connection, hitherto unstudied, between

Nietzsche's conception of culture and education in "Schopenhauer as Educator" and

Weil's The Need for Roots. The two texts demonstrate two sharply similar minds, both

keen on restoring a derailed culture to a different state. This thesis articulates just what

that state is for both Nietzsche and Weil. For each writer, culture is, in its true form,

concerned primarily with human need, specifically metaphysical need[1]. Both authors, as

we will discover, contend that various forms of corrupted culture undermine this original

purpose, trading the metaphysical needs of humans for the temporal needs of vicious

corporations and individuals. Thus, in the first two chapters, I will trace how Nietzsche

and Weil individually outline these lines of thought in "Schopenhauer" and Roots.

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[1] Nietzsche speaks constantly in terms of human need as the singular and pure engine of true learning and cultural activity, as I will show. The essay, which positions Schopenhauer as Nietzsche's true educator, opens with the language of needs. That discourse remains throughout. The second section of the essay, as an example, proclaims: "It was in this condition of need, distress and desire that I came to know Schopenhauer." ("Schopenhauer" 133)

The third chapter suggests key points of difference in Nietzsche and Weil on culture. Ultimately, I suggest that the two most foundational of these differences are Weil's theological teleology in her philosophy of culture, as well as her particular understanding of justice that necessarily includes the political life in her account of culture. These elements, I will argue, are absent in Nietzsche's text. Even as I note these differences, I conclude that Weil and Nietzsche share a deeply resonant view of culture as the fulfiller of metaphysical need. The differences, meaningful and significant, suggest a continuous understanding of true culture from which theists and atheists alike may profit in the future.

Finally, regarding the texts, I am working with the Gallimard edition of Simone Weil's completed works published in 1999. The text is in Weil's native French, so the translations cited here are all original. The Nietzsche text is Don Breazeale's edition *Untimely Meditations* from the Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy series. Published in 1997 and translated by R.J. Hollingdale, this volume includes the essay "Schopenhauer as Educator".

CHAPTER ONE

"Schopenhauer as Educator" on Education, Culture, and Human Need

The work of Friedrich Nietzsche is often grouped into an early, middle, and late period. Among these, the early period consistently receives the least scholarly and popular attention. Nietzsche's most enduring texts, like Thus Spoke Zarathustra and Beyond Good and Evil, belong to those middle and later periods where he developed his notion of the "death of god" and other ideas whose grandeur eclipses the strikingly different types of ideas developed in Nietzsche's earlier writings.

Among these is "Schopenhauer as Educator", the lengthy third essay in the four part series titled Untimely Meditations. Unlike Nietzsche's later works, "Schopenhauer" is characterized by a remarkably constructive tone. The subject matter is diverse, but among it we find a discussion on education, culture, and nature. The aim of this chapter is to explicate the relatedness of those themes as they manifest themselves in "Schopenhauer". Regarding method, one of the central interpretive challenges for commenting on "Schopenhauer" is navigating its complexity and density. Themes are never tidily developed in a linear way that lends itself to straightforward analysis. This means that with respect to the essay's major themes, like education, there are often apparent or obvious interpretations that try to assimilate all the relevant material in "Schopenhauer". These primary interpretations rarely turn out to do justice to the profundity of Nietzsche's thinking, and yet I have found it is often best to arrive at more just interpretations by way of those obvious or apparent glosses.

Ultimately, I show that Nietzsche's complex understanding of education rests on an anthropology that imagines education as that which helps humans achieve their telos through a cultivation of beauty, goodness, and truth—the basic elements of human nature. That education necessitates individual self-realization, but includes a positive role for philosophy and tradition. Finally, education represents both a fulfillment of human and non-human nature that uniquely endows human becoming with a noble character.[2]

1.1 Education Reimagined

Nietzsche's essay begins with the observation that humans are "lazy," and that this fundamental characteristic of humans makes them conform to cultural norms and conventions. This in turn renders humans weak and sterile, incapable of being what they truly are through the many layers of postured, false selves adopted out of laziness to appease convention. Such artificial and external forces prevent the true self of each individual from realizing the cry of Nietzsche's imagined conscience, "Be yourself! All you are now doing, thinking, desiring, is not you yourself."("Schopenhauer"127)

In response to this deplorable state, the task of education and of all culture is to help humans achieve access to and expression of that truest self. This is something acutely observed already by Breazeale: "This is where the process of cultivation [Bildung] and education [Erziehung] comes into play, for it is precisely the role of the educator to facilitate one's discovery of 'who one really is.'" (17) Nietzsche most

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[2] Why study one text, much less one essay among a group, without reference to Nietzsche's whole literary corpus? The simple reason is because of the great quantity of overlapping content in "Schopenhauer" and *Roots*. The significant common ground warrants a specific comparison. Naturally, this study cannot hope to assert claims beyond the scope of this immediate textual analysis. Thus, when I speak of "Nietzsche" and "Weil" throughout, I intend only the authors' thinking as manifested in the texts treated here.

frequently imagines this movement as liberation from the various artificial concepts of selfhood imposed on the individual by institutions: "And how dismal and senseless life can be without this liberation!" (127-8). Much of the time, this education of liberation is understood in opposition to its perversions, corrupted forms of education that produce human beings who are "wholly exterior, without kernel, a tattered, painted bag of clothes." (128) Instead, "true educators and formative teachers reveal to you that the true, original meaning, and basic stuff of your nature is something completely incapable of being educated or formed…your educators can only be your liberators." (129)

Education, then, is the process of liberating the learner from elements that promote false selves and allows for a rediscovery of that "basic stuff of your nature" (129). But what is that nature? And how is to be realized? To discover Nietzsche's answers to these questions, we must trace his well concealed anthropology in the essay, and his understanding of the needs of the higher self[3].

1.2 What is a Human? An Aggregate Philosopher-Artist-Saint

Nietzsche asserts that a teacher must "undertake the difficulty of the task of educating a man to be a man!" (131) Given the emotional emphasis of the claim, it is surprising not to find a readily accessible description in the essay that gives substance and particularity to what this man is. The first substantial material arrives nearly halfway through "Schopenhauer" in the following passage: "They are those true men, those who are no longer animal, the philosophers, artists and saints." (159) The strength of the

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[3] Similar theoretical concerns are raised by Harrington in her article cited in the bibliography, though not at all with respect to Nietzsche. From her abstract, "an adequate ethical theory of self-realization requires for its complete on the specification of what man's nature is, toward what ends he should progress, and what pattern of inter-relationships exists among these ends" (Abstract).

adverb true and the italics demonstrate the importance of the passage to Nietzsche as a positive description of the most exceptional human beings. Somehow, artists, philosophers, and saints realize "true" humanity. Yet in Nietzsche's specific understanding of artists, philosophers, and saints, those categories are not reserved only for describing a special class of people, but are conditionally extended to all humanity:

> It is incontestable that we are all related and allied to the saint, just as we are related to the philosopher and artist; there are moments and as it were bright sparks of the fire of love in whose light we cease to understand the word 'I', there lies something beyond our being which at these moments moves across into it, and we are thus possessed of a heartfelt longing for bridges between here and there. (161)

There are several features here of immense value in discovering Nietzsche's understanding of human beings. The first is the notion that everyone, without qualification, is "related and allied" to the artist, saint, and philosopher. Rather than being special types set apart from the human race, each category is understood as a possible mode of being accessible to any individual. To be "related" implies a common heritage, a point well expounded by Conant: "Nietzsche insists here on what I…called the exemplarity of the artist and the philosopher—that we are all members of the same genus. They ought to strike home at each and every one of us." (Conant 204) It seems that artistry, sainthood, and philosophy are accessible elements of human experience indigenous to everyone.

The qualification then is in Nietzsche's proposal that the human race ("each of us") is a body of potential saints, artists, and philosophers. The claim is that those categories are natural to everyone, but somehow difficult to access. We experience "moments" of being in these categories, according to the passage, which implies a challenge—or impossibility—of permanently dwelling there. Moreover, the realization of

these states seems to require hard work because, in order to realize them, one has to overcome those forces of laziness and fear that characterize human behavior.

I turn to a related idea. Nietzsche's tripartite cultural project has both a social component and an individual component. Nowhere is this clearer than in the following passage: "It is the fundamental idea of culture, insofar as it sets for each one of us but one task: to promote the production of the philosopher, the artist and the saint within us and without us…" ("Schopenhauer" 160) The language of "within us" suggests that Nietzsche does not merely think that humanity ought to produce a special class of these categories, but that the categories themselves ought all to be cultivated together inside of each individual. The two dimensions of Nietzsche's cultural project, external and internal, make room for an individual experience of the states of being that belong to saints, artists, and philosophers. We may ask, but what of the connection between this construction of culture and education? Is Nietzsche failing to make clear the precise relationship between the two? To answer affirmatively is to demonstrate the limitations of reading in translation. As Breazeale shows in his reading of "Schopenhauer", culture and education in Nietzsche are very often translations of one single German word: Bildung.[4] Therefore, it should not surprise us to see Nietzsche assuming an essential connection between culture and human education, one that is already embedded in the structures of his native language.

Nevertheless, this understanding does not entirely elucidate a Nietzschean anthropology. Clearly, the telos of culture or education is the production of artists,

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[4] "We thus arrive at our final topic: Nietzsche's account, in the third *Meditation*, of the essential role played by "education" or "cultivation" [*Bildung*] in the formation of the self," (Breazeale 17).

saints[5], and philosophers. Furthermore, that production manifests itself at a large social level and a more intimate individual one. But what does that suggest about human need? And why educational and cultural paradigms ought to be established to produce artists, saints, and philosophers?

To answer this, I consider that the three Nietzschean categories proposed here take as their subject matter beauty (artists), truth (philosophers), and goodness (saints). We can recognize in these categories the three transcendental absolutes of ancient Greek philosophy. For a writer whose work is often characterized by its vehemence towards Plato, it is seemingly striking to uncover such a positive connection with the metaphysical philosophy of the Hellenistic thinkers, a connection so fundamental to all the argumentative threads of the essay concerning culture and education.

In trying to discern what to make of this connection, we can remember that for many ancients, as for a long tradition that followed them, Beauty, Truth, and Goodness were inseparable. Alexander reminds us that this unity is implicit in Plato, especially in the Symposium, and explicit later in Augustine: "Already with Augustine, God is 'absolute, immutable, omnipresent Goodness and Truth and Beauty.'"(Alexander 7) Thus, in many streams of Greek and Christian philosophy, these three transcendental absolutes were fundamentally related and all reflected irreducible aspects of metaphysical reality. One of the many ramifications of this unity is the notion that one cannot pursue Beauty or Truth or Goodness alone. Because the three are unified, so must be any

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[5]The saint tends to get less air time in Nietzsche's commentators than the artist and the philosopher. But in the saint, we hear an echo of Pascal's opening aphorism in *Divertissement*: "Si l'homme était heureux il le serait d'autant plus qu'il serait moins diverti, comme les saints et Dieu." (Pascal 8) Here, Pascal chooses saints as the archetype of those humans who do not divert themselves from life. Is not this precisely what Nietzsche's saint does in tandem with the philosopher and artist?

meaningful pursuit of them. Thus, an individual's preoccupation with Beauty and its pursuit may deprive him or her of a needed cultivation of Goodness and Truth in his or her life, and so on. Classical understandings like this also suggest that beauty, goodness, and truth are to be pursued and cultivated in a person. Thus, Plato's three categories[6], and Nietzsche's by extension, present not just an ontology of transcendent beauty, truth, and goodness, but an account of humanity in which human need is defined and satisfied by a pursuit of those transcendentals. The foundational need of humans is to cultivate Beauty, Truth, and Goodness in their lives precisely because the pursuit of those things is the pursuit of that which is most real.

I propose that Nietzsche is making a partial return to this Platonic-Augustinian anthropology in "Schopenhauer". If indeed the artist, saint, and philosopher are the exemplars of cultural fulfillment, then Nietzsche must place a proportionally high value on their objects of truth, beauty, and goodness. That he insists that the three must be cultivated in tandem "within us" implies also the understanding of the unity of truth, beauty, and goodness, and an awareness that flourishing occurs when that unity is cultivated in the self. Conant, in his brilliant reading of "Schopenhauer", is right to note Nietzsche's suggestion that the genius of artists, saints, and philosophers is potent if unrealized in any given human. But what that reading does not do that I accomplish here is to emphasize how that common heritage suggests that beauty, goodness, and truth answer to the needs of human beings. As we discovered, philosophers, artists, and saints are "those true men", and that must be understood as a powerful anthropological claim.

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[6]*Symposium* arguably develops the earliest examples of the triune reality of goodness, beauty, and truth, even if their fundamental unity is not fully established there. Alexander on the *Symposium*; "Plato does not assert the identity of the true, the good, and the beautiful, though he does say the good must be true as well as beautiful," (Alexander 6).

Thus, Nietzsche does not fall into the trap of suggesting an educational paradigm predicated on an empty human. Rather, human nature has a character, a particular one that is amplified in artists, saints, and philosophers. And if those types are the most representative of what it is to be human, then their objects of beauty, truth, and goodness answer to the needs of human nature itself.

To be clear, Nietzsche does not make it clear what precisely human need is and how the artists, philosophers and saints procure those needs in humans. "Schopenhauer" is much vaguer on this point than Weil is in Roots, as I will show in the concluding chapter. However, we are positioned to conclude two key features of Nietzsche's understanding of human need and its relationship to culture. First, human need is identifiable with the flowering of cultural genius in an individual. Section Three of "Schopenhauer" invokes this notion several times, as in this example: "This is the root of all true culture; and if I understand by this the longing of man to be reborn as saint and genius, I know that one does not have to be a Buddhist to understand this myth." (142) Secondly, that flourishing is fulfilled individually. Nietzsche's model allows for the positive role of guides to help in "educating a man to be a man!" ("Schopenhauer" 131), but by and large, forces external to the self are understood as agents of "tyranny" that violate the individual's pursuit of the flourishing of their genius:

> where there have been powerful societies, governments, religions, public opinions, in short wherever there has been tyranny, there the solitary philosopher has been hated; for philosophy offers unto a man into which no tyranny can force its way. (139)

Finally, I notice that this individual process seeks fulfillment, in its most advanced stages, in the contemplative life:

> For the genius longs more deeply for sainthood because from his watchtower he has seen farther and more clearly than other men, down into the reconciliation of knowledge with being, over into the domain of peace and denial of the will, across to other coast of which the Indians speak. (143)

The images of isolated coasts and watchtowers strongly evoke the individual nature of human cultural flourishing. The particular description of that solitude is, also, steeped in the imagery of monastic withdrawal, evinced in the specific allusion to the Hindu conception of the self that has transcended ego. Thus, rather than being a community praxis, culture is, by Nietzsche's account, ultimately a process of realizing individual genius that satisfies individual need.

1.3 Education: Blindness, Philosophy and Tradition

Though we have found and labeled Nietzsche's understanding of humans, education, and the goal of the latter for the former, the precise character of that education remains unclear. As Breazeale writes, "Education, so understood [in "Schopenhauer"], has nothing to do with the transference of skills or information. Its sole end is to assist the learner in becoming acquainted with his or her own unique self." (Breazeale 17) Our analysis up to now allows us to affirm the second part of Breazeale's claim with ease, but what of the first? Nietzsche does affirm, as I will shortly show, a certain blindness inherent to true education, but he also emphasizes the role of philosophers and tradition at different places in "Schopenhauer". How could education be characterized by all three? Does not tradition and philosophy concern themselves with the "transference of…information"? Is not such "transference" concerned with increased understanding rather than blindness?

Returning to the text, Nietzsche claims that in pursuit of one's true self, one

necessarily moves through life without knowledge of the road ahead:

> No one can construct for you the bridge upon which precisely you must cross the
> stream of life, no one but you yourself alone. There are, to be sure, countless
> paths and bridges and demi-gods which would bear you through this stream; but
> only at the cost of yourself...There exists in the world a single path along which
> no one can go except you: whither does it lead? Do not ask, go along. (129)

What then is the significance of the path's obscure end? How are we to understand the

images of paths and ends? First, Nietzsche must be suggesting that the individual

chronology of each person's life is unknown. It unfolds along unique contours, and that

uniqueness is significant to each person's discovery of her authentic self. More

significantly, it seems that true education involves a certain rejection of tradition insofar

as nothing can realize the true self but the individual. Any road to self-realization

furnished by a thinker or sage of the past would seem to be one of those abhorred "paths"

and "bridges" Nietzsche rejects.

A careful reading that takes seriously the entirety of "Schopenhauer", and the

aggregate references to philosophers and traditions past, will find ultimately no paradox

in the essay, but an enlightening understanding of those elements. First, philosophers in

"Schopenhauer" are characterized in opposition to another distinct category: the scholar.

Only by comparison does the category "philosopher" as it occurs in the essay begin to

make its fullest sense with respect to education. The scholar is the enemy; he is the one

who postures and focuses on surfaces and serves the institutional goals of his employers.

On the other extreme, the philosopher is one who cultivates "philosophical genius" that

"can at any rate come into existence in our time despite the forces working against it"

when the following conditions are met: "free manliness of character, early knowledge of

mankind, no scholarly education, no narrow patriotism, no necessity for bread-winning, no ties with the state." (182) The distinction then between the professor and the philosopher is one of authenticity. For former postures the genius of the latter, as Nietzsche suggests here:

> But, you will object, he is not supposed to be a thinker at all, but at most a learned presenter of what others have thought: and as to that, he will always have something to say his pupils do not already know—But precisely this—to undertake to appear first and foremost as scholarliness—is the third perilous concession which philosophy makes to the state. Above all when it appears as knowledge of the history of philosophy. (186)

The enemies to education, then, are those who pursue the "history of philosophy" rather than truth, the object of the philosophical genius. This is at the center of Nietzsche's critique of tradition and philosophy as such: they can so easily derail themselves from an authentic cultivation of human nature. As Nietzsche points out in the last citation, philosophy, especially when it serves the state, takes on ulterior motives that are not interested in realizing the true nature of humans.[7]

We can now address the second way in which Nietzsche peripherally addresses tradition and some sort of positive role for it in education. This is the question of moral knowledge. Regarding the debased teaching and practice of science in Germany, Nietzsche bemoans, 'What has become of any reflection on questions of morality-questions that have at all times engaged every more highly civilized society? There is no longer any model or reflection of any kind...' (132) Suddenly, Nietzsche confronts his readers with a call to moral reflection. Moral reflection suggests moral knowledge, and even a tradition of moral knowledge as in this passage: "what we are in fact doing is

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[7] I affirm also Breazeale's reading of the philosopher category in the essay: "In fact, one of the central claims of "Schopenhauer as Educator" is that what chiefly distinguishes a genuine philosopher from a mere "university philosopher" is that the former tries to *live by his own philosophy*," (10).

consuming the moral capital we have inherited from our forefathers, which we are incapable of increasing, but know only how to squander..." (132, my emphasis)

Forefathers? Moral capital? All this suggests bridge building and inauthentic education. Yet the major feature that Nietzsche wants to emphasize is not a reverence for or even an appeal to tradition, but rather to challenge the assumption that all valuable education is modern. There are many examples in the text that demonstrate this, but the best occurs in a discussion on Christianity and Greek Culture, perhaps the two prominent traditions surrounding Nietzsche in his academic setting at the time of the Meditations:

> It is in this oscillation between Christianity and antiquity, between an imitated or hypocritical Christianity of morals and an equally despondent and timid revival of antiquity, that modern man lives, and does not live very happily…the desire for a firm footing somewhere, the impotence of his knowledge that reels back and forth between the good and the better, all this engenders a restlessness, a disorder in the modern soul which condemns it to a joyless unfruitfulness. (133)

The critique in this passage, and throughout "Schopenhauer", is not one against the content of Christianity or Greek philosophy, or against the usefulness of that content. Rather, the main line of criticism is against the ambivalence of modern humans in their hybrid adoption of elements from both systems. Rather than realize the benefits of either tradition, modern men fail to appropriate the stuff of either. Tradition, then, in itself, is not the enemy of authentic culture. Rather, it is the ambivalence that characterizes modernity that "squanders the moral capital" of our "forefathers". In this critique, we can appreciate the impact and aim of the essay collection's title noted by Breazeale: 'To a generation of good readers who prided themselves on their good fortune to live in the best of times- namely "modern times"- he proposed to deliver a collection of "Unmodern Observations" or "Untimely Meditations"' (Breazeale 2)

At last, we can make sense of Nietzsche's particular appeals to Greek philosophy throughout "Schopenhauer": "In the meantime I could not find my philosopher, however I tried; I saw how badly we moderns compare with the Greeks and Romans, even in the serious study of educational problems." (2) And how are we moderns insufficient with respect to the Ancients? Nietzsche furnishes us with excellent detail:

> Never have moral educators been more needed, and never has it seemed less likely they would be found; in the times when physicians are required the most, in times of great plagues, they are also most in peril. For where the physicians for modern mankind who themselves stand so firmly and soundly on their feet that they are able to support others and lead them by the hand? (133, my emphasis)

Here, all the elements we have addressed in Nietzsche's complex attitude towards tradition and philosophy are present and synthesized. The rhetoric of "honesty and lies" recalls the distinction between the philosopher and savant, and underscores the value Nietzsche is placing on authentic pursuit of truth. The appeal to "moral teachers" of the past suggests the cultivation of goodness, the second area of genius constitutive of Nietzschean anthropology. And finally, we encounter a positive depiction of teachers that "lead by the hand". Perhaps, then, those "bridges" and "paths" by which the student realizes their true self are, indeed, only constructed by the self. Yet Nietzsche openly suggests here that we may need guides to lead us along those paths. As Breazeale notes, "It [the self] should not, however, be constructed blindly or arbitrarily…instead, this process of self-construction must be accompanied by a constant effort to obtain a critical understanding of what we have constructed so far and of where we should proceed next." (Breazeale 15)

I conclude in summary that Nietzschean education has respect for tradition in the following ways. First, philosophy, authentically in pursuit of truth, is essential to

education. Furthermore, true philosophy, as contrasted with the praxis of the savant, is valid and useful for education wherever it is found in history, exemplified in the Greeks. Thirdly, moral knowledge requires teachers to help lead the way of the student, but we have no reason to find this incompatible with Nietzsche's insistence on the individual burden of self-realization.

1.4 Nature: Human and Otherwise

We are now equipped to return to the social component of Nietzsche's cultural project. If there is a personal, individual dimension to Nietzsche's project, as I have shown, what is the function of the social component? That is to say, why the need for full time artists, philosophers, and saints if all individuals are already tasked with the cultivation of all three within themselves? The question is particularly apparent in passages like this, where Nietzsche dramatically reinforces the final importance of individual transformation into these categories; he writes that everyone must "unwearyingly combat that which would deprive us of the supreme fulfillment of our existence by preventing us from becoming such Schopenhauerian men ourselves." (161)

The first reason for the production of a class of artists, saints, and philosophers is a practical concern. In short, excellence in each of these categories is very difficult to achieve, implied when Nietzsche reminds us that the individual is often only able to access the states of true sainthood, artistry, and philosophy in fleeting moments. Therefore, if it is important for individuals to cultivate these three categories in themselves, it follows that there will be a practical need to produce excellent models of all three types. Exemplere is the German word Nietzsche uses to describe the function of

artists, saints, and philosophers for the majority. Explicating the importance of

Nietzsche's word choice, Conant writes that for Nietzsche,

> (1) genius represents a kind of excellence which makes a demand on us; (2) the kind of demand it makes cannot be formulated in terms of an explicit rule…(3) this demand, its amorphous and inarticulate character notwithstanding, requires our assent; and (4) assent in such a case expresses itself to treat the source of the demand as an exemplar to be... "emulated." (Conant 193)[8]

The second reason Nietzsche proposes for the social dimension of his cultural

project is this; the perfection of nature demands it. Textual examples abound, beginning

with the remainder of the aforementioned passage; culture, we are reminded, should

serve…

> …the production of the philosopher, the artist, and the saint, within us and without us and thereby to work at the perfection of nature. For as nature needs the philosopher, so does it need the artist, for the achievement of a metaphysical goal, that of its own self-enlightenment, so that it may at last behold as a clear and finished picture that which it could see only obscurely in the agitation of its evolution- for the end, that is to say, of self-knowledge. ("Schopenhauer" 160)

What are we to make of this association between cultural fulfillment and the fulfillment

of nature? Does not this account of cultural telos fall into the trap of directing human

need towards something other than itself? Would not any education paradigm designed to

promote this understanding be characterized by an orientation away from human need as

an end in itself?

A partial answer starts with the observation that Nietzsche uses the term nature

for two purposes in "Schopenhauer". The first is as a means to describe human nature, or

that which is most essential about humans. It is in this sense that we have encountered

Nietzsche's thoughts on education whose design is to force an encounter with one's

individual nature. The second use of nature is to describe non-human nature in the way

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[8]Lemm makes precisely the same point in her essay in her reading of Cavall on Nietzsche, citing Conant as well (Lemm 8).

he does in the citation just above. Nature in this sense, however, is not always pictured in such awesome terms, as in this passage on the isolation of the Schopenhauerean man: "and now there sounds within it a note of joy, of sheer, unreflecting joy! But already the mists of early evening are creeping in, the note dies away, the wanderer's step grates on the ground; for as far as he can still see, he sees nothing but the cruel and desolate face of nature" (149, my emphasis) Nature seems to be what is left to confront a human when they commit to true education and lose the social support of their neighbors previously maintained through a fearful and lazy commitment to convention. This sharp and morose imagery underscores the distinction between "nature", as employed in the last two citations, and humans.

Yet nature's telos is curiously tied to human cultural fulfillment, namely in the production of artists, saints, and philosophers:

> Here I have arrived at an answer to the question whether it is possible to pursue the great ideal of the Schopenhauerean man by means of a practical activity. One thing above all is certain: these new duties are not the duties of a solitary; on the contrary, they set one in the midst of a mighty community held together, not by external forms and regulations, but by a fundamental idea…of culture; insofar as it sets for each one of us but one task: to promote the production of the philosopher, the artist and the saint within and without us and thereby to work at the perfecting of Nature. (160)

What does Nietzsche want us to make of these connections? How would he have us read the passage? Breazeale makes an interesting attempt when he says that the genius of artists, saints, and philosophers is meant to "'redeem nature'…by holding up a "picture" of life and existence as a whole- more specifically, by providing us with a new image of a human being." (Breazeale 9) This must be the case, but it does little to help us understand the relationship between human and non-human nature as Nietzsche has developed it in the passages I have cited.

I observe that Nietzsche uses such poetic and emotionally charged language in all those instances where he establishes the connections between human and non-human nature. As a consequence, I suggest that Nietzsche does invite us to tease out some literal, ontological blueprint that may appear to be in play throughout Nietzsche's discussion on nature. That is, the essay offers no reason to think that Nietzsche's intellectual project in "Schopenhauer" is one that invites us to reconstruct an analytical map of Nature and human nature and their interaction at some physical or metaphysical level. Nietzsche is not constructing an ontology that makes Hegelian or Christian teleological claims. Instead of searching for such an analytical explanation of these connections, we can instead notice that Nietzsche's duel use of nature to describe the essence of humans and human nature accomplishes a few fascinating things. First, by establishing the fulfillment of non-human nature as the realization of human nature, Nietzsche unquestionably heightens and ennobles the human culture. Human cultural fulfillment, the education that realizes human nature, is so grand that it is imagined as the telos of the whole universe. To construct Nature's highest purpose as human fulfillment is to elevate human nature to the highest level of significance possible through a literary as much as philosophical act.

I note another function of Nietzsche's construction of nature and cultural fulfillment. We observe first, like Nietzsche, that non-human nature cannot become:

> And so nature at last needs the saint, in whom the ego is completely melted away and whose life of suffering is no longer felt as his own life…but as a profound feeling of oneness and identity with all living things: the saint in whom there appears that miracle of transformation which the game of becoming never hits upon, that final and supreme becoming-human after which all nature presses and urges for its redemption from itself. (160-1)

Does not non-human nature evolve? Yes, but not in the ways that are most interesting and that characterize human becoming: artistic, philosophical, or moral progress. Only

humans are capable of those incredible tasks. Only humans among all the specimens of nature are endowed with the potency for these special kinds of becoming, the significance of which is total for Nietzsche. There is a uniqueness to the character of human becoming, and Nietzsche places it at the summit of all other kinds of becoming. This choice may be arbitrary, but it is hardly irrational, and it does, once again, give great nobility to the project of human cultural fulfillment.

In summary, the enduring intellectual contribution of "Schopenhauer" with respect to education exceeds even the idea that education should assist the student on their journey towards his highest self. Rather, it is the understanding of human nature itself. As we saw, that nature is enriched by beauty, truth, and goodness "within and without" each human being. The genius of Nietzsche, then, is the innovation of suggesting that culture's highest purpose is the production of artists, saints, and philosophers to realize those fundamental elements of human nature. Finally, the realization of human nature through these exemplars is elevated to an extreme level of significance when Nietzsche situates that process as the fulfillment of non-human Nature which is constitutively incapable of human becoming.

CHAPTER TWO

Simone Weil: Work, Justice, and Theology in The Need for Roots

During her brief life, the French philosopher Simone Weil produced an

impressive amount of writing. Her complete works contain over a thousand pages of

notes, essays, letters, and books whose topics range from Hindu philology to Pythagorean

geometry. Yet amidst all that material, we are left with only one extended discussion of

Nietzsche. The tone is manifestly condemning and condescending. Writing to her brother

André Weil, Simone explains that Nietzsche

> …inspires no inclination in me to treat him lightly; only an invisible and almost
> physical repulsion. Even when he expresses things that I think, he is literally
> intolerable to me. I like better to believe by word that he is a great man than to go
> and see; why would I approach what makes me ill? But I do not see how a lover
> of wisdom who ends as he ended can be regarded as having succeeded.
> ("Correspondance" 571)

In the letter above, Weil goes on to specify that her repulsion of Nietzsche is rooted in her

aversion to his interpretation of the Greeks. Yet her admission of common ground

coupled with the violent emotional description of her aversion suggests the hatred of a

child who at once detests and acknowledges her heritage. At the very least, Weil's

subversive and telling intolerance invites a comparison of her thinking with that of

Nietzsche.

All comparison is to some degree forced, but if invited, can be fruitful. In

accepting Weil's invitation to compare her thoughts with that of Nietzsche, I find that the

project of the later relating culture and education to human need and a re-appropriation of classical anthropology is deeply resonant with Weil's project in The Need for Roots[9].

2.1 The Shared Feature of Untimeliness

One of the chief points of overlap between "Schopenhauer" and Roots is that both texts are concerned with urgently identifying troubling pathologies in the culture immediately around the writer, namely in the practice of education. Both writers label and respond to contemporary (modern) corruptions of culture and education that invite a reexamination of what culture and education ought to be or can accomplish. Just as Nietzsche was made livid by the degraded academic system in his Germany, so does Weil in Roots demonstrate a similar alarm in response to the state of education and culture in her native France.

As the title of his essay collection suggests, Nietzsche thought of his ideas in "Schopenhauer" as untimely (Breazeale). This seems to mean, at least, that Nietzsche had unpopular thinking to share with the popular world, thinking which he held to be a valuable corrective for a negative movement away from something good to something less good in culture. Roots takes a similar approach on all accounts, exemplified in Weil's initial analysis of cultural degradation as "the social relationships in the interior of a…country can be dangerous factors for uprooted-ness[10]. In our countries, in our times, there are two poisons that propagate this disease" (1053). Weil sees poison in her time, and she wants to extract it by identifying the ways in which culture and education have

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[9]I retain the title as it has been translated since its first English publication in 333 to ensure academic continuity. That said, the original title, *L'Enracinement*, may be better rendered, if not better translated, as *The Enrooting*.

[10]*Déracinement.* Literally, de-rooted-ness.

become pathological, and by inviting a return to an understanding of culture that will stop the production of such poison. Both as a rhetorical strategy and at the level of the ideas themselves, the sum of this approach might be called untimeliness. It is the most obvious, and not the least profound, shared feature between Roots and "Schopenhauer" that at once justifies the comparison of the texts, and provides a helpful point of departure for understanding the thinking of Weil's book on education and culture.

2.2 Poisoned Roots: Cultural Pathology

Because of the significance of this untimely approach to Weil's style and content in Roots, it is logical to continue this analysis by briefly enumerating the cultural pathologies that Weil takes to need correction. The most general way to understand Weil's conception of the problem is in the title of the second part of work: Déracinement. We may translate this in English as "uprootedness". First, a review, to be much expanded later, of Weil's understanding of roots. The human need for roots "is one of the most difficult to define. A human being has a root by his real, active, and natural participation with the existence of a collective that keeps alive certain treasures of the past and certain feelings[11] for the future. Natural participation, that is to say, brought automatically by place, birth, profession, all of it[12]" (1052) While the need for roots, as the work's title suggests, occupies the center of Weil's thought, it but one among fifteen human needs enumerated in the works first section, "The Needs of the Soul". Those needs are order, liberty, obedience, responsibility, equality, hierarchy, honor, punishment, liberty of

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[11]*Pressentiments* renders better here as *hopes* or *expectations*, but the present translation makes room for those instances when Weil does use *espoirs* and *attentes*.
[12]*l'entourage*

opinion, security, risk, private property, collective property, and truth. Taken together, these needs form a picture of Weil's anthropology. The question follows, why does Weil place such emphasis on roots among all these many needs? That privileged place of roots arises from the fact that, as per Weil's definition, roots are those cultural pathways that procure the rest of the needs. I will return more to this in the final chapter; for now, I draw attention to this catalogue of human needs in order to better discuss Weil's understanding of uprooted-ness, that condition by which the function of roots is compromised.

In Roots, we find two directions in which the forces that uproot operate from the perspective of a culture, in this case France of the 1940's: outwardly and internally. That outward uprooting Weil broadly identifies as colonialism, which is principally responsible for destroying roots, both in history, and in Weil's own 20th century. Countries invade and conquer a place, and unless they integrate themselves into the indigenous culture of the conquered peoples, they destroy the vitality of those cultural resources for the conquered people (1052). In Roots, the major historical example and identifying trope of colonial uprooting is Rome[13]. In contrast, a culture uproots itself from internal forces. Weil claims "There are four obstacles separating us from a form of civilization susceptible to being worth something. Our false conception of grandeur; degradation of the sentiment of justice; our idolatry of money; and the absence in us of religious inspiration." (1164) These root-compromising forces have several effects, but

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[13]"It (Rome) was truly an atheistic and idolatrous people; not idolatrous from statues made of stone or bronze, but idolatry of itself. It is this idolatry of self that has been bequeathed to us under the name of patriotism." (1115)

the majority of Weil's book is spent discussing how those effects uniquely effect laborers as a demographic.

Whether a factory workers or a farmer, the worker is particularly and deeply affected by the loss of roots. This is attested to in the second part of Roots which has three sub-sections, two of which are entitled "Uprooted-ness of the worker" (Le déracinement ouvrier) and "Uprooted-ness of the farmer" (Le déracinement paysan). To specify, I summarize Weil's framing of the problem in a few propositions. First, laborers are often miserable people as a consequence of the way in which they are uprooted in the culture of the workplace. That uprooting involves the supplanting of the needs of the worker for the needs of the factory economy. Therefore, as a prognosis for this problem, workers require education that resupplies those needs. Finally, that education requires a "participation in an intellectual culture" (1066)

2.3 Education and Work

Weil's preoccupation with laborers in her conservation on education has two principal dimensions of interest for this project. The first, as already stated, is the way in which Weil imagines education as a critical component of the restoration of roots in laborer culture. The second feature is Weil's reimagined culture of work, which she separately suggests as a prognostic for restoring roots. We will revisit the former by way of the latter to demonstrate a strong gap in the literature that underappreciates the precise role of education in Weil's cultural ideal.

As many have noted, Weil is insistent in her belief that manual work itself can be a part of a process of restoring roots (Hamilton, Springsted, Pirrucello). Weil writes

without qualification that "the mission, the vocation, of our time is the constitution of a civilization founded on the spirituality of work." (1085, my emphasis) Springsted sums up Weil's lengthy thoughts on this theme well: "even if there is no one answer for all times and places Weil does make it quite clear in The Need for Roots that there is one way for us to regain roots in the universe as a whole and that is by making spiritual labor the core of a well-ordered social life." (114)

Springsted goes on to formulate the question that arises: "But why does labour have this special spiritual virtue, especially in terms of being that which roots a culture in the universe as a whole? In the first place for Weil there is simply the spiritual value of work that is present whenever it is performed…" (114) He adds that in The Need for Roots, Weil understands work as a "consent to daily death. Through physical labor, she thinks, we consent to the necessity God has ordained as providence and sacrifice our belief that we are the centre of the universe." (114-5) Springsted suggests that Weil's spiritual understanding of work is more nuanced still. He offers several good examples of that complexity in Weil: work provides a healthy release from the modern fantasy according to which humans may dominate nature through technology. Furthermore, work can restore those roots effaced by the loss of "geographical and group distinctions" and because Weil's culture of work will "force a reconstruction of the economic system." Finally, Springsted adds that Weil's culture of work is significant to her main arguments because it "honors the laborer. By doing so" he adds "it makes us take as our ultimate reason doing what we do, the ends and natural goals of human beings instead of systems, banks or states." (Springsted 116)

To these astute readings, I would add that the spirituality of work also roots the worker in the moral teleology of his or her work. That is, according to Weil, a more spiritual work will require the worker to pay acute attention to the object and process of his or her work in order to more deeply appreciate its moral ends in the world. The beautiful example Weil furnishes is of a pregnant woman knitting clothes for her unborn baby. The mother, Weil urges, has an opportunity to contemplate the baby and her love for the baby in the minutiae of knitting which deepens the technical skills of knitting itself. The skill has ceased to be merely a function of apparently meaningless work and has been transformed into an act of love through a particular mode of attention that emphasizes the moral good of the work itself[14].

In sum, Weil is directly interested in the praxis of work as a vehicle for restoring cultural roots that satisfy human need. Moreover, she promotes a subtler point that may be of greater importance in the last analysis. Spiritual nourishment in work, however important, is a necessary but insufficient condition for a full restoration of cultural roots. Weil never says it explicitly, but the notion is clear, as I will show. Pirrucello comes to the edge of making this observation when she writes that according to Weil, "labor supported by the right narratives and traditions, community connections, tools, and educational and attentional practices can be the occasion for the exquisite beauty of the world and religious truths to enter the body" (Pirrucello 486). I highlight two elements in this citation. First, Pirrucello implies the insufficiency of labor alone to affect the kind of

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[14] This spirituality of work may resonate with Hannah Arendt's analysis of the *Vita Activa* in *The Human Condition*. Weil's contemporary, Arendt suggests that the active life is comprised of work, labor, and action. Work, in her account, is distinguished by labor because its products are concerned with immortality and durability. The products of work are not required for survival, but as such, occupy a special place in our cultural and political life (Arendt, 7-9).

cultural rootedness for which Weil searches.[15] Pirrucello notes that for Weil, those changes, namely the spirituality of work, must occur in a context. The second helpful feature is Pirrucello's brief identification of education as a part of that contextual supplement to the spiritualized attitude of work.

We have an opportunity here to deepen our grasp of how Weil understands the relatedness of culture and education. Unlike Nietzsche, Weil does not benefit from the etymological resonances of the German term Bildung with notions of culture as well as education. In the last chapter, we saw that Nietzsche's use of those linguistic features enabled an understanding of culture as a both kind of social space for philosophical, artistic, and spiritual production and the practice of education. In Weil's native French, no such immediate resonance occurs. Yet in her particular way, Weil understands culture and education to be bound up with one another. As I highlighted, Weil promotes the use but insufficiency of the spirituality of work to restore roots in the culture of the working classes. Education is the needed supplement. I argue that such an understanding runs constantly throughout *L'Enracin*ement. I mean by this that education is a vehicle by which culture "keeps alive certain treasures of the past and certain feelings." (Weil 1052). Weil also explicitly names bad education as a cause of uprootedness, from which it follows that right education is a part of the proper functioning of roots:

> …the second factor of uprootedness is instruction such as it is conceived today. Everywhere the Renaissance has provoked a break between cultivated people and the masses; but in separating culture from the national tradition, at least it [the Renaissance] plunged it [culture] into the Greek tradition. Since then, the links

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[15]While I do not treat Weil's relationship to Marx in this thesis, there is a very enlightening scholarly interest in that topic. The point I make here might be noted in future discourse on that subject, for one of the possible differences between Weil and Marx with respect to their conceptions of worker culture is Weil's belief that a spiritual, intellectual, and artistic culture must supplement any adjustment made in the workplace itself in order to heal the sickening effects of capitalism on the worker.

with national traditions have not been renewed, but Greece has been forgotten. (1055)

Clearly, Weil is developing several ideas here. I draw attention though to the notion that the divorce of culture and tradition is the result of bad education. The recovery, as she suggests elsewhere, will necessarily involve a re-working of "instruction". Since Weil identifies the need for a new sort of education for restoring cultural roots, the question arises: what is the substance of education as Weil imagines it? The answer finds deep resonance with the analogous suggestions in "Schopenhauer", and allows for a look at Weil's understanding of tradition and virtue as the central fixtures of education.

2.4 Education and Roots: The Need of the Past is the Need for the Virtues

Like Nietzsche, Weil's cultural ideal relies on a complex relationship to tradition. And like Nietzsche, Weil focuses on the Greek and Christian traditions. Yet the role she assigns those traditions and her understanding of them is at once similar and dissimilar to the analogous assignments of Nietzsche. We need to deepen our grasp of those roles in Roots. First, Weil's broadly positive attitude towards tradition is indicated in her definition of roots and its relationship to community:

> …the collectivity has its roots in the past. It constitutes the sole organ of transmission by which the dead may intermediately speak to the living. And the unique earthly thing that has a direct link with the eternal destiny of man is the radiance of those who knew how to be completely aware of this destiny, transmitted from generation to generation. (1030)

Intergenerational transmission is, then, the instrument by which roots are maintained and from which roots take their reality. But we should take care to note the nuanced

distinction of these ideas- roots, tradition, and culture- in the passage lest we confound concepts whose distinctness is central to Weil's cultural project. I first notice the identification of roots with an "organ of transmission". This is the most precise way that Weil helps her readers understand the identity of the metaphor of roots: it is an organ. This particular function of the metaphor already distinguishes between an organ and that which transmits, stores, or distributes. In the passage above, that material- "transmitted" through roots- is the cultural inheritance of the past. While Weil does not directly employ the term "tradition" in the French, it is the best word to capture Weil's description of the past transmitted to the living. The key is in the etymology of tradition, which comes from the Latin verb tradere whose literal meaning is a handing down from generation to generation (Harper). This image of handing down across generations overlaps precisely with the last sentence of the citation above, as well as the extended meaning of the whole passage that describes the "transmission" from the dead to the living.

This distinction illumines our reading of Weil's cultural project by clarifying that she is not what we might term a traditionalist. That is, her central purpose in Roots is not, as it might appear, to advocate a return to tradition as something of intrinsic goodness or use. Rather, she has established tradition as that process of handing down those insights of past culture that most engages the final goods of humans (destin). But the contents of that transmission are not good merely because they have been handed down over a great period of time. As the passage above suggests, culture can produce that which is not invested in human flourishing in which case the traditional act of handing down such knowledge does not render the knowledge any less noxious. Such a distinction recalls John Milton's thinking on the subject in Areopagitica: "Truth is compar'd in Scripture to

a streaming fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition." (Milton 38) For Milton, as for Weil, tradition is not intrinsically invaluable or noxious, but is rather the value neutral process by which positive and negative cultural material is passed down in time and space.

Weil maintains then a fundamental separation between culture, tradition, and roots. The final of these is neither the process of handing down cultural artifacts over time (tradition), nor is it the stuff of culture itself. Rather, roots are what Weil always suggested they were: an organ of transmission that creates a framework of connectedness by which humans may receive nourishing cultural material through the dynamic process of handing down that material over time. Yet Weil gives us one more term that maps onto Nietzsche's cultural project with striking similarity- genius: "The unique source of salvation and greatness for France is to take back contact with its genius" (1161). Genius also appears earlier in this context: "Help France to find at the bottom of its misfortune an inspiration conformed to her genius and to the current needs of men in distress." (1150) Weil goes on to imply the strong connection between cultural genius and tradition:

> We absolutely have reason to say it is a Christian and Hellenistic genius. This is why it would be legitimate to give a lesser part in the education and culture of the French to specifically French things than to Roman art, Gregorian chant, liturgical poetry and art, poetry, prose of the Greeks of the good era. (1175)

Christian and Greek genius, being the particular stuff of France's past, must be restored since it is the only material that can restore French cultural roots. The major import here is that the historical context of tradition is important for the way in which it functions as nourishment for a people. It matters that the cultural wisdom is particular and that particularity must, for Weil, logically be part of the restoration of a culture that has lost a living connection with its roots. Yet we are confronted again with the danger of

reading Weil's call to a return to tradition as a sort of traditionalism that conflates the old with the good. When we read the passage above in light of the distinctions between roots, tradition, and culture (now to include genius), we can see that Weil is suggesting that the particular cultural genius of France can provide material for the reestablishment of roots even as they are not roots in themselves. Conversely, she does not suggest that the particular cultural heritage of a place is good because it exists and has been handed down. Her lengthy critiques of Roman imperialism and corrupted Christianity confirm Weil's capacity to locate the noxious and destructive in a cultural heritage. This reading throws into relief Weil's use of genius as those parts of culture which do nourish human need. Rather than traditional culture being good in itself, it is that genius in culture which Weil calls us to seek out and hand down for its value for securing human need.

Let us return to the last citation now and recognize the central presence of art in Weil's cultural ideal. The end that it serves is explicitly identified throughout Roots as the realization in the human mind of order, one of the chief needs of the soul that Weil identifies. Order is "a web of social relationships such that no one be forced to violate some rigorous obligations in order to execute other obligations. The soul does not suffer spiritual violence from external circumstances except in this case." (1051) In education, then, art has the pedagogical value of providing objects of contemplation by which we perceive beauty, which leads to an intellectual perception of order and goodness: "we love the beauty of the world, because we feel behind its presence something analogous to the wisdom that we would like to possess to quench our desire for the good." (1032) And also, "To a lesser degree, truly beautiful works of art offer the example of ensembles or

of concurrent independent factors, in a manner impossible to understand, to constitute a unique beauty." (1032)

Why the emphasis on order and goodness as objects of a pedagogy of artistic contemplation? I put the question another way. In reading Nietzsche, we encountered an educational ideal of beauty, goodness, and truth that was also predicated on human need. But it did not assert order as the object of the artist's work, and so Weil seems to be innovating on whatever classical model Nietzsche is appropriating. Weil herself anticipates the question, for she knows it is an original move to consistently place justice alongside beauty, truth, and goodness as metaphysical transcendental objects: "But why would politics, which decides the destiny of peoples and has justice as its object, demand less attention than art or science, which have beauty and truth as objects? Politics has a very narrow affinity with art…" (1162)

Weil provides her readers with a few subtle but reasoned moves to answer her own question. First, we note that in addition to the usual triad of beauty, truth, and goodness, Weil is fond of invoking justice as a fourth companion. In fact, she variously rotates the four elements in groups of three as if to suggest their unity. Some groupings are recurrent, as in "the spirit of truth, justice, and love" (1170) which appears twice on the same page in Roots alone. "It is false that there are no links between perfect beauty, perfect truth, perfect justice; there are more than links. There is a mysterious unity, because the good is one." (1174) It follows then that the genius of any one of these elements is somewhat blurred in its engagement with beauty, truth, goodness, and justice: "There is a point of greatness where the creator genius of beauty, revelator genius of

truth, heroism and sanctity are indiscernible…We cannot separately discern in Giotto the genius of the painter and the genius of the Franciscan spirit." (1174)

So we are furnished with a conception of a unified goodness, beauty, truth, and justice, the four of which constitute the virtues towards which Weil's cultural and educational ideals tend. The answer, I think, for Weil's insistence on singling out justice as a separate and worthwhile archetypal element towards which culture and education ought to move works like this. First, contemplation of beauty, as Weil noted, leads to an apprehension of order. Secondly, order is defined as that social framework which minimizes any conflict between ethical imperatives as they are lived out in community (Weil 1031). Therefore, an education in artistic contemplation takes as its object order, which is the model after which justice is to be achieved: "Finally, the sentiment of diverse obligations proceeds always from a desire of the good which is unique, fixed, identical to itself, for all men, from the cradle to the grave." (1032)

I suggest then that Weil's most interesting intellectual contribution here with respect to education is her awareness of the necessarily political dimensions that follow from her cultural ideal predicated on a unified truth, beauty, and goodness. By emphasizing justice as an equal partner to those other three elements, Weil makes artistic education both a traditional Platonic exercise in aesthetic contemplation, as in the example of the knitting pregnant woman, and a source of practical wisdom from which one may draw the designs for ordering political life. This was, as we saw, contingent on Weil's peculiar reasoning that relates artistic contemplation to order to the practical work of sorting out conflicting ethical imperatives which implies the attempt to procure justice.

This begins to make sense of Weil's preoccupation with the category of workers as her primary demographic of discussion. If roots, as we saw in Weil, take importance from their historical particularity and respond to likewise particular situations in culture, then it follows that Weil would focus on the particular injustices of her time in France, namely, the plight of the worker. Furthermore, Weil sees political reform in labor and education as part and parcel of the same cultural process: "it is necessary to have in spirit the notion of public action as a mode of the education of a country." (1144)

To recapitulate, Weil understands tradition as being vital to cultural and educational reform because, in Springsted's words, it is the very source of "moral, intellectual and spiritual vocabulary…where that world begins to develop deep and true spiritual aspects is when we begin to see that that ordering is not optional for us but in fact creates the links by which our lives are forged into a whole, both individually and collectively." (Springsted 111) Then, I trace Weil's particular use of justice as a departure from Nietzsche's three part cultural ideal which builds a bridge from the theoretical work of artistic contemplation to the practical work of politics. This helped to contextualize Weil's emphasis on labor and laborers in her discussions on education.

2.5 The Living Education of Simone Weil

Here, I need to establish a final area of groundwork in preparation for comparing Weil and Nietzsche on education in the following chapter. This concerns the question of ethics and God in education. Hamilton, in the Harvard Theological Review, writes on Weil's account of faith that "for Weil, there can be no real content to a faith that is professed but not lived. That is, we are dealing here with the kind of life a person lives, a

whole Christian praxis, not assent (or not merely assent) to some set of propositions concerning a certain kind of value…" (Hamilton 194) There are two things to note in this observation. The first is the moral and theological teleology that Hamilton rightly discerns in Weil, the kind of which we have seen all over Roots. The goal of education in Weil cannot be, as Roberts suggests, merely attention (321). Attention has ends, and those ends are a function of a virtuous cultivation that leads to a cultural and individual relationship with God. The deep theological context in which Weil's educational ideal occurs then firmly opposes the sort of interpretation of Roberts.

Let us explore two key instances of his reading of Weil. He writes, "The term "soul" [in Weil's works] is employed here not in a religious sense but rather as an indication of something deeper, more essential, in higher educational life…" (Roberts 316) That Weil speaks of soul in this way is certain; that she is not using it in a "religious sense" in Roots is manifestly not the case. Consider her resolute emphasis on the importance of religious ontology to education: "The science of the soul and social science are one and the other completely impossible if the notion of supernatural is not rigorously defined and introduced into science…" (Weil 1213) Weil gives a more precise note on supernatural reality earlier in Roots: "Supernatural mechanisms are at least rigorous as the law of the fall of bodies…supernatural mechanisms are the conditions of the production of pure good as such. This is confirmed by the practical experience of saints." (1193)

> Further domesticating Weil's theological dimensions, Roberts suggests that
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> In her later writings, Weil makes frequent reference to 'God', in a manner that can be uncomfortable or off-putting for those working in secular disciplines in the university. She also speaks elsewhere (Weil, 2002) of the 'needs of the soul'. Her use of such terminology is, however, built upon a broader platform of

philosophical understanding, and her comments on matters of faith are likewise of importance well beyond the theological sphere. Education is one domain in which this is readily apparent (Roberts 317)

First, I take Hamilton's "discomfort" to be just the sort of effect that Weil's untimely meditations are supposed to evoke. As in the citation from Roots I last quoted, science must learn to re-appropriate supernatural and spiritual knowledge, however uncomfortable the process may be. Secondly, Weil's "philosophical platform" is indeed "broad", encompassing Christian, Greek, and Eastern schools of thought. But to associate breadth of theological thought with an outgrowing of that thought is not demonstrated by Roberts and I find no evidence of it in Weil. Rather, Roots boldly calls for an eventual reconciliation of science and religion: "The spirit of truth can reside in science on the condition that the mobile object of the savant is the love of the object." (Weil 1191) Weil clarifies identity of that spirit: "Real and pure love is through itself the spirit of truth. It is the Holy Spirit." (1186).

Given the overwhelming frequency of such classically religious tropes and themes in Roots, Robert's comment manifestly reflects a way of looking at theologically minded philosophy that perceives theology as something which should eventually be used in order to move "beyond the theological sphere". I hope I have shown in this chapter that if anything, Weil places theological and ethical objects as the telos of education: "until the second half of the Renaissance, there was always universally recognized that there is a method in spiritual things and in all that is related to the good of the soul." (Weil 1144)

We can certainly agree with Roberts that Weil's use of theological nomenclature is nuanced. Future research would do well to attempt to grasp more fully Weil's complex use of the terms "God" and "soul" in her whole corpus. But Roots demonstrates, as we

have seen, a commitment to a theistic world order which is intrinsically ethical and which is the context, material, and end of education as Weil sees it. Furthermore, neither Hamilton nor Roberts derive their observations from Roots but from elsewhere in Weil's writings. This signals a failure to notice the foregrounded theological elements in Roots and their participation with Weil's thoughts on culture and education. The next chapter will examine more closely the ways in which Weil and Nietzsche differ and overlap in often surprising ways on questions of theological and moral teleology. For now, I conclude that Weil at least uses theological nomenclature in Roots such as God and soul in a religious sense. While complex, such usage does not in any way appear to leave behind but rather relies on religious connotation.

We have noticed then that Simone Weil's approach is both formally and thematically similar to Nietzsche's in several ways. First, it is marked by untimeliness, a rhetorical strategy that announces counter cultural ideas to instigate a return to a cultural ideal. I also found that Weil's expansion from Nietzsche's understanding of beauty, truth, and goodness to include justice places a unique emphasis on labor. That expansion both identifies the need for education to address the challenges of restoring the roots of the labor class, and suggests a unique theoretical movement from artistic contemplation to political knowledge in pursuit of justice. Lastly, I suggested that Weil's thinking on education has been misunderstood in some of the secondary literature in that some commentators such as Roberts misunderstand the evidently theological framework in which Weil grounds education's ends. Though we saw to a limited extent how these elements compared and contrasted with Nietzsche's thoughts on culture and education, the next chapter will deepen those connections.

CHAPTER THREE:

Contrast and Convergence in Nietzsche and Weil

In the last chapter, I noted that Weil identifies four sources of cultural corruption. Here again is that passage:

> There are four obstacles separating us from a form of civilization susceptible to being worth something. Our false conception of grandeur; the degradation of the sentiment of justice; our idolatry of money; and the absence in us of religious inspiration. (1164)

In the sixth section of "Schopenhauer", Nietzsche also identifies a fourfold diagnosis of cultural corruption. The parallel invites comparison and provides a logical point of departure for a discussion of Nietzsche and Weil in concert.

3.1 Forces of Cultural Corruption Compared

Nietzsche names four forces that all may lead to what he terms "misemployed and appropriated culture." (164) Those adjectives suggest a culture that has been debased from its intrinsic ends and instead serves the goal of some usurping force. This helps explain why Nietzsche categorizes all four of these forces as classes of a common category: greed. First, there is the greed of the "the money-makers" (164); secondly, the greed of the state (165). Thirdly, Nietzsche names the greed of those who pursue culture to obscure a perception of internal emptiness or "ugly and boring content" within themselves. Lastly, there is the greed of the "sciences" and "men of learning." (169)

An understanding of cultural corruption relies on a positive concept of a culture, something that can be corrupted from its original state. While I have pointed to the ways

in which both Nietzsche and Weil positively conceive culture, we ought to here consider Nietzsche's explicit discussion of culture in section six of "Schopenhauer". There, he nuances his thinking on cultural genius from earlier in the essay by suggesting that "culture is the child of each individual's self-knowledge and dissatisfaction with himself. Anyone who believes in culture is thereby saying, 'I see above me something higher and more human than I am: let everyone help me to attain it.'" (162) This process of recognizing and pursuing a higher form of humanity in oneself is the bedrock of Nietzsche's positive definition of culture. He names the process the "first consecration to culture". The language evokes baptism, belonging to something profound, undergoing rites of initiation. Such a consecration, Nietzsche explains, produces a culture constituted by people who collectively come to "resemble a field over which is scattered the most precious fragments of sculpture where everything calls to us: come, assist, complete, bring together what belongs together, we have an immeasurable longing to become whole." (163)

This image is perhaps Nietzsche's most explicit formulation of what properly drives and constitutes authentic culture. Culture is the pursuit of human wholeness, a reality that is entered into through a communal process of becoming towards increasingly higher models of human excellence. It is critical then to note that culture has, in Nietzsche's account, an intrinsic purpose, one ordered towards the needs of human beings. That purpose intrinsic to culture is expressly concerned with the need of a human being as an end in itself, and not with respect to any extrinsic goal that might be imposed on a human being. In light of such an understanding of culture, we may now better appreciate the way in which Nietzsche frames corrupt culture as "misemployed" and

"appropriated." Each of the four greeds arise from persons or groups who seek to use culture for ends other than the pursuit of human wholeness, culture's one intrinsic end in Nietzsche's account. Let us consider how these four categories compare and contrast with Weil's own understanding of cultural debasement.

A clear region of overlap locates itself between Nietzsche's category of the greed of money-makers and Weil's indictment of the idolatry of money. The language itself helps to clarify and compliment the thinking of each writer. Idolatry suggests an ersatz, the replacement of something authentic with something else, in this case money. Nietzsche's use of "greed" helps to clarify the vicious source of that idolatry. Secondly, Nietzsche and Weil are also mutually concerned with the way in which the state can warp the goals of culture to its own ends. Both writers are keen to demonstrate the state's propensity for valuing its own preservation over the good of the people to whom it should serve. We will return shortly to this point in the context of both writers' discourse on justice.

I thirdly suggest that Weil's category of "false perception of grandeur" is situated in territory occupied by the greed of the falsely civilized in "Schopenhauer". In the case of the latter, Nietzsche suggests that some people- whether through vice, ignorance, or some combination - surround themselves with cultural artifacts to appear 'cultivated' when in fact they are merely masking a deficiency of interesting humanity inside themselves. He likens this practice to an elaborate exercise in perfuming the body: "They soak themselves in all the spices of the Orient and the Occident, and to be sure! they now smell very interesting…" ("Schopenhauer" 166) But in failing to appropriate the cultural experiences with which they lavish their external forms, these people miss any occasion

for realizing the sorts of internal changes that true culture is meant to cause in humans. Instead, the human pursuit of wholeness is supplanted by a project of appearances that is categorically incapable of satisfying the deepest human needs.

While Weil's "false perception of grandeur" is meant to point to a large social phenomenon, it similarly describes a preoccupation with appearances and external form that misses or ignores the true importance of culture to aid in the pursuit of human flourishing. Grandeur, the virtue whose corruption is the false sense of grandeur, is the state of a culture rooted in goodness, beauty, truth and justice. This is never stated outright as a definition, but Weil makes the suggestion pervasively through her several examples of false grandeur, characterized by a large social disconnection with the transcendentals. In example, she writes that we must deprive "the little boys parched for grandeur" (1169) of Hitler's example, which she associates with the archetype of all false grandeur- the Roman Empire. Weil points to other examples in cultural history where she sees such an appetite for false grandeur manifesting itself in the positive valuation of talent without consideration for the ethical value of the cultural artifact, be it artistic, scientific, or other:

> How will a child who sees cruelty and ambition glorified in history lessons; in science all the discoveries that have overturned the lives of men; how will he learn to admire the good? All that tries to go against this very general current rings false. In the atmosphere of false grandeur, it is vain to want to find the truth again. It is necessary to disdain the false grandeur. (1173)

Rather than cultivating a people who learns to recognize and value the good, the false sense of grandeur produces a society that values things like physical strength, prowess, and vice. Like Nietzsche's externally cultivated people, those committed to the idea of false grandeur have confused some kind of material, visible model of cultural

'achievement' with the true ends of culture that serve metaphysical needs by both Nietzsche and Weil's accounts. How then does this false grandeur spread in a culture? Weil proposes a revelatory answer. Right after the citation above, she writes

> It is true that talent has no link with morality; but this is just because there is no grandeur in talent. It is false that there are no links between perfect beauty, perfect truth, and perfect justice; there is more than merely links. There is a mysterious unity, because the good is one. (1174)

The worship of talent without any concern for the ethical ends of culture is implicitly understood here as a failure to appreciate and order culture around the unity of the good in its various attributes of beauty, truth and justice. Such an implication recalls Weil's pervasive invocation of justice, beauty, truth, and goodness. I noted in the last chapter that Weil rotates those four elements in various groupings, a practice that reinforces their perceived unity. Now in the citation above, those four elements form a unity whose fragmentation is implied to be the cause of various forms of cultural debasement. I think we may accurately formulate Weil's thesis another way: when the state and corporations pursue their own institutional goods in place of the metaphysical ends of humans, they demonstrate a deliberate or ignorant fragmentation of the unity of beauty, truth, and justice. As we saw, such fragmentation accounts for the production of a culture that values physical and political force over the transcendent reality of beauty, truth and justice (1173).

At this juncture, we may rightly wonder if Nietzsche's essay has nothing to say on justice. It would appear that Nietzsche's artist-saint-philosopher cultural ideal has no discussion of the just. Not only is this not the case, but the particular manner in which Nietzsche introduces justice into his discourse on culture reveals at once the greatest

similarity and distinction between his thinking articulated in "Schopenhauer" and that of Weil in The Need for Roots.

3.2 Justice in "Schopenhauer"

Recalling Nietzsche's discussion of artists, saints and philosophers, I summarize that culture is--in one of its iterations in "Schopenhauer"--a human endeavor to contemplate, represent, understand, and engage beauty, truth and goodness. In this model, truth, beauty and goodness are not contingent on human participation or approval. Those who have been "consecrated" to this culture demonstrate the longing spoken of in this passage: "Science is related to wisdom as virtuousness is related to holiness; it is cold and dry, it has not love and knows nothing of a deep feeling of inadequacy and longing." (169) In opposition, greedy states, money makers, scientists, and culture snobs all subvert or corrupt the true purpose of culture in a common way: they all try to possess the objects of culture (beauty, truth and goodness) rather than allow them to nourish the human being and inaugurate a process of becoming whole. Nietzsche's particular understanding of corruption then belies a likewise particular notion of the nature of truth, beauty and goodness; first, that they are not commodities that can be possessed; secondly, that they are the object of human need, demonstrated in our longing for them. By Nietzsche's account, the objects of true culture satiate. They are not the stuff of a vending machine that produces objects that humans eat and drink over and over again. They satisfy, and so do not require marketing or advertising because they are not for sale.

Truth, beauty and goodness perpetually renew human wholeness by virtue of being fulfilling. They do not continually transmit themselves as consumer products that

humans have to go back for like an addiction, despite the best efforts of states, corporations, snobs, and greedy professors. For Nietzsche, this feature distinguishes authentic culture from "misemployed" culture. The later, in all four of its forms, creates a dependency that only exists because human need is not being fulfilled. If it were, humans would not keep buying the product or serving the greedy state or greedily decorating themselves or pursuing their own scholarly vanity. All of these relationships are made possible by the dissatisfaction inherent to their methods for pursuing satisfaction. Conversely, true culture pursues beauty, truth and goodness as ends in themselves. Those who "consecrate" themselves to culture set themselves to becoming whole by an ongoing encounter with beauty, truth, and goodness, not a transaction that guarantees their possession as objects of pleasure.

But Nietzsche adds that true cultural activity is not totally disinterested. Rather, the supreme motivating force of true learning is "the impulse to justice"[16]. This impulse is the thirteenth and last entry in a list of desires that can motivate the learning of a "scholar". It is also the only desire on the list that Nietzsche understands to be good. In fact, the text venerates justice: "I append this last number [justice] with the pious hope that this impulse is more common and influential among scholars than it appears to be." (173) What follows after is one of the most important passages in the essay:

> For a spark from the fire of justice fallen into the scholar's soul suffices to
> rekindle and purify his life and strivings, so that he no longer knows any rest and

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[16]Like Weil, Nietzsche resists definitions. Accordingly, we find no explicit analysis of 'justice' as a single idea throughout "Schopenhauer". There are more extended passages on justice in "On the Uses and Disadvatages of History for Life", but they do little to help in the pursuit of a Nietzschean definition of justice. I invite the reader to consult section s 3, 7, and 8 of that essay for passages that resonate with and echo the insistence on the profound importance of justice to cultural praxis in the *Meditations*, as in this passage: "Only insofar as the truthful man possesses the unconditional will to justice is there anything great in that striving for truth which is everywhere so thoughtlessly glorified." ("On the Uses and Disadvantages" 88-89).

is forever expelled from the lukewarm or frosty mood in which scholars usually accomplish their daily work. (173)

This passage situates the pursuit of justice at the top of a hierarchy of motivating desires for scholarly activity. It also suggests that justice is the end of true learning. This is noteworthy first because Nietzsche does not suggest that cultural activity should seek to be disinterested or unmotivated. Instead, culture ought to be driven by the pursuit of justice. According to Nietzsche, purely disinterested learning is the poisonous vice characteristic of "science" and exhibited by the greed of "men of learning" and "scholars". The suggestion is that when true culture loses the impulse to justice as its motor, it becomes the lesser practice of science which is now debased from its final cause. Nietzsche argues that such a debasing movement also replaces the methods of learning inherent to true learning: "it is very advisable to examine and dissect the men of learning themselves for once, since they for their part are quite accustomed to laying bold hands on everything in the world, even the most venerable things, and taking them to pieces." (169) "Science", then, as the ersatz of true culture, dissects the venerable.

The second noteworthy element in the passage cited above is Nietzsche's metaphor of the impulse to justice as a spark corresponding to the fire of justice itself. The imagery suggests that justice has a purifying effect on the scholar's whole person and his activity of learning. I draw attention to the distinction between the life of the learner and his activities. Nietzsche claims that the impulse to justice will indeed purify both, but perhaps by listing "life" before "strivings" in the text, Nietzsche suggests that the renewal of the learner's whole life precedes the transformation of his or her learning activity or scholarly praxis. This interpretation is in keeping with Nietzsche's understanding of culture as that which makes humans whole. Human fulfillment involves a process of

making whole that which is separate or fragmented in the human, and true culture is in pursuit of that wholeness. Justice, then, does not merely change a scholar's pursuit of the truth. Rather, the change in the pursuit is a manifestation of a change in the human soul caused by justice.

I propose that Nietzsche's discourse on justice in the sixth section of "Schopenhauer" intersects with his earlier account of artists, saints, and philosophers from section five. As I noted, justice is in Nietzsche's account a metaphysical reality, and the impulse towards it positively transforms human life and learning. We have, however, already encountered metaphysical realities towards which true cultural activity ought to direct itself—beauty, truth, and goodness- the ends of the activities of artists, philosophers, and saints. How then does Nietzsche understand the relationship between justice and the previously introduced group of beauty, truth, and goodness? Why is justice introduced later in the essay in isolation from rather than in concert with these other metaphysical realities?

I suggest the answer lies in Nietzsche's aforementioned distinction between the purification of the soul and of the scholarly activity. What that process accomplishes is the death of the "scholar", "scientist" or "man of learning" and his rebirth into the true cultural genius of the philosopher. Furthermore, Nietzsche suggests that the purification of the soul by justice is a process that applies itself to the saint and artist as well when, later in this same discourse in section six, he uses the more general term "genius" to encompass all three cultural archetypes: "geniuses and scholars have at all times been at odds with one another. For the latter want to kill, dissect, and understand nature, while the former want to augment nature with true living nature." (174) While genius is

opposed specifically to the scholar in this passage, Nietzsche's consistently employs genius throughout "Schopenhauer" as a term that includes the true cultural activity of artists, saints, and philosophers.

I suggest that Nietzsche isolates justice because he understands it to have a different role in the life of the cultural genius than do beauty, truth, and goodness. The impulse to justice purifies the human soul and as a consequence restores a human's capacity for exercising the activity of his or her genius—be that artistic, saintly or philosophical. Consequently, justice plays a role in the cultural praxis of all three types of genius. The artist, saint and philosopher all require the effects of justice in the soul as a precondition of the proper functioning of their genius. While the artist, saint and philosopher each preferentially "specialize" in the cultivation of beauty, truth, and goodness, they must all ground their genius in the "impulse to justice," which Nietzsche implies is the condition for true cultural activity.

What Nietzsche has done is to make the ethical reality of justice the ground of true culture. The pursuit of human wholeness through the cultivation of beauty, truth and goodness is only finally meaningful when the entire endeavor is moved in its participants by a longing for justice. The resultant portrait of culture is one where the cultural genius of artists, philosophers, and saints is motivated by a thirst for justice. And since Nietzsche understands culture as that which fulfills the human longing for wholeness, it follows from his account that beauty, truth, goodness, and justice are all metaphysical realities whose engagement by humans aids in their quest to achieve wholeness.

3.3 *Weil's Politicized Account of* Justice

Nietzsche asserts that "A new degree of culture would instantly revolutionize system of human pursuits." ("Schopenhauer" 193) Weil, too, seems interested throughout The Need for Roots with a total revitalization of culture. But her own account of culture will not separate the just from the political. She insists on maintaining that politics is necessarily a part of culture given justice's unity with truth, beauty and goodness: "But why should politics, which decides the fate of peoples and has justice for its object, demand less attention than art and science, which have for objects the beautiful and the true?" (1162) Like Nietzsche, she perceives the powerful ways in which culture may be misguided and commandeered by political organizations. But unlike Nietzsche, Weil is convinced that those organizations must be theoretically and practically associated with a meaningful account of culture, one that takes seriously the interconnectedness of artistic and philosophical production with political activity.

As I have shown, the principal arena of Weil's political focus is the life of the worker. Working politics is not just a theoretical preoccupation, though, but an enormous constituency of people who are in particular need of cultural resources to counter the corrupting forces which Nietzsche and Weil commonly identify in the state and the power structures of industrial economies. I recall that this uprooting is a distancing of people from those pathways that ensure access to the nourishment of their cultural heritage. Furthermore, that uprooting is an instance of injustice in Weil's eyes. Injustice requires action, and it is cultural revitalization that Weil offers up as the prognostic tool for repealing those grievances: "Insofar as human language is far from divine beauty, and

so far as the sensible and intellectual faculties of men are far from the truth, so far are the needs of the social life from justice." (1163)

If Nietzsche assigns justice a foundational role in his cultural ideal, and he does, it cannot be said to develop explicitly political dimensions. He does not demonstrate the same concern for the working classes because his understanding of culture does not force him into a discourse on politics and the cultural life of the working class. This is hardly grounds to suggest Nietzsche harbors malign thinking towards the working classes, but the text does confirm an opposition of politics to culture:

> It will probably be increasingly the sign of spiritual superiority from now on if a man takes the state and his duties towards it lightly; for he who has the furor philosophicus within him will no longer have time for the *furor politicus…*(181)

Nietzsche does make an amendment in the next sentence in affirming the spiritual man's commitment to his country under certain circumstances: "he will not hesitate for a moment to be at his place when his fatherland experiences a real emergency." (181) We do not know what Nietzsche might consider such an emergency beyond warfare. But even a broad gloss of this amendment could not reasonably make room for the sort of political action that Weil demonstrates in Roots, not in the context of Nietzsche's expressed distaste for the furor politicus. Accordingly, we can notice with confidence that Weil's metaphysic of justice, beauty, truth, and goodness encourages an account of culture that incorporates the political life into itself in a way that Nietzsche's otherwise very similar cultural ethos does not.

3.4 The Justice of the Kallipolis: A Road Forward

The major source of contention between Weil and Nietzsche's cultural models occurs in their contrasting treatments of justice and its association with beauty, truth and goodness. Accordingly, this final section aims to tease out the significance of that contrast. To throw this contrast into relief, I propose to examine Nietzsche and Weil alongside the progenitor of all such cultural philosophy: Plato, specifically through his Republic. While I make no claim to fully explore Plato's own attitude towards justice, politics and culture in Republic, I find it useful to hold up Weil and Nietzsche's respective accounts of culture next to Plato's own in order to tease out the most significant contrasting elements in Weil and Nietzsche. First, like Nietzsche and Weil, Plato is concerned in Republic with imagining culture as being rooted in justice by virtue of its cultivation of just philosophers. One illustration for this model occurs during the Allegory of the Cave in which Socrates puts the following question to Glaucon. Referring to those philosophers who have experienced the light of the Good and return to the cave, Socrates asks

> Do you think it's surprising, since his sight is still dim, and he hasn't yet become accustomed to the darkness around him, that he behaves awkwardly and appears completely ridiculous if he's compelled, either in the courts or elsewhere, to contend about the shadows of justice or the statues of which they are the shadows and to dispute about the way these things are understood by people who have never seen justice itself? (517d)

The passage highlights the clear influence of Republic on the thinking of both Weil and Nietzsche. Here, Plato places justice in the realm of formal knowledge illuminated by the sun itself, the form of the good. Such a model is a clear antecedent of both Weil and Nietzsche's high evaluation of justice in their respective cultural imaginations.

Secondly, Plato is also explicitly concerned with imagining how a just culture does or does not involve politics, particularly for the life of the philosopher. Ultimately, Republic offers up two seemingly opposed conclusions about how politics and philosophy relate to one another. First, there is the suggestion that the true philosopher distances himself from politics, even distaining political activity. Socrates expresses this view clearly in Book VI when he dialogues with Adiemantus:

> Then there remains, Adiemantus, only a very small group who consort with philosophy in a way that's worthy of her: A noble and well brought-up character, for example, kept down by exile, who remains with philosophy according to his nature because there is no one to corrupt him, or a great soul living in a small city, who disdains the city's affairs and looks beyond them. (496b)

Socrates clearly contrasts the life of the philosopher with the political life of the city. Hannah Arendt sums up this perspective well when she write that "One thing is certain: it is only in Plato that concern with the eternal and the life of the philosopher are seen as inherently contradictory and in conflict with the striving for immortality, the way of life of the citizen, the bios politikos." (Arendt, 20) This alleged Platonic distinction would appear to be the source of Nietzsche's own opposition of the furor politicus with the furor philosophicus. For Nietzsche, the cultural genius of the philosopher has no interest in political life, nor does Socrates's philosopher model. In the case of the later, the explicit reason for such abstention is the constant threat that political life poses to the just character of the individual philosopher. During the same dialogue with Adiemantus, Socrates asserts that

> like someone who takes refuge under a little wall from a storm of dust or hail driven by the wind, the philosopher- seeing others filled with lawlessness- is satisfied if he can somehow lead his present life free from injustice and impious acts and depart from it with good hope, blameless and content. (496d-e)

Does Nietzsche have the same moral concerns in mind when he sets politics apart from philosophy? "Schopenhauer" does not suggest so. However, there may be an echo of Socrates's concerns in "Schopenhauer" insofar as Nietzsche is actively concerned with protecting the genius of the philosopher. We may assert that Nietzsche does sense that the affairs of politics may distract or corrupt from the contemplative life of the philosopher.

However, Socrates crucially modifies his assessment of the philosopher's role in politics in Book VII when he notes, "Can you name any life that despises political rule besides that of the true philosopher?...But surely it is those who are not lovers of ruling who must rule, for if they don't, the lovers of it, who are rivals, will fight over it." (521b) Rather than suggesting that philosophers ought to categorically avoid all political activity, Socrates seems to advocate their civic involvement as leaders. Other passages echo this same complication, such as this pivotal pronouncement by Socrates, also from Book VII:

> And once they've seen the good itself, they must each in turn put the city, its citizens, and themselves in order, using it as their model. Each of them will spend most of his time with philosophy, but, when his turn comes, he must labor in politics *and rule for the city's sake,* not as if he were doing something fine, but rather something that has to be done. Then, having educated others like himself to take his place as guardians of the city, he will depart for the Isles of the Blessed and dwell there. (540, my emphasis)

By Socrates's account, then, the philosopher has a moral obligation to engage in political activity. He must do this because he is uniquely qualified for this service as a function of his just character. Since justice is, as the Allegory of the Cave suggests, that which must guide the state, the most just people—that is, the philosophers—ought to be the city's leaders. At the heart of such an understanding lies the idea according to which the good of the state, of the ordered social group, is something worth the sacrifice of the

philosopher's time, energy and resources. Whatever may be said of Nietzsche and Plato's shared ground, we cannot assert that Nietzsche shares this understanding of the philosopher. His genius, like that of the artist and saint, does not serve a cultural model that prioritizes the good of the city. The general well-being of the larger population is not something that finds itself present in Nietzsche's cultural ideal.

In contrast, I argue that this is precisely what Simone Weil's cultural model accomplishes. We have already seen how Roots is pervasively concerned with the right order of the state, education for all social demographics, and the particular political plights of the working and farmer classes. For Weil, these concerns form the heart of her cultural paradigm, apparent in this passage cited earlier: "But why would politics, which decides the destiny of peoples and has justice as its object, demand less attention than art or science, which have beauty and truth as objects?" (1162). According to Weil, the 'destiny of peoples' and justice are mentioned in the same thought, indicating a clear association. The close proximity of the ideas in the same clause reveals the deep connectedness of these two realities in Weil's account. Concerning education, Weil similarly opens her scope to consider the whole of society: "A method of education is no big large thing if it does not have the conception of a certain human perfection for inspiration. When it is a question of the education of a people, this conception must be of a civilization."(1163) Like Plato, Weil insists on thinking in terms of social wholes, perceiving the intrinsically political dimensions of justice since justice necessarily affects the lives of everyone in a society[17].

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[17]Any reader of Plato is alive to the tense task of interpreting *Republic* politically. The description of the Kallipolis is, finally, a metaphor for the soul itself. Yet the political dimensions of *Republic* are too explicit to be entirely symbolic, and in any case, they provide a helpful point of comparison in the way I have used them here.

It is worthwhile and instructive merely to demonstrate Weil's affinity with the Socratic notion of justice and politics. Yet I propose that we can point to Weil's reasoning for such an affinity. It occurs as a consequence of her particular perception of the unity of truth, beauty and goodness, an idea certainly inherited from Plato. She names the importance of such unity to her thinking when she writes "Faith is before all the certitude that the good is one. To believe that there are several distinct and mutually independent goods, like truth, beauty, morality, that is what constitutes the sin of polytheism…" (1185) Since we have already seen throughout Roots the idea of justice noted in concert with the other metaphysical realities in this list, we can rightly conclude that Weil also counts justice as one with beauty, truth and goodness. For Weil, it uniquely follows that, culture, as a complex of fine arts and sciences, must also include politics within its domain. The unity of the just with the good, the true and the beautiful logically demands such an inclusion.

Is Nietzsche, then, guilty of the sin of polytheism by Weil's account? We simply do not possess the resources in "Schopenhauer" to answer the question. However, Nietzsche never explicates or implies a unity of justice with beauty, truth and goodness in terms that logically implicate the political in his cultural ideal. For Nietzsche, the furor philosophicus remains opposed to political activity. The cultural praxis of the artist, philosopher and saint do point to an account of unified beauty, goodness and truth, but that unity does not engage the political, even in those moments when Nietzsche explicitly values justice.

A version of this view is espoused by Cavall, as Lemm notes in her analysis of "Schopenhauer" Interprets the emphasis on Schopenhauer as the "'living man'" (Lemm

20) to be an indicator that Nietzsche ultimately points to the importance of the political life to culture. She further suggests that the second and third consecrations to culture found in "Schopenhauer" move beyond the invitation to self-overcoming as an individual act (Lemm 13). The major flaw as I see in this argument is the inability to assimilate the finality of the previously cited descriptions of the genius of the saint which, as I noted, is the natural terminus of cultural genius by Nietzsche's account. As we saw, that life is characterized in the text by tropes of withdrawal, isolation and eventual dissolution of the ego. This model is, by my view, not reconcilable with any reading of Nietzsche that would assert a cultural politics as we find in Weil.

Furthermore, Lemm's criticism of Cavell's reading of Nietzschean culture as fundamentally concerning individual moral perfection relies on her claim that Cavell is somehow suggesting that the path of moral perfection is incapable of playing itself out in a plurality of particular forms. Lemm sees "responsibility" (12) as determining the particular nature of moral perfection (12). She takes that observation to somehow defeat or undermine Cavell's claim, yet even if one is sympathetic to this reading, the notion that moral perfection is particularly determined is not sufficiently demonstrated to be a counterclaim to Cavell's reading. This concerns us here in the following way. Lemm is the only writer making a case for a reading of "Schopenhauer" that sees Nietzsche's philosophy of culture as one that calls for some sort of political engagement. Yet this reading, along the lines discussed here, does not persuade us away from the interpretation that I have offered here that suggests the finality in "Schopenhauer" of the increasingly individual nature of cultural genius.

I further suggest that Weil's unique account of roots and the relationship of roots to the other needs separates her from Nietzsche. Given Weil's definition of roots as that which provides the social framework for procuring other needs, Weil's cultural model necessarily thrives from social participation. The very nature of the needs themselves, such as public property and punishment, already suggest needs that require the engaged participation of the human community and an explicitly political one at that. And yet by positioning, for example, 'public property'—something that involves political relations— as the need of an individual soul, Weil has effectively suggested that human metaphysical needs are partially realized not only within the material world (property is understood in an explicitly material sense), but within a political context. This radical suggestion is summarized in the opening argument of Weil's section in Roots when she states that "He [each individual human] has a need to receive almost the entirety of his moral, intellectual and spiritual life through the intermediary of those milieus in which he naturally partakes." (1052) Human need is procured by culture, but culture is itself necessarily constituted by a web of political interaction whose proper ethical functioning is the stuff of justice, the same justice whose identity is unequivocally one with beauty, truth and goodness.

Thus, Weil's concern with the spirituality of work, labor rights, and farming culture is not a failure to understand the necessarily rarified nature of art, philosophy and sainthood. Rather, her whole work suggests, these praxes do not exist apart from the political world of justice whose unity with the metaphysical reality of beauty, truth and goodness provide a powerful connection between the political and the cultural. This differing understanding of justice underscores the ultimately contemplative nature of

Nietzschean culture. As I showed before, Nietzsche's understanding of cultural fulfillment as the flowering of individual genius tends towards isolation and solitude. Conversely, Weil's account of culture is foundationally social.

Is there some core argumentative difference in Nietzsche and Weil's reasoning that can essentially account for this difference of cultural understanding? I recall the discussion on Weil's theism. In the last chapter, I showed that Roberts's claims about Weil's religious tones failed to grasp Weil's deep intellectual commitment to theological ways of understanding. Now, we are positioned to fully appreciate the impact of that commitment. Weil's language throughout Roots, like in the rest of her corpus, is openly theistic. But rather than being ideological, her theology forms the logical center of her arguments. First, as we saw in the last citation, the apprehension of the unity of the good requires "faith", a Christian value understood as such throughout Roots. Weil means, I take it, to remind us that this unity is not demonstrable or available for empirical verification, and requires faith as such to postulate its logically necessary existence. Secondly, Weil explicitly identifies the good with God: "it is certainly forbidden to love one's country, in a certain sense of the word love. Because the proper object of love is the good, and 'God alone is good.'" (1110) We also note in this passage that the state has a telos beyond human goals. In fact, the state has a supernatural telos: God. Framed another way, the political action of society is ordered towards a transcendent good in God, a God who is identified as the unified being of beauty, truth, goodness and justice.

Now, one could argue that Weil does not intend a monotheistic God here, that she intends God as a religious symbol for something supra-religious. The text, however, simply does not support this. First, the passage I cited concerning God comes from

Weil's exegesis of a parable in the Gospel of Luke, one among many sympathetic readings of Christian parables. Secondly, Weil's ontology of separate spiritual and earthly realms firmly places her in a Neo-Platonist tradition that identifies God with the supernatural and transcendent:

> Above the earthly realm, carnal, where our thoughts ordinarily move, and which is everywhere an inextricable mix of good and evil, there is found another, the spiritual domain, where the good is only good and, even in the inferior domain, produces only good…It is a direct consequence of faith in God. Absolute good is not only the best of all goods- this would be a relative good- but the unique good, total, which encloses itself…(1152)

Thus, the good is firmly associated with a transcendent metaphysical God that Weil names as the source of beauty, truth, goodness and justice. Such theistic teleology is not present in Nietzsche's writing, though he certainly does, as we have seen, point to the metaphysical telos of human nature. Two lines of thought in Schopenhauer confirm this gloss. The first is Nietzsche's general view of Culture as the fulfillment of human metaphysical needs. Nietzsche does not concern himself with human material needs in his essay, instead upholding the transcendent needs of human nature through his philosopher-artist-saint model. On this count, Weil and Nietzsche share a vision of culture that is primarily in the service of metaphysical human needs.

The second piece of textual evidence for Nietzsche's metaphysical commitment occurs in the passage cited in chapter one in which Nietzsche describes the contemplative life of the saint. Here, I note Nietzsche's imagery of grace:

> Thus he [Schopenhauer] knew half his nature to be satisfied…thus he victoriously fulfilled his calling with greatness and dignity. In the other half there dwelt a burning longing. We comprehend it when we hear that he turned away from a picture of the great founder of La Trappe, Rancé, with the words: 'This is a matter of grace. (143)

Breazeale glosses the passage to remind readers that Rancé was one of the forerunners of the Trappist monastic order, cementing the idea according to which Nietzsche's model of culture deals in transcendental human needs. Finally, the specific citation of Rancé and its reference to grace echoes Nietzsche's description of justice "coming down" into the soul of man. This grace does indeed suggest some metaphysical source that inspires the cultural praxis of Nietzsche's artists, philosophers, and saints. That said, such a source is never identified with theistic language, and certainly avoids the Christian language that Weil employs, as we have seen. Nietzsche may contend that nature is fulfilled in human cultural flourishing, that the "one true purpose" of Nature is finally made whole in culture. Yet this model of natural fulfillment does not engage the same theological teleology that we saw displayed in Roots. For this reason, I conclude that Nietzsche and Weil's cultural ideals distinguish themselves by their differing accounts of the theological goals of human cultural activity.

CONCLUSION

What is culture? If Nietzsche and Weil's writings explored here teach us anything, it must be that the answer is not intuitive. Both writers suggest that the question has real and knowable answers. Both writers suggest that the best model is one that serves human need, needs that are metaphysical in nature and corresponds to the unified beauty, truth and goodness of Plato. Each writer likewise suggests that justice animates these three transcendent realities. Yet for Weil, that justice has deep engagement and value for political activity. The same is not so for Nietzsche, who views cultural fulfillment primarily in the isolated contemplation of the genius. Secondly, Nietzsche's cultural ideal shares Weil's insistence on the metaphysical nature of humanity, and the need of culture to engage and nourish that part of human nature. Nevertheless, Weil ultimately sets herself apart from Nietzsche by her comparatively traditional theological cultural philosophy, one that derives the significance of human culture from its engagement with not merely the world above (the "coast of which the Indians speak") but with the world of God.

In an age in which humanities programs in academia are increasingly undervalued in favor of the "practical" scientific disciplines, we are in urgent need of the wisdom of Nietzsche and Simone Weil. Despite their differences, each seeks to recover a model of culture and education that seeks to serve the essence of human beings. By both of their accounts, that essence is not physical, but rather derives sustenance from a sustained relationship with the transcendental realities of beauty, truth, and goodness. Their wisdom further demonstrates the pernicious nature of so many forms of "sham" culture

that seek to supplant (and uproot) human needs in favor of the greedy desires of all manner of corporations and individuals. Accordingly, Nietzsche and Weil are prophetic voices for any debased culture that has forgotten its roots, roots that link human beings to their final ends in beauty, truth, and goodness. Furthermore, Weil and Nietzsche's differing theological stances enable future research to engage relatively similar cultural philosophies in or outside of a theological framework. This is, I think, one of the chief benefits of this study's findings. It is my hope that future work will deepen the cultural analysis begun here, plumbing both Nietzsche and Weil for their resources both in Weil's theistic view and Nietzsche's non-Christian metaphysics. To do so would be to fulfill Weil's own invocation to cultivate "multiple roots" (1052). Both Simone Weil and Friedrich Nietzsche have become profoundly helpful resources in our own cultural root system, guides that urge the thoughtful back to a cultural understanding that is animated by justice and that seeks as its end the proper flourishing of all humans in their metaphysical need for beauty, truth, goodness.

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