

ABSTRACT

Nietzsche: The “Anti-Political” Thinker

Elan Wilson

Director: Dr. David Corey

Compared to other thinkers in the canon of political philosophy (Hobbes, Mill, Locke, Rousseau), Friedrich Nietzsche is an outlier. His comments on politics are cryptic at times and nearly impossible to organize into an airtight system. This ambiguity has spawned academic dialogues that orbit around the following question: what “flavor” of politics, if any, does Nietzsche’s philosophy promote? From my research, I have discovered four interpretive “camps” that most scholars can fit into: the “Apolitical” camp, the “Aristocratic Distinction” camp, the “Egalitarian” camp, and the “Anti-Political” camp. In this thesis, I will attempt to prove, through both primary and secondary-source evidence, that the Anti-Political camp offers the best lens through which to view Nietzsche’s work. Nietzsche is not concerned with promoting a political paradigm we would recognize (Democracy, Aristocracy, Oligarchy, etc). He is focused on clearing away life-denying iterations of politics to make room for a fresh, life-affirming political reality.

APPROVED BY DIRECTOR OF HONORS THESIS:

Dr. David Corey, Department of Political Science

APPROVED BY THE HONORS PROGRAM:

Dr. Andrew Wisely, Interim Director

DATE: _____

NIETZSCHE: THE “ANTI-POLITICAL” THINKER

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Baylor University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Honors Program

By
Elan Wilson

Waco, Texas

May 2021

CONTENTS

PREFACE – NIETZSCHE IN A CHRISTIAN SETTING – iii

Strength Through Antagonism
Nietzsche’s Perspective on Religion: Hidden Nuances
A Note on Abbreviations

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS – xi

EPIGRAPH – xii

INTRODUCTION – 1

Nietzsche and the “Camps”

CHAPTER ONE – GENEALOGICAL ORIGINS: THE EMERGENCE OF THE MODERN STATE – 16

The Value of Nietzsche’s Genealogy
The Content of Nietzsche’s Genealogy
Nietzsche’s Origin Narrative and the Canon: A Brief Comparison with
Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau

CHAPTER TWO – THE BISMARCK REGIME: A SNAPSHOT OF THE DEGENERATIVE STATE – 31

The Value of Historical Investigation
Bismarck’s Rise to Power
Bismarck’s Post-Unification Agenda
Nietzsche’s Critical Outlook
 Foreign Policy
 Domestic Policy

CHAPTER THREE – REFURBISHING THE STATE AND POLITICS: NIETZSCHE’S RECONSTRUCTIVE PROJECT – 52

Nietzsche’s Problematic Solutions
Nietzsche & Restoration: Four Ideas
Takeaways from Nietzsche’s Solutions

CHAPTER FOUR – THE INNER DOMAIN OF NIETZSCHE’S POLITICS – 73

The Camps as Semi-porous Containers
Nietzsche’s Politics for the Soul

CODA – 83

Turning Over the Rocks

BIBLIOGRAPHY – 91

PREFACE

Nietzsche in a Christian Setting

Strength Through Antagonism

Nietzsche does not pull any punches when it comes to castigating Christianity. He paints it as an illusory and life-denying faith. This prompts a difficult question concerning Christian scholars and Nietzsche's work. Since he openly disparages Christianity, what is the purpose of teaching and digesting his work at a university founded on Christian principles? What is the purpose of giving attention to an anti-Christian in a space where we are tasked with refining and cultivating our faith? This last question, in particular, answers itself. Nietzsche is valuable precisely because his criticisms provide means to strengthen faith. I stumbled upon this ironic truth from my personal journey with Nietzsche. For Nietzsche, antagonism is crucial to living an affirmative life. True overcoming can only be facilitated by seeking out one's strongest enemies and vanquishing them. As such, holding uncontested convictions is life-denying. This practice promotes intellectual stagnation instead of growth: "Unchallenged convictions, Nietzsche maintained, are prisons for those who have not the strength to bear the burden of freedom" (Thiele, 16-17). Though Nietzsche posits overcoming antagonism as a rule

for “free spirits”¹ to follow, there is no reason why this concept cannot be adopted by Christian thinkers (Abbey and Appel, 111).

My first encounters with Nietzsche left a bitter taste in my mouth. Seeing him tear down a faith that had been instilled in me from an early age was disheartening. However, once these initial shocks subsided, I started to approach my readings in a new way. My spiritual system developed an unusual tolerance. I became interested in tracking his thoughts wherever they might lead, despite the fact that I was unconvinced of their truth. Along the way, I started to take stock of thoughts of his that seemed questionable: Is the Christian life incompatible with flourishing, or is it simply flourishing reined in by self-discipline, which Nietzsche approves of (Huddleston, 149)? If Christian morality contradicts our hardwiring, and overcoming challenges is integral to a good life, then wouldn't subscribing to it be a difficult yet rewarding feat? If the task before us is to craft our own table of values for living, why can't a rational understanding of Christianity (cognizant of and open to challenges from competing perspectives) be one of those values? Does Christianity truly demonize rich, wealthy, and powerful individuals or does it forward a different understanding of richness, wealth, and power (housed in the spirit)? Is Christianity truly animated by a spirit of revenge, or is it instead anchored on principles of love, fraternity, and forgiveness (that are not stand-ins for some subterranean drive)?²

¹ Individuals who do not hedge their values in a transcendent reality and manufacture their own values.

² In his book *Why is there Something Rather than Nothing?* Leszek Kolakowski presents a fascinating question concerning Nietzsche's anti-Christian stance: “Nietzsche claims that Christianity is a religion of weakness and fear, hostile to life and power. Can the fact that it triumphed and established its dominion over large swathes of the world be considered a refutation of this claim?” (Kolakowski, 201). This goes to show that Nietzsche's anti-Christian position is far from air-tight. In certain areas, it suffers from leakage.

Drawing out these questions has been rewarding for me. Each one was a result of committed spadework. To come up with them, I had to parse through scripture. I had to brush the dust off the wisdom I had been given from sermons, friends, and family. I had to enter into Nietzsche's mind, searching for nuances he may have missed. The critiques of an anti-Christian lit a spark, paradoxically inspiring me to explore Christianity's textures and complexities all the more. While for some, the exercise of reading Nietzsche seriously may undermine their faith, for me, the exact opposite occurred. It caused me to analyze the foundations of my belief and buttress them. I emerged stronger and more enlightened from the trial. I believe this would never have happened if I gave in to my first visceral reactions and shied away from further investigation. I also believe that my experience is not anomalous. Instead, it is an example of the intellectual growth that can result if Nietzsche is approached from the right angle. If we refrain from preemptively silencing Nietzsche, if we keep our religious convictions close to heart but simultaneously allow his ideas to brush up against them, I believe the resulting friction can be enriching. This exercise will also dodge one of the central critiques Nietzsche hurls at Christianity, namely that it "excises" everything disagreeable in sight, resorting to "castratism" instead of grappling with opposing ideas (Huddleston, 146-147).

Nietzsche's Perspective on Religion: Hidden Nuances

It would be ill-advised to avoid Nietzsche's work because there are hidden nuances to his critique of Christianity. Though these in no way convey that he is secretly in favor of Christianity behind his tough rhetoric, they do display that he had more to say aside from blatant rejection. For example, Nietzsche admired how Christianity served as

a social adhesive and an expedient for power. He acknowledged that it bound people together and created unity. Christianity made the task of ruling easier because norms of obedience were woven into the faith (Abbey and Appel, 108).³ Other faiths, in Nietzsche's view, simply did not pack this sort of punch. Nietzsche also espoused a more positive outlook on the ancient roots of Christianity, even though he detests its modern form. In *The Anti-Christ*, he performs a brief genealogy of Christianity, what he identifies as the "history of Israel" (A, 25). He pinpoints where Christianity began and traces out the changes it experienced over time. Nietzsche looked highly upon ancient Judaism, particularly because of how the Israelites expressed the nature of God:

Originally, particularly in the time of the kings, Israel had a correct, which is to say natural, relation to all things. Its Yahweh expressed a consciousness of power, Israel's joy in itself and hope for itself: Yahweh allowed people to expect victory and salvation, he allowed people to trust that nature would provide what they needed - above all, rain. Yahweh is the god of Israel and consequently the god of justice: the logic of every people that wields power with a good conscience. Festival cults express these two sides of a people's self-affirmation: they are grateful for the magnificent destiny that elevated them to their present position, they are grateful for the yearly cycle and all the luck they have had in agriculture and breeding cattle (A, 25).⁴

Nietzsche thinks this "golden age" ended once the saints began to accrue power and influence in the wake of Jesus's life. They superimposed synthetic doctrines of sin, guilt, and punishment over the ancient Israelite tradition (and the life of Jesus) and sold it to the masses through proselytizing efforts (A, 26).⁵ Figures like St. Paul were integral to this

³ Nietzsche recommended that Christianity be used strategically to pacify certain segments of the population (the lower types) who are granted their own sphere of existence in his re-valued society (Abbey and Appel, 110). This instrumental understanding of religion seems to echo Machiavelli's ideas.

⁴ When he references "festival cults" (A, 25) it seems as if Nietzsche is drawing a bridge of similarity between the Israelites' treatment of Yahweh and the Greeks' relationship with their gods.

⁵ This is one of Nietzsche's central arguments against Christianity in *The Anti-Christ*. Christ was a "bearer of glad tidings" (Ridley, xxiv) who lived a self-directed, virtuous life (he was a self-discoverer of sorts). However, through the efforts of St Paul and others, Christianity tried to systematize the life of Christ into rigid doctrines and moral edicts. This was a disastrous mistake as it prized "conformity *in abstracto* over self-discovery *in concreto*" (Ridley, xxiv).

process. This is why Nietzsche sees the development of ancient Israelite morality as a tragedy. Its history was a tale of how “[a state of] happiness [was] polluted by the concept of ‘sin’” (A, 25).

Nietzsche’s theological stance presents other complexities. Specifically, his contrarian position to religion is more tempered than one would think. In his view, gods are creations of man, not the other way around. Humans invent gods to provide stability and sense to an otherwise unstable world. Gods provide meaning to our sufferings (for example, the Christian adage “this is all a part of God’s plan”) and companionship, both of which allow us to press on through life. In this sense, gods function as existential crutches. Though Nietzsche would prefer that we live life without crutches if we can, he also hints that some crutches are better than others.⁶ For example, Nietzsche applauded the Greek theological tradition in part because the gods were reflections of humanity’s true nature: they had conflicts and quarrels, they strived for power and glory, they were overtaken by passion, greed, and the other raw, human emotions. The Greek gods were not anti-natural constructs, they existed in harmony with nature. The Christian God, in contrast, represented everything contrary to nature: purity (excising the drives and passions), asceticism, self-flagellation, and otherworldliness. Even though Nietzsche disapproves of dependence on gods for meaning, he appears to concede that, if the gods are fashioned in a way that reflects the truth of human nature, they can be life-affirming.⁷ The fact that Nietzsche is anti-Christian but not necessarily anti-religion is also reinforced

⁶ A comment by Kene Gemes inspired me to take this view: “When Nietzsche objects to a thing, for example religion or the will to truth, it is important to place that thing in its relevant context. The point here, one often made by Nietzsche himself, is that something that is dangerous, unhealthy in a given context may well be beneficial in another (cf. BGE 30). Nietzsche is always a local rather than a global thinker” (Gemes, 198).

⁷ This cuts back against the assumption that Nietzsche is an unwavering anti-theist.

by his acceptance of Buddhism.⁸ Nietzsche praises Buddhism for its outlook on suffering (which neatly coincides with his theory of *amor fati*, a mandate to embrace suffering and struggle as constituents of life), among many things:

Buddhism is a hundred times colder, truer, more objective. It no longer needs to make its suffering, its susceptibility to pain respectable by interpreting it as a sin, - it just says what it thinks: 'I suffer' (A, 23).⁹

Nietzsche also praises the Law of Manu, a caste-centered social code instituted in India that was derived from Hindu maxims. This softens the idea that Nietzsche tramples over anything even remotely religious. His approach is far more interesting and subtle. We should recognize that these subtleties exist and be open to exploring them.

A Brief Note on Abbreviations

In this project, I will be referring to Nietzsche's works in a way that approximates academic standards. I derived the following abbreviations from the *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies*,¹⁰ a source that I presumed to be authoritative when it came to citations.

⁸ Nietzsche's anti-Christian stance is not totalizing. There are a few moments, such as in *Daybreak*, where he admires the actions of key figures in the faith. For example, Nietzsche argues that custom and tradition are conservative forces that foreclose innovation, turning us into mere depositories of the past instead of active creators. Interestingly, Jesus made a point of breaking with tradition (openly contesting the Pharisees and the Jewish power structure) through his teachings. This is why Nietzsche labors to establish a distinction between Christ as an individual and Christianity as a faith. Aaron Ridley touches on this in the introduction to *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*: "[Nietzsche's] claim, in a nutshell, is that the church (pre-eminently St Paul) has systematically perverted and distorted Christ's real significance - which lay in how he lived his life - by turning his example into the set of beliefs, doctrines, and dogmas that we know as 'Christianity'" (Ridley, xxii). This leads Nietzsche to an interesting conclusion: "there was really only one Christian, and he died on the cross" (A, 39).

⁹ Nietzsche treats Buddhism preferentially to Christianity at other points: "And this - as I have already pointed out - is the fundamental difference between the two religions of decadence: Buddhism does not promise, it delivers, Christianity promises everything and delivers nothing" (A, 42).

¹⁰ The list of abbreviations can be found here: <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/jns/style-guide/abbreviations-and-citations-of-friedrich-nietzsche2019s-works>.

I will use the abbreviation used by the journal followed by the number of the aphorism I am referencing:

(GM): *On the Genealogy of Morals*

(GS): *The Gay Science*

(Z): *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*¹¹

(TI): *Twilight of the Idols*

(HH): *Human, All Too Human*¹²

(A): *The Anti-Christ*

(GSt): *The Greek State*¹³

(BGE): *Beyond Good and Evil*

(D): *The Dawn of Day (Daybreak)*

¹¹ Since *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is organized differently from the other texts on the list, I will cite using the abbreviation, “Z,” followed by the part of the text I am referencing (I, II, III, or IV), and then the title of the section within the part (for example, “The Child with the Mirror”).

¹² *Human, All Too Human* has two parts. I will reference the second part as “HH II” (this part contains “The Wanderer and His Shadow”).

¹³ For this source, I will use the abbreviation “Gst” followed by the page number as this is a short essay that is not organized aphoristically.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would not have been able to complete this project without the mentorship of my thesis advisor, Dr. Corey. From my first year at Baylor, Dr. Corey has been a tremendous source of inspiration for me. He taught me how to write and abandon pretentious language (this lesson was hammered in by several rough essay grades in my First Year Seminar). He taught me the delicate art of close reading. In his lectures, he always presented political ideas as artifacts to be held, investigated, and applied to modern dilemmas, not dry concepts to be recited and memorized. His classes were intellectually nourishing, so much so that I returned for second, third, and fourth servings (and a fifth serving just for good measure). He stirred up a hunger for understanding that will be with me for the rest of my days. His courses impressed timeless virtues upon my soul (humility, patience, tolerance, the beauty of simplicity) that have been indispensable to my transition from boyhood to manhood. As I kept returning to him, he eventually imparted a gift to me, my first encounter with Friedrich Nietzsche (the *Genealogy of Morality*). This series of lectures planted questions in my mind that drove me to read more and dig deeper. They shed light on segments of Nietzsche's cavern, inspiring me to explore the crevices and tunnels we did not have time to illuminate in class. This marked the beginning of a two-year love affair. It never would have happened without him playing the role of the illuminator, the philosophical shepherd, the teacher. Thank you for helping me mature as a thinker and a human. Thank you for pouring your brilliance into me and teaching me how to convey my own. I am forever in your debt.

"One repays a teacher badly if one always remains nothing but a pupil."
-Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Every profound thinker is more afraid of being understood than of being misunderstood.
-Beyond Good and Evil, Aphorism 290

INTRODUCTION

Nietzsche and the “Camps”

Nietzsche’s stance on politics is contested. Since the 1970s, it has been the subject of numerous debates in academia (Strong, 5). Why do these controversies exist? Tracy Strong suggests that the amorphous nature of Nietzsche’s work is likely responsible: “He seems to write, as David Allison has recently remarked, ‘for you.’ The particular quality of the man’s work seems to lend itself to every appropriation” (Strong, 6). Like soft clay, Nietzsche’s work can take on a number of appearances and shapes depending on the potter’s (the reader) “style” (biases, personal judgments, etc). The conversations I surveyed during my research contained recurring perspectives that I identify as “camps.” Many authors can be grouped into a “camp” based on their outlooks on Nietzsche’s political thinking. Though this grouping process can be obscure at times (for example, there are times when an author draws from multiple camps or hovers awkwardly between camps), it is, nevertheless, an effective tool that can be used to parse through discussions about Nietzsche’s politics.

There are four major camps at play with respect to Nietzsche’s political thinking: the apolitical camp, the aristocratic distinction camp, the egalitarian camp, and the anti-political camp.¹ Before sifting through the camps in search of which one fits Nietzsche, I

¹ These camp titles are my own and are the product of conversations with my thesis mentor. These group names have aided my academic research greatly. There are a few qualifications that need to be made, however. First, not all Nietzsche scholars identify as formal members of a “camp.” Some thinkers are free-floaters who could care less about placing themselves in a well-defined interpretive box. Second, some scholars do identify with a certain “camp” but use a different title for the camp they subscribe to (for example, “non-political” instead of “apolitical”). Though my classification system has helped me personally, it does not capture all the complexities present in academia (I think this is a recurring problem that most classification schemes must deal with).

want to emphasize two things. First, there is a distinction between inadequacy and bankruptcy. In the following analysis, I will explain why some camps do not convey Nietzsche's political ideas in the best way (they are inadequate), but this should not be conflated with saying they are completely bankrupt. Additionally, the camp I believe captures Nietzsche the best should not be perceived as a flawless fit. Instead, it simply aligns with Nietzsche's thinking better when compared against the other camps. In picking which camp to place Nietzsche in, I was concerned with navigating through degrees of error instead of scavenging for the "perfect" camp. Second, this is not an exhaustive list of all of the interpretive boxes that Nietzsche has been placed in. There are a number of fringe perspectives on Nietzsche's political thought. For example, there are some scholars who posit Nietzsche as an anarchist who favors a stateless society (Hunt, 453). Enumerating camps like these would be cumbersome and counterproductive. Instead, I will break down the camps that appeared frequently during my research.

Thinkers in the apolitical camp assert that Nietzsche is occupied with the solitary individual, not placing significance on politics. Nietzsche is concerned with morality, psychology, and self-mastery, not politics. Some members of this camp argue that there are certain thresholds that a corpus must reach in order to count as having a "coherent politics," and that Nietzsche fails to satisfy these standards (Drochon, 155). Others argue that there is a distinction between referencing political events and being a political thinker, and that Nietzsche falls into the former category (van Tongeren, 70). The consensus of this camp is that Nietzsche is more concerned with the self and less concerned with the chatter of political affairs; his work generally withdraws from political questions instead of approaching them. Scholars who adopt this position include

Walter Kaufmann,² Bernard Williams, Brian Leiter, Leslie Paul Thiele, Martha Nussbaum, Jeremy Fortier, and Alexander Nehamas. A close relative of the apolitical camp is the supra-political camp, which argues that Nietzsche transcends the question of politics altogether (this camp is populated by thinkers such as Paul van Tongeren and Isabelle Wienand). He is philosophizing at a higher level of abstraction. Some hypothesize that the apolitical camp gained popularity to rescue Nietzsche from the charges of being a Nazi propagandist (Abbey and Appel, 113).³

I find this camp inadequate for two reasons. First, I find it wrong to assume that simply because Nietzsche does not meet certain criteria of political theorizing that he is silent on the question of politics. He may not address politics in a manner we are accustomed to, but that is because he conveys his ideas using a unique grammar. Nietzsche can be a profoundly political thinker, even if he does not appear to be relative to the traditional metrics of political philosophy. Second, the camp ignores how individualism can have a political dimension. For example, Nietzsche argues that self-mastery does not occur in a vacuum. It has a communal dimension. Nietzsche says that individuals who tend to themselves as works of art experience a great amount of joy (Ure, 15). This joy does not remain bottled up within the self, it overflows into the surrounding community, giving the self-cultivator the chance to share joy with others: “And if we learn to enjoy ourselves better, then we forget best how to hurt others and plot hurt for

² Interestingly, in *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Walter Kaufman situates Nietzsche as an anti-political thinker, but he equates this with not being political at all. This goes to show that some scholars mean different things when they say Nietzsche is “anti-political.” In Kaufman’s situation, when he describes Nietzsche as “anti-political”, he functionally means the same thing as when I refer to Nietzsche as “apolitical.” This is why assembling a classification system for Nietzsche scholars is so arduous.

³ For if Nietzsche was not concerned much with politics, this would disassociate him from the political establishment of the Nazi’s.

them” (Z, II, *Of the Pitying*). In other words, becoming exceptional generates the capacity to appreciate and value the exceptional qualities of others. In this view, the great individual appears far less reclusive; they are in fraternal friendship with other like-minded greats. Nietzsche also thinks that self-cultivation creates a communal ripple effect. Not only does it allow us to appreciate others who are self-cultivators themselves, it inspires individuals who are not self-cultivators to become so. Nietzsche hints at this in *Daybreak* when he writes:

In the meantime even the question remains unanswered whether we are of more use to our neighbour in running immediately and continually to his help,—which for the most part can only be done in a very superficial way, as otherwise it would become a tyrannical meddling and changing,—or by transforming ourselves into something which our neighbour can look upon with pleasure,—something, for example, which may be compared to a beautiful, quiet, and secluded garden, protected by high walls against storms and the dust of the roads, but likewise with a hospitable gate (D, 174).

In this view, Nietzsche appears to have a two-pronged philosophy of neighborhood: becoming a self-cultivator allows us to value other self-cultivators and inspire a generation of new ones. In sum, the great individuals are wrapped up in a network of unique, uplifting relationships.⁴ This makes the “solitary philosopher” title harder to pin on Nietzsche because the community and the relation of the individual to the other (which are politically freighted ideas) factor into his philosophy of greatness. However, this camp does hold some valuable insights, which I will touch on in my final chapter.

Members of the aristocratic distinction camp contend that Nietzsche favors a concrete system of rank between individuals, what he references at various points as a “pathos of distance” (GM, 26). His ideal political structure, thus, would resemble an

⁴ This functions as a good counter-argument to those who presume Nietzsche’s individualist thinking lacks an ethical sensibility (i.e. it opens the floodgates to immoral and tyrannical behavior).

aristocracy with clear distinctions between higher and lower classes. Some scholars who have adopted this framework, at least partially, include Daniel Conway, Bruce Detwiler, George Kateb, Ruth Abbey, and Frederick Appel.

Though this camp is backed by solid evidence, there are several reasons why it fails to capture Nietzsche's political outlook. First, it is possible to hold aristocratic *values* while not being in favor of a formally structured aristocratic *society*. As long as this possibility exists, I am uncomfortable with formally declaring Nietzsche as an aristocrat. Second, I believe this camp is essentialist. It boxes Nietzsche in a way that crowds out other aspects of his thinking. For example, Bismarck, the Prime Minister of Germany in Nietzsche's time, championed aristocratic values. As a member of Prussia's landed nobility, Junker values were instilled in him from a young age. The fact that he strongly opposed socialist calls for equality during his political career suggests that these values stuck with him; he was a lifelong defender of hierarchical ordering. Yet this did not stop Nietzsche from bombarding him with criticism. I see this as evidence against the aristocratic distinction camp. If Nietzsche was a die-hard aristocrat, he arguably should have looked upon Bismarck far more favorably. Additionally, the nuances in Nietzsche's critique of the German state suggest that aristocracy plays a smaller theoretical role than some would assume. For example, Nietzsche disapproved of the state's obsession with militarization, its meaningless religious factionalism, and the way it hooked its citizens on the opiates of nationalism and racism (Drochon, 157-159). Nietzsche's criticism did not "check out" after the aristocracy question. It did not formulaically declare Bismarck's state as broken on the simple fact that it was not an aristocracy. There were other questions and issues that underscored his critique. These could have been seen as more

important than or of equal importance to the aristocracy question in Nietzsche's eyes. Though aristocracy might play a role in the evolution of Nietzsche's political ideas, it is not a dispositive criterion (it is not the "game-ender" or the single lens he consults before he passes judgement).⁵ The aristocratic distinction camp covers a good portion of Nietzsche's thinking, but leaves some important areas exposed.

Lastly, I find this camp insufficient because at no point does Nietzsche actually commit to a concrete political structure (which an aristocracy happens to be). He sketches out ways politics can be restored, but this falls short of laying down a formal political paradigm (as in monarchy, oligarchy, democracy, republic, etc). The gap between a formal political paradigm and Nietzsche's political comments has invited many speculations, but perhaps Nietzsche never wanted this gap to be bridged in the first place. I am persuaded by Graham Howell's statement that, "Nietzsche does not ...clearly articulate a best regime, which reconciles political order with philosophy" (7). There is a strong chance that, instead of endorsing a formal aristocracy, Nietzsche approves of it as an "underlying value orientation" (Clark, 7). Nietzsche seems to stand behind aristocracy as a mentality (an approach to living and synthesizing values) instead of a set-in-stone structure that needs to be dragged from the past into the future.

There is a sub-camp to the aristocratic distinction camp that views Nietzsche's politics more contemptuously, the fascism camp.⁶ This camp holds a moral charge that the aristocratic distinction camp lacks. Members of the aristocratic distinction camp take

⁵ Nor is "aristocracy" the only facet of Nietzsche's solution to political life. Nietzsche wants to accomplish far more than merely returning to the aristocratic ages of the past (this would make him a sort of reactionary). This will be unpacked more thoroughly in Chapter 3.

⁶ I used the term "Fascism" because it is morally freighted. It elicits visceral feelings of disgust and contempt, largely because it reminds of us the abhorrent conditions of Germany, Italy, and Spain in WW2. I chose a morally freighted term because this camp is saturated with moral rhetoric.

a sobered approach to Nietzsche's stance on hierarchies and the "pathos of distance" (GM, 26). In contrast, members of the fascism camp spotlight these ideas as proofs of Nietzsche's complicity with oppression and injustice. Their writings are tinged with indignation and disapproval. An example of a thinker who adopts this view is Aret Karademir who argues that:

...Nietzschean politics is exclusionist in the sense that Nietzsche abhors the possibility of intermingling different social strata with each other and denies the socially underprivileged groups the possibility of self-transformation and self-improvement. (Karademir, 1)

Many academics who sympathize with the left tend to view Nietzsche in this light. For example, some feminist theorists have declined to engage with his corpus because of its misogyny (Clark, 3).⁷ All in all, these thinkers argue that Nietzsche's ideal political structure, if he has one, would be stratified in a way that degrades equality and human dignity. A thinker of this camp who has attracted a lot of academic attention is Malcolm Bull.

I find this camp unpersuasive for several reasons. First, I believe there is a tension between oppression and Nietzsche's (untainted) idea of greatness. For Nietzsche, the excellent are self-legislators (Thiele, 42). They do not scavenge for values outside of themselves. They do not use an external crutch to stabilize their being. Instead, their concept of self is a kernel that is lodged inside of them. If Nietzsche were a proponent of oppression, this theory would fall apart. This is because an oppressor generates their value through an external object: the oppressed. Their existence is solely a negation of

⁷ This is interesting, considering the fact that Nietzsche's arguments about perspectivism (i.e. that there are no absolute truths) could be tools that further the deconstruction of patriarchy, an artificial, man-made system that poses as an objective fact of nature (Solga, 13). Some early feminists, such as Meta von Salis (one of Nietzsche's many caretakers during his decline in health) caught onto this and were drawn to his works for this reason.

another (*not* a slave, *not* a woman, *not* a pauper, etc.), but this falls short of a positive affirmation of identity, which takes place “[neither] with [nor] before others” (Thiele, 21). Andrew Huddleston succinctly captures this idea in his distinction between “active” will to power and “reactive” will to power (9).⁸ Whereas the former creates, the latter reacts to an outside force or entity.⁹ Whereas the former is healthy, the latter is pathological.

Additionally, I believe oppression is mutually exclusive with self-mastery. Instead of looking inward and refining the self, oppressors merely vent their mastery onto someone “beneath” them. This misdirection neglects the internal self, leaving some group of “outsiders” senselessly pulverized in the process. I strongly believe Nietzsche would disagree with these outcomes. The only result of this misdirection is destruction, not creation or brilliance. For example, during Hitler’s rise to power, he mandated the oppression of Jews, Gypsies, and other non-Aryan groups. He funneled them into ghettos and shipped them off to labor camps where they would be worked to death. This was supposedly being done because non-Aryans were enemies of the Reich. They were the reason why Germany’s economy was floundering. They stood in the way of

⁸ The “will to power” is an important term. It appears frequently in Nietzsche’s writings and many readers have a general idea of what it is. This line provided me with clarity and helped to guide my studies: “A living thing seeks above all to discharge its strength—life itself is will to power; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent results” (BGE, 13). In other words, the will to power is a natural compulsion, experienced by living beings, to express their power: to grow, to outstretch, to overtake. Self-preservation is byproduct of this natural compulsion.

⁹ In my view, crafting your sense of self in hate-filled opposition to another (another race, another gender, etc) is not true self-legislation because you end up surrendering power to that “other,” allowing them to control your process of self-definition. For example, if someone were to explain their identity as follows “I am an intelligent white, not a brutish black,” they would, ironically, be granting an immense amount of authority to the black race over their identity. In a world where black people did not exist, this racist white man would cease to exist as well because that is the negative point his identity was anchored upon. The mark of a true self-legislator is the ability to thrive even when all the “rugs” (whether it be a transcendent religion or another race) are ripped from under them (since they create their values internally, *ex nihilo*, independent of the surrounding world).

Germany's greatness. The same narratives can be found in current white supremacist circles, which paint minority groups as stealing jobs, creating social anarchy, and endangering the white nation. Nietzsche would be nauseated by these scapegoating tactics. Our energy reserves are limited. We can only do so many things with the life-force we have. This creates a trade-off dilemma; if we direct our energy towards one thing, that prevents us from using it for another.¹⁰ Instead of focusing our life-force (our will to power) on negating an "outsider" (a waste), Nietzsche says we should focus our energy on ourselves, using it to fuel overcoming and improvement (a positive investment with tremendous returns). Mark Jonas agrees with me on this point:

As my analysis of self-overcoming will illustrate, power should not be construed as power over others, political power or economic power; these forms of power are inferior and even a form of weakness. For Nietzsche, the ultimate form of power is power over one's self—the ability to love life in all its vicissitudes and difficulty; the ability to say Yes to fate and to encourage the affirmation of life in others (Jonas, 161n10).

Though Nietzsche is not a proponent of oppression, this does not mean that he is against some groups being elevated over others. An inevitable outcome of individuals adopting his philosophy is that some people will ascend higher or faster than others. For example, individuals who remain hooked on the drug of resentment (slaves) will inevitably be surpassed by those who focus wholeheartedly on self-legislation, self-improvement, and the achievement of excellence (masters). However, I believe this outcome of relative

¹⁰ Nietzsche goes even further than this. Resentment-filled concepts such as racism and hatred not only create a trade-off scenario for our spirits, they actively eat away at it: "nothing burns you up more quickly than the affects of resentment" (EH, 6). Building on this point, Nietzsche points to resentment as a cause of physical ailments, he sees it as a literal pathology: "[resentment] inevitably lead[s] to a rapid consumption of nervous energy and a pathological increase in harmful excretions, of bile into the stomach, for instance" (EH, 6).

distinction is supposed to be a byproduct of living well according to Nietzsche's teachings, not something to be lived for.¹¹

Secondly, I find this camp inadequate because it appears to be powered by an ideological engine, the social justice movement. I do not believe the social justice movement is bankrupt. It does hold redeemable aspects. It has also inspired critical and important conversations in our political climate that we need to address. However, I believe its intellectually unjust to map ideological values (whether conservative or liberal) onto past thinkers and demonize them for being incongruent with them. This enslaves Nietzsche, compelling his work to spit out ideas that conform to our worldview, instead of genuinely navigating his corpus and having it speak to us. We should avoid this practice. By reading authors we would normally avoid, we cultivate knowledge from unexpected places: "I may well be a wood and a night of dark trees, yet whoever does not shrink from my darkness will also find rose slopes under my cypresses" (Z, II, *The Dance Song*). Dismissal and censorship (from moral outrage) leads only to the destruction of knowledge. Leslie Paul Thiele packages this point in a striking image:

In the end, there is a choice to be made concerning how one will come to terms with Nietzsche. One may choose to fence or to wrestle with him. Fencers never get much beyond analytic parrying. Their object is to back Nietzsche into a corner. The rules of the game allow them to dismiss many of his antics as out of order. If occasionally, they cut off something to be considered of value, it is employed to fortify their own convictions. When they claim victory, it often rings hollow. For their adversary has been domesticated... On the other hand, wrestlers abandon all weapons and fail to keep their distance. If they come to feel rapport... it is usually evidenced in their entanglement with him. They do not resolve his dilemma, but at best manage to explore its profundity. (Thiele, 8)

¹¹ Though this may be an unpopular outlook on Nietzsche, I think it is the correct one. To me, it seems like Nietzsche is far more concerned with internal comparisons (i.e., "I strive to be better than I was yesterday") than external comparisons (i.e., "I strive to be better than Jimmy"). Nietzsche wants the gauge of our values to be tucked away safely inside of us, not influenced by celebrities, friends, or public figures. Interestingly though, as we focus on internal improvements, we may end up surpassing the aptitudes of those around us. This is what I mean when I say relative distinction is a product of living according to Nietzsche's philosophy instead of what should be lived for.

Tracy Strong also provides useful input. Instead of grafting our own ideas onto Nietzsche (or reducing his ideas into a straw man that can easily be pummeled), Strong advises readers and scholars to be self-critical, constantly prodding at their own interpretations and acknowledging their own biases. We need to read with two focus-points: the text and the mass of ideas and predispositions inside us that influence our responses to it. Strong pushes us to pose the following question: “why is it that I want to think that this is what Nietzsche means?” (Strong, 20).¹²

The egalitarian camp holds more than meets the eye. At the beginning of my explorations, I assumed that thinkers within the camp thought Nietzsche’s ideal society would be an approximation of democracy. However, upon further digging, I realized that this characterization was inaccurate. Instead, the egalitarians recognize the elitist aspects of Nietzsche’s work, understanding that those themes make it unlikely that he favors democratic politics wholeheartedly. Because of this, they make several interesting moves. Some of them separate Nietzsche’s politics from his ethics, arguing that he endorses an “egalitarian ethics of creativity,” (Ikuta, 340) even though his political ideas seem to bend in the opposite direction. Other scholars argue that some of Nietzsche’s core ideas are compatible with democracy even if he is not an explicit proponent of it. For example, some scholars see Nietzsche’s admiration of the Greek *agon* (the cultural emphasis on open contest in the court of law, athletic competitions, etc.) as congruent with the

¹² In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche paints a beautiful image of learning that is on-par with Thiele’s fencing metaphor (perhaps this was the source of it). Nietzsche sees the mark of a true learner as his/her ability to suspend judgement and explore with a calmed, sober perspective: “Learning to see - getting your eyes used to calm, to patience, to letting things come to you; postponing judgment, learning to encompass and take stock of an individual case from all sides. This is the first preliminary schooling for spirituality: not to react immediately to a stimulus, but instead to take control of the inhibiting, excluding instincts” (TI, 6).

deliberative aspects democracy. Some scholars who hold these views include Christine Daigle, Lawrence Hatab, Bonnie Honig, William Connolly, and David Owen.

There are several reasons why this camp is a bad fit. First, it appears to be more of a subcamp and less of a distinct camp. It seems to be a mere qualification of the aristocratic distinction camp (especially since it accepts that elitism is prominent in Nietzsche's works) instead of a unique outlook on Nietzsche's philosophy. Second, the scholars in this camp generally admit that they pushed the question of politics to the wayside (or they admitted that he was not a formal democrat) to evaluate the democratic textures of Nietzsche's ethics. Though this could lead to rich inquiries, such a shift means this camp falls outside the scope of this thesis, which is centered on the question of Nietzsche's political thinking. Lastly, even if some of Nietzsche's ideas are compatible with democratic structures and values, that does not mean democracy is the core that animates his work. To be comfortable with putting him in this camp, I believe the latter would have to be true.

Subscribers to the anti-political camp claim that Nietzsche valued political questions, he simply had a unique way of interacting with them. If the other camps could be conceived as checkboxes, the anti-political camp would be the box marked "other." Robert Guay unpacks anti-politics in a lucid way: "anti-politics [is] opposition to politics in a conventional sense, not to the whole sphere of politics properly considered" (Guay, 159). According to this view, Nietzsche was interested in clearing away political norms and practices that stymied greatness, with the hopes that this would create space for a fresh, life-affirming politic. Some thinkers who fall into this camp include Hugo Drochon, Ruth Abbey, and Marina Cominos.

This thesis will explain why Nietzsche is an anti-political thinker.¹³ I believe the anti-political nature of Nietzsche's thinking is showcased in his analysis of the 19th century German state. He believed that the state of his time held certain features that inhibited life-affirming culture (Drochon, 157). He then issues a series of exhortations to change these conditions and provide politics with a new telos: the cultivation of great men. Nietzsche is anti-political because he opposes a traditional system of politics (Bismarck's state) and ushers in a new understanding of politics to replace it.¹⁴ I believe this camp fits well with Nietzsche's broader polemic tendencies. He is a thinker who takes his sickle to the foliage, clearing out everything that congests the path towards affirmative living: "the great man is a genuine child of his age...he is contending against those aspects of his age that prevent him from being great" (SE, 11). The "anti-motif"¹⁵ is a theme that runs throughout Nietzsche's work: he is anti-Straussian, anti-Darwin, anti-Christian, and anti-Wagner (Dallmayr, 133). Nietzsche treats politics no differently than how he treats these other subjects. The anti-political lens provides the clearest view of Nietzsche because it harmonizes with the critical refrain that echoes across his writing.

I also believe that understanding Nietzsche as an anti-political thinker respects the complexity of his work. All of the other camps, to me, seem to rush to quickly to simplicity (Nietzsche = Aristocrat, Nietzsche = Democrat, Nietzsche = Fascist, etc). This

¹³ Though I will argue that Nietzsche's thought falls in line with the anti-political" camp, this does not mean there are no moments where his thinking synchronizes with other camps. Chapter 4 will seek to provide an example of how Nietzsche's anti-political stance is supplemented by ideas from other camps (specifically, the apolitical camp).

¹⁴ Nietzsche does not want to merely *reform* the state and the political conditions of his time. He wants to *transform* them completely. Instead of breaking down the state and building up something new from the fragments of the old (reform), he wants to break down the state, sweep away the fragments, and start reconstructing with entirely new material (revolution).

¹⁵ Understood as being against or opposed to something, whether it be an idea, a person, or a structure.

is a problem, particularly when it comes to squaring such groupings with the parts of his work that do not budge under the pressure of simplification (i.e. the non-aristocratic, anti-democratic, or anti-Fascist parts of his work). In other words, with the other camps, a simplified interpretation of Nietzsche is selected, and then the incompatible parts of the corpus are either neglected or squeezed to fit into the container properly.¹⁶ This takes a significant theoretical toll and presents the risk of muffling Nietzsche's voice with our own analyses. In contrast, I believe the anti-political camp welcomes the twists and turns of Nietzsche's writings. The anti-political camp recognizes that Nietzsche's ideas are slippery. Instead of warring against the chaos, the camp seems to accept it. In my view, understanding Nietzsche as a critical and unconventional mind when it comes to politics provides far more room for his work to speak to us than placing him under a deterministic banner would (Aristocrat, Democrat, Fascist).¹⁷ Though this camp is far from perfect, I believe it an effective glass encasement. It allows us to view and appreciate Nietzsche's ideas without mucking them up with our groping fingers.

This thesis will employ a method of explication. The objective of this thesis is not to contribute a groundbreaking insight to the current debate surrounding Nietzsche and

¹⁶ These simplifying interpretations (which harken back to Thiele's fencing analogy) are tempting because we tend to derive a sense of gratification from them. We often pat ourselves on the back for finally "pinning down" a complex thinker. These celebrations, however, tend to be deceiving.

¹⁷ For example, say a group identifies person A as "disruptive" and person B as "elegantly polite." Person B would be constrained to a range of behaviors: saying "thank you," giving out frequent compliments, lifting their pinky when they drink their tea. In contrast, Person A could theoretically be "all over the place all the time": at one moment he could yell when everyone else is whispering, at another moment he could start breakdancing while people are listening to a lecture, etc. There is a wide range of things the "disruptive" person can do that would mesh with their "disruptive" identity, while there is a more limited range of things an "elegantly polite" person can do that mesh with their "elegantly polite" identity (in every forum or environment they enter, there is a box that they have to fit their behaviors within; the disruptive person's identity is based, quite literally, on not having this box). "Elegantly polite" represents what I mean by a "deterministic banner", its more constraining and limiting. In contrast, "disruptive" provides far more room for fluidity and unpredictability. In conclusion, we are free to label Nietzsche as we please, but we should be careful that our labels do not become cages.

politics, rather, it is to illuminate and to ponder. The two goals of this project are to isolate which of the “camps” I find the most accurate at describing Nietzsche’s political thinking and to support this position through his critique of the German state. Along the way, I will address some controversial hotspots in Nietzsche’s work and defend certain reading practices that can turn these jarring speedbumps into fruitful launching pads. Thus, this thesis will be running on two tracks at once. On one track, I will try to make sense of what Nietzsche thinks about politics and the state. On the other, I will endorse a certain manner of taking in Nietzsche’s thoughts on politics that will allow us to steer clear of indigestion.

CHAPTER ONE

Genealogical Origins: The Emergence of the Modern State

The Value of Nietzsche's Genealogy

Genealogy is central to Nietzsche's thinking. It is his tool of choice in his polemics against Christianity, transcendent morality, and the ascetic ideal. This is no surprise, considering Nietzsche spent his early years as a philologist. He was familiar with deep historical analysis and investigations (Mencken, 22-23). Particularly, in his genealogical tracing of morality, he referenced back to a time of "aristocratic value judgements" (GM, 26). He focused on how values were originally arranged properly, "good" and "bad," and then infected by those who were envious of the noble (GM, 26). This is crucial to his critique of modernity and his call for transvaluation: "[Nietzsche] sees [genealogy] as having vital implications for his project of a revaluation" (Schuringa, 262). To illustrate, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes:

The circumstances which one must partly create...to bring this [transvaluation] about; the probable ways and experiments by means of which a soul would grow to such height and power in order to feel the compulsion to these tasks; a transvaluation of values under the new pressure and hammer of which a conscience is steeled, a heart turned to iron, so that it can bear the weight of such a responsibility... (BGE, 203).

Here, the image of the hammer and weighty responsibility are significant. They suggest that the project of trans-valuation, the goal of forging and spreading life-affirming values, is a grueling one. Why? Because society has been buried under life-denying values that have accreted over time: "Modern man, Nietzsche disgustingly declares, has become a 'walking encyclopedia,' stuffed to overflowing with the customs, art, philosophy, and

religion of previous ages” (Berkowitz, 17).¹ Genealogy gives Nietzsche a tool to demonstrate this encrusting in action. He takes the reader into the past and ushers him to the moments when the build-up begins and accelerates. Genealogy allows him to illustrate the expanse of the structures his followers are destined to conquer. It allows him to detail the different valences error takes, its twists and turns, so a clearing can be facilitated in the present: “His genealogical studies traced the embarrassing pedigree of ruling systems of thought, undermining their authority, disgracing their heritage, and subverting their pantheons” (Thiele, 11). Nietzsche’s brand of genealogy was so strong that it would come to inform the work of postmodern theorists, such as Michel Foucault, over an entire century later. Though Nietzsche’s genealogy of the state may not mirror the exact function of his genealogy of morality, it arguably plays a role in his polemic against the state.

There are other reasons why Nietzsche’s genealogy of the state is worth analyzing. First, it is one of the clearest points where he departs from the canon of political philosophy. This highlights the revolutionary and groundbreaking nature of his thinking. For example, Nietzsche’s state origin narrative contrasts with Hobbes’ and Locke’s and relates interestingly to Rousseau’s. Nietzsche’s state genealogy also provides a point of emphasis for his unique epistemology. For Nietzsche, knowledge (and ultimately our values) can only be grounded in human experience and perception. Knowledge cannot be anchored in a transcendent plane, a domain of platonic forms, or a

¹ Ken Gemes phrases this in another way just as effectively using psychological language: “Nietzsche believes our current psychology is built on and out of the sediments of past psychological developments, and that only by understanding those developments can we understand and perhaps eventually change ourselves. The point of his historical narratives is ultimately to make us aware of certain psychological types and their possible relations” (Gemes, 205).

Kantian “in-itself” realm that hides behind the illusory world in front of us (Thiele, 30-31). This argument is conveyed by his depiction of the state’s origins, he asserts that it was uniquely a man-made creation. In one fell swoop, Nietzsche dispels the notion that the state was a divine construct or derived from some agglomeration of natural laws implanted in our minds from above. Nietzsche understands the state realistically instead of idealistically: it was forged through blood, raw power, and domination. This refusal to view the state through an idealist lens bears resemblance to Machiavelli’s view:

It appears to me more appropriate to follow up the real truth of the matter than the imagination of it; for many have pictured republics and principalities which in fact have never been known or seen... (Machiavelli, 61).

Though Nietzsche is an outlier relative to the canon of political philosophy, there are embryos of his epistemology that can be found in thinkers who are in it.

The Content of Nietzsche’s Genealogy

Nietzsche begins his genealogy with an image of conquest. Instead of emerging peacefully, the state had an explosive birth:

I employed the word ‘state: it is obvious what is meant – some pack of blond beasts of prey, a conqueror and master race which, organized for war and with the ability to organize, unhesitatingly lays its terrible claws upon a populace perhaps tremendously superior in numbers but still formless and nomad (GM, 86).

Nietzsche labels these creators as “unconscious artists” (GM, 86). They were free from moral constraints, driven by pure instinct to conquer, give form to, and appropriate everything around them. This shows how Nietzsche’s “ontology” of the will to power colors his “political anthropology,” or his tracing of the state’s origins and development (von Tongeren, 81). The state, a political structure, was created from a hoard of

individuals exercising the will to power, an ontological process, on a grand scale.² The unconscious artists vented their will to power in a violent and tyrannical fashion: “they come like fate, without reason, consideration, or pretext; they appear as lightning appears, too terrible, too sudden, too convincing, too ‘different’ even to be hated” (GM, 86). Nietzsche points out that though the blond beasts assembled the state unconsciously, fueled solely by raw power, their creation was the nursery bed for “bad conscience” (GM, 87). The state would be the means through which moral sensibilities would be instilled.

Nietzsche’s origin narrative is complex. It is difficult to both digest its details and ascertain Nietzsche’s outlook on them (whether he thinks the state’s origin was an admirable or a tragic event). On one hand, the blond beasts embodied the will to power. This is something Nietzsche would applaud because the will to power is a fundamental feature of human existence (trying to repress or suppress it would be equivalent to waging war against our own nature). On the other hand, however, the unconscious artists introduced a structure that would eventually hamstring man’s creative drives. Walter Kaufmann touches on this negative aspect: “The State is the devil who tempts and intimidates man into animal conformity and thus keeps him from rising into the heaven of true humanity” (176). Thus, Nietzsche has an ambiguous relationship with his state origin narrative. Though he sees the state as a product of artistry, it eventually becomes

² Before going further, it is important to clarify what is precisely meant by the term “will to power.” Leszek Kolakowski does a good job at simplifying this concept: “the will to power is a mechanism that operates in the universe; one might call it a metaphysical principle, were it not for the unsuitability of such an adjective for his philosophy. Reality is a collection of an infinite number of centers of will to power, each which struggles to enlarge the domain of its power at the cost of the others. Each of us is such a center” (Kolakowski, 198). Kolakowski goes on to state that there is “no direction, no aim, and no meaning in this struggle,” (Kolakowski, 198) but this deserves an important qualification. Though at its core our will to power is a meaningless force, we can, through artistry for example, channel and concentrate that meaningless energy into something meaningful.

contorted into an instrument of “sickness” (GM, 93) not unlike a good tool being used for bad purposes.³

Nietzsche’s origin narrative is significant in two ways. First, it provides the latticework for his moral philosophy. At the founding of the state, the human race split into masters and slaves: the commanders and those who are commanded. This dyad would be the focus of Nietzsche's analysis throughout the rest of the *Genealogy* as it would serve as the source of civilization's epochal changes and battles. More importantly, Nietzsche constructs his affirmative vision of politics using his origin narrative as a base:

[Nietzsche thinks] about grand politics as aesthetic activity, which takes humans as its raw material and shapes, molds, transforms and beautifies them...Nietzsche imagines master race of the future, comprising ‘philosophical men and artist tyrants,’ working ‘as artists upon ‘man’ himself (Abbey and Appel, 94).

In his origin narrative, the unconscious artists shaped masses of people. Like potters, they used their power to form them into an organized structure. Nietzsche’s “artist-tyrants,” the individuals burdened with restoring politics, would mirror this behavior. They would take notes from their predecessors and become shapers of men themselves.

Nietzsche disregards formal dates in his origin narrative.⁴ I believe he does this intentionally. Nietzsche does not care about forging an air-tight timeline. He is unconcerned with temporal precision. Instead, he is focused on the bigger picture. He wants to sketch out a background story (almost like a myth) to buttress his arguments

³ Nietzsche conveys this dualism clearly in *Twilight of the Idols*: “Liberal institutions stop being liberal as soon as they have been established: from that point forward, there is nothing that harms freedom more severely and fundamentally than liberal institutions” (TI, 38).

⁴ Though Nietzsche does not lay down dates, he does hint that the state’s birth took place long ago. This is supported by how he paints the conquerors as animalistic free roamers, “They are completely natural, without any restriction; they are preceding beings” (van Tongeren [Siemens], p. 79). The state’s emergence was a primordial moment.

about morality.⁵ Keith Ansell-Pearson concurs with this analysis in his introduction to the *Genealogy*:

Nietzsche's polemic challenges the assumptions of standard genealogies...that there is a line of descent that can be continuously traced from a common ancestor, and that would enable us to trace moral notions and legal practices back to a natural single and fixed origin. His emphasis is rather on fundamental transformations, on disruptions, and on psychological innovations and moral inventions that emerge in specific material and cultural contexts (Ansell-Pearson, xx).

Not only does Nietzsche break from traditional political theorizing, but he also takes a philosophical tool, genealogy, and customizes it in a unique way.

Nietzsche's origin narrative has stirred up racial controversy. This is largely attributed to how, on the surface, it appears to be infected with racism. His references to the "blonde beasts" could be interpreted as a promotion of Aryan dominance. Hugo Drochon addresses this problem in his article, *Nietzsche and Politics*, where he isolates this as the main reason Nietzsche's work was dodged by scholars in the wake of World War II (Drochon, 663-664).⁶ However, there is a distinction between interpretation and truth. The interpretation that Nietzsche's origin narrative is racial is a valid one to have, but it is ultimately misguided. Instead of attaching racial characteristics to the blond beasts (i.e. white skin and blue eyes, which would fit the Aryan narrative), Nietzsche posits them as beings that transcend such arbitrary categories. In his first essay in the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche describes the blond beasts as supra-racial instead of racialized:

One cannot fail to see at the bottom of all these noble races the beasts of prey, the splendid blond beast prowling about avidly in search of spoil and victory; this hidden core needs to erupt from time to time, the animal has to get out again and

⁵ This is interesting because it means that Nietzsche's origin narrative is instructive even if it is not designed to be taken literally.

⁶ In fact, Walter Kaufmann was given most the credit for picking up the shambles and attempting to restore Nietzsche's battered reputation.

go back to the wilderness: the Roman, Arabian, Germanic, Japanese nobility, the Homeric heroes, the Scandinavian Vikings – they all share this need (GM, 11).

Here, Nietzsche presents the blond beast as an intangible entity instead of a tangible one (a person or a race of people). It is a spirit or a force, a “hidden core” that can manifest in different cultures. This cuts back against the charge that Nietzsche was an Aryan propagandist. He did not promote Aryanism, he was swept into it. This also rebuts the fascism camp. It is one of many moments where Nietzsche steers clear of racial superiority and ethnonationalism. This mistaken appropriation can be attributed largely to his sister Elizabeth. Her husband was a Nazi-sympathizer and she soaked up his views by association. This was revealed in the “spin” that she applied to her brother’s writings in *The Will to Power*, which was published posthumously in 1901.

Nietzsche’s Origin Narrative and the Canon: A Brief Comparison with Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau

Nietzsche’s origin narrative stands out relative to the canon of political philosophy. This can be observed through his departure from three key figureheads: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacque Rousseau.⁷

Hobbes argues that life in the state of nature is “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” (Hobbes, 89). In the state of nature, man is driven by self-preservation, seeking after the objects of his desire. Hobbes postulates that this self-preserving drive inevitably conflicts with the drives of other individuals, triggering an unending battle of all against

⁷ Though these thinkers do not claim a monopoly over the western canon of political philosophy (and there are many other thinkers I did not address), they are important figureheads nevertheless. Their thoughts were formative in the field of political philosophy (conveniently, these are the first thinkers I encountered at the beginning of my collegiate studies).

all known as the “state of war” (Hobbes, 88). In this condition, war is an ever-present ambiance: “For Warre, consisteth not in battel lonely, or the act of fighting, but in the tract of time, wherein the will to contend by battel is sufficiently known” (Hobbes, 88). The only escape from this combative environment is the social contract. This symbolizes a submission of multiple wills to a common will, an absolute power which can establish order and peace: “I authorize and give up my right of governing myself, to this Man... on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner” (Hobbes, 120). The “Leviathan” (Hobbes, 120), or the state, emerges at this consensual moment.

Locke’s outlook on the state of nature is less pessimistic. For Locke, the state of nature is a “state of liberty, yet it is not a state of license” (Locke, 170). Man is free to do as he pleases, except if that involves subordinating or destroying others. Locke argues that this moral norm is established by “laws of nature,” (171) which are derived from reason: “no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions” (171). Each man is functionally an independent deputy tasked with ensuring compliance to this maxim. Though Locke believes this process generally runs smoothly, it is not immune from hiccups because “it is unreasonable for men to be judges in their own cases” (Locke, 275). For Locke, men are flawed creatures. Sometimes they fail to be impartial, they misapply the laws of nature, or strive after power and self-gain.⁸ Locke argues that this inconvenience is corrected by the creation of civil government. Similar to Hobbes, in

⁸ This is an important point of contrast between the narratives of Locke and Hobbes. Hobbes’ state of nature is rampant with bloodlust, conflict, and death. Locke’s is mostly tranquil with a few aberrations. This leads Hobbes to conclude that an absolute power is needed to establish peace. Locke views this as an overcorrection.

the instant that government is created, a multitude of wills congeal into one. However, Locke adds a unique twist to this congealing moment:

And thus every man, consenting with others to make one body politick under one government, puts himself under an obligation to every one of that society, to submit to the determination of the majority; or else this original compact...would signify nothing (Locke, 332).

Whereas Hobbes' social contract results in the creation of an abstract ruler with absolute authority, the Leviathan, Locke's social contract selects "the majority" (Locke, 332) as the supreme ruler. Where Hobbes' original state is organized vertically, Locke's is more horizontalist. Whereas Hobbes's state has monarchical aspects, Locke's is marked with democratic features. Additionally, Locke's understanding of the state of war directly clashes with Hobbes'. Locke claims the state of war is introduced when "[a man] attempts to get another man into his absolute power" (Locke, 279). Since Hobbes' Leviathan holds supreme power (and the majority, in his state, does not), Locke's state of war ironically begins when Hobbes' ends.

Rousseau's state of nature is heavily romanticized.⁹ His state of nature is "man in his primitive state" (Rousseau, 150). At this time, men lacked complex moral faculties yet had a basic grasp of social relationships common of most "savages" (Rousseau, 151). Rousseau glorifies this primitive condition:

[men] lived free, healthy, good, and happy insofar as they could be according to their nature and they continued to enjoy among themselves the sweetness of independent intercourse (Rousseau, 151).

Rousseau proclaims that this era marked humanity's peak; it symbolized a "golden mean" where man was positioned "at equal distances from the stupidity of brutes and the fatal

⁹ By "romanticized," I mean packaged in grand, nostalgic rhetoric.

enlightenment of man” (150). However, the emergence of metallurgy and agriculture drew humanity out of this state of bliss, producing inequalities in the process (Rousseau, 152). Society became divided into the select few who mastered the means of production and the subservient toilers (Rousseau 154-155). This gap became the source of frequent conflicts. The tranquility enjoyed in primitive society was gradually replaced by avarice, ambition, and evil. A war between the haves and the have-nots was waged: the toilers struggled for more possessions and the powerful fought to protect their riches (Rousseau, 157). Rousseau argues that the powerful few cleverly designed a social compact, the result of which would be “peace.” This was all a ruse to ensure the preservation of the haves and the pacification of the have nots:

Instead of turning our forces against ourselves, let us gather them into one supreme power which governs us according to wise laws, protects and defends all members of the association, repulses common enemies, and maintains us in an eternal concord (159).

The have nots, in accepting this bargain, ironically “ran to meet their chains” (Rousseau, 159). They failed to see that the compact was nefariously designed to favor the powerful. For Hobbes and Locke, the state was a necessary solution to issues in the state of nature. For Rousseau, not only was the state of nature largely bereft of issues, but the state was a lure that drew man out of this optimal condition. Rousseau’s original state resembles an oligarchy operating behind a democratic façade.

Nietzsche deviates from all three thinkers.¹⁰ He does this in two ways: he does not posit a clear state-of-nature-to-state paradigm and he presents a fresh outlook on the

¹⁰ If Rousseau is the deviant relative to Hobbes and Locke, Nietzsche deviates from the “deviator.” This illustrates the radical and idiosyncratic nature of his work.

state's creation. Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau provide an extended prelude to the state's arrival. They all forward state of nature theories, some of them even divided into phases (for example, Rousseau's "nascent" and "primitive" stages). Through them, they give a detailed analysis of how primordial man was, the conditions (conflict or peace) that he was situated in, and why (and how) the transition to the state was made. Nietzsche's account omits these details. He immediately cuts to the act of genesis, skipping the build-up narrative. Though subtle, this is an important theoretical move. It displays his refusal to cram his ideas into the traditional model of political anthropology.¹¹ This is a moment of reevaluation, a philosophical jailbreak:

Commentators recognize that Nietzsche is a revolutionary and that at least part of his task [was] to destroy decaying western civilization in the hopes that a new civilization will resurrect from the ashes (Howell, 2).

Nietzsche's break with the state-of-nature-to-state paradigm raises an interesting question: does Nietzsche have a "state of nature" at all? I believe his theory of the will to power supplies him with one (implicitly).

For Nietzsche, humans are wired to dominate and accrue power.¹² This is our essence, this is our "natural" disposition, this is our being without the artificial conventions and codes of civilization. Such an argument can be distilled from Nietzsche's comments on "counter-nature," a term he applies to "pure reason" and transcendent religion in his third essay in the *Genealogy* (GM, 12). To Nietzsche, these systems degrade and expunge the instincts of life (creativity, appropriation, and power).

¹¹ This "right to the genesis" approach ironically places Nietzsche closer to Aristotle's position: "Like Aristotle, for whom the human being is 'by nature' a political being, so Nietzsche claims that it is the initial, natural event of a political distribution and organization of power that introduces the human being in history" (van Tongeren, 80).

¹² This is not unique to humans. Nietzsche thinks that the will to power also discloses itself throughout nature (for example, the fungi and bacteria that overtake a carcass to attain nutrients).

If counter-nature is anything that represses the will to power as such, then “nature,” by contrast, represents the will to power working undisturbed. In other words, Nietzsche’s “state of nature” exists whenever the will to power is given ample space to bloom. For Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, the state of nature has been lost to history. For Nietzsche, it is a timeless flame housed inside of us. This is a profoundly fresh perspective.

Nietzsche’s outlook on the state’s creation is unique. Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau all believed that some consensual exchange generated the state. Nietzsche, however, argues that the state was forged through force, bloodshed, and domination. The state did not emerge from individuals coming together and discussing how their rights could fuse into a singular will. It emerged when a pack of powerful men imposed their will, unconsensually, on an unformed mass of people, shaping them the way they saw fit. What separates Nietzsche further is that he does not condemn this act. He quietly applauds it, as it stands as an expression of the will to power.¹³ What Rousseau saw as a dirty trick, Nietzsche viewed as an act of greatness. What the traditional thinkers saw as a product of consent, Nietzsche saw as a consequence of raw, amoral force. It is important to note that Nietzsche’s original state cannot be grasped with a formal political paradigm. While Hobbes’ shares features with a monarchy, Locke’s with a democracy, and

¹³ “Quietly” insofar as I believe Nietzsche does not want us to senselessly tyrannize others. The passage I base this argument on comes from *The Anti-Christ*, where Nietzsche presents the *Übermensch* as two-faced, a being who is driven by a certain harshness (to conquer and overcome obstacles) yet retains a certain warmth. I think this duality that Nietzsche presents is more than rhetorical garnish. It should be taken seriously: “The most spiritual people, being the strongest, find their happiness where other people would find their downfall: in labyrinths, in harshness towards themselves and towards others, in trials; they take pleasure in self-overcoming: asceticism is their nature, requirement, instinct. They see difficult tasks as a privilege, they relax by playing with burdens that would crush other people ... They are the most admirable type of people: which does not prevent them from being the most cheerful, the kindest” (A, 57). More support for this “two-faced” *Übermensch* interpretation can be found in other places: “A man who is not willing to become master over his wrath, his gall and vengefulness, and his lust, and who tries to become a master in anything else, is as stupid as the farmer who lays out his field beside a torrential stream without protecting himself” (HH II, *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, 65).

Rousseau's with an oligarchy, Nietzsche's is relatively indeterminate. His state frustrates categorization.

Was man better off before or after the emergence of the state? Nietzsche provides an ambiguous answer: the state was both a blessing and a curse. In one sense, it created the conditions for affirmative culture to thrive. On the other hand, it soon became one of its greatest inhibitors. In terms of its positive aspects, the state insulated individuals from constant war. It provided boundaries and regulations that allowed humans to live together peacefully. Arguably, this is a vital precondition for artistry, creativity, and ultimately, culture. With survival ensured, individuals could channel their will to power in constructive ways. This would be impossible if humans spent the majority of their days in unrestrained combat: "political institutions are necessary for the will to power to express itself in an active, creative way" (Drochon, 109). But Nietzsche cautions against stopping the discussion here. Though the state secured physical survival, he saw an important distinction between survival and true living: "[For Nietzsche] the state is not capable of permanently transforming human beings into contented beings" (Howell, 3). In other words, though the state is a precondition for affirmative living, it can also constrain it by promoting base and life-denying values. For example, Nietzsche highlights how the state can serve the function of a resurrected "God," employing nationalism as a tool to inspire submission, conformity, and worship (Howell, 3). It can transform into the new transcendent anchor that individuals use to generate value and purpose, a dependence that Nietzsche critiques. The state can also be a site of corruption, a means to enhance power and fulfill narrow-minded desires: "Nietzsche takes this stance because he sees the state as a 'more complicated version of the herd,' a cauldron of 'egotism,' despotism, and

‘lavishness’” (Kaufmann, 166). Nietzsche does not pass judgement on the inherent value of the state. He refrains from slapping a “good” or “bad” label on it. Instead, he judges it contingently: if it restricts affirmative culture, it is problematic. If it is endorsing and promoting affirmative culture (or at least carving out space for affirmative culture to thrive), it is acceptable. Ironically, this suggests that the state transcends the categories of good and evil. Tamin Shaw breaks down this unique “middle-ground” position:

Nietzsche does not advocate the overthrow of the state. In fact, we will see that stable political authority is a necessary precondition for the kinds of human achievements that he values. But he cannot concede to the state the kind of ideological power that maintenance of its authority seems to require...Nietzsche is strongly committed to the view that our values should be determined by an independent form of normative authority, and that this should shape political life rather than vice versa (14).

Nietzsche pays equal attention to the state’s usefulness and its dangers: it can temper down senseless conflict and violence, but this does not foreclose it from doing bad things (eating away at life-affirming values).

Other thinkers in the canon do not hold this outlook. For Hobbes, the state is inherently good. The Leviathan is a *summum bonum*. Hobbes suggests this at several points: “When speaking reverently of the Leviathan, Hobbes chooses to call him the ‘Mortal God’ under the Immortal God” (Howell, 5). The Leviathan, being animated by the compounded wills of men, approaches the threshold of purity. Rousseau views the state as inherently bad.¹⁴ This is proven by the catalogue of atrocities he assigns to the state,¹⁵ including “inequality,” “work,” “solitude,” and “misery” (Rousseau, 160). Interestingly, Locke’s outlook on the state closely resembles Nietzsche’s. His seems to

¹⁴ In the *Second Discourse*.

¹⁵ Founded on private property relations.

adopt a lens of contingency as well. For Locke, the state's status as good or bad depends on its relationship to the "Life, Health, Liberty, [and] Possessions" (Locke, 271) of its subjects. If the state respects and seeks to satisfy these rights, it is good. However, it becomes bad if it encroaches upon any of these core freedoms. Locke sees such encroachments as justifications for revolution (because they functionally initiate the state of war). This overlap with Locke suggests that Nietzsche's dissociation from the canon is not as total as some would think.

CHAPTER TWO

The Bismarck Regime: A Snapshot of the Degenerative State

The Value of Historical Investigation

Before diving into Nietzsche's idea of what a degenerative state looks like, it is important to briefly visit the establishment he lived under. This will be done by investigating Bismarck's state from an objective angle. Though Nietzsche's perspective on the Bismarck regime holds some truth, it is fallacious to presume that it holds a monopoly on the truth. I believe a broadened historical scope serves several purposes. First, it allows for a fuller view of Nietzsche's critique. When Nietzsche references Bismarck's state, he drowns it in pejoratives. This leaves the reader with a high-resolution image of a fuming Nietzsche and a fuzzy image of the state that actually existed for him and other Germans. An objective historical account allows the activities of the Bismarck regime to be explored, providing a clearer image of Nietzsche's object of criticism (and perhaps, a fuller justification for his disappointments). Second, I believe that this historical engagement fosters intellectual integrity. It is a good practice to do forensic work behind the curtains of interpretation instead of taking them at face value. This allows us to test the strength of said interpretations. In Nietzsche's case, perhaps there was a specific policy that he strongly disagreed with and that outrage fueled his sweeping critique of the administration as a whole (this would commit the error of mistaking a characteristic of the part, a single policy, for a characteristic of the whole, the entire apparatus of government). A broader historical context would catch those slippages

if they were to appear. All in all, this would allow Nietzsche's work to be rigorously assessed instead of merely ingested. Lastly, I believe that this historical detour allows for a fuller appreciation of Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche's writings are not treatises derived from abstract thinking or formal logic. Instead, they are crystallizations of his life experiences: his love life, his friendships, his occupations (as an instructor at the University of Basel and a soldier in the Franco-Prussian War), and his ailments (dysentery, chronic migraines, and the insanity that would eventually overcome him). His thoughts were not a series of "depersonalized observations" (Thiele, 38). Instead, they were intimately tied to his immediate, surrounding conditions. Since the Bismarck regime supplies an important backdrop for Nietzsche's middle and late life, I believe a deeper investigation of it is equivalent to a deeper understanding of his philosophy. It would allow us to take stock of the regime that stirred his mind and inspired him to pick up his pen.

Bismarck's Rise to Power

Otto von Bismarck became the Prime Minister of Prussia in 1862. As he rose to power, there were two strains of thought that shaped his outlook on politics. First, he subscribed to "Realpolitik" (Pflanze, 493). This school of thought implies "a particular conception of the realities of political life," and involves certain "techniques of achieving positive results in view of these realities" (Pflanze, 493). Bismarck viewed politics through a lens of pragmatism, and concrete power-relations (Pflanze, 494). He leaned on prudent calculations (including cost-benefit analysis and multi-option planning) to mitigate risk and contend with uncertainty (Pflanze, 514). In a sense, he viewed politics

as a chessboard where victory could be assured through proper strategy, adjustments, predictions, and counters.¹ Bismarck was also heavily influenced by conservatism. This is ironic considering the unhinged nature of his early life. In his youth, Bismarck was a free spirit eagerly scavenging for the meaning of life. He was creative and curious. He immersed himself in the German Classics, thumbed through Shakespeare, absorbed Beethoven's music, and dabbled in romantic literature to stimulate his passions. He was also a strong drinker. This is why historians call Bismarck's adolescence and early adulthood his "mad Junker" phase (Holborn, 86). The fervor of this phase would eventually simmer down as he married in 1847 and converted to Christianity (Holborn, 86).² This colored his political outlook with a conservative tinge:

In Bismarck's view, the world and its orders were created by God and the course of history directed by him. The existing political institutions, consequently, were not made by men nor could they be altered by ideal constructions of human reason (Holborn, 89).

Bismarck's religious perspective rationalized his defense of the status quo: "His supreme goal was and remained the preservation and the elevation of the Prussian military monarchy" (Holborn, 91).

The act that vaulted Bismarck into fame was the unification of Germany. In the early 19th century, Germany was not the unified entity we recognize today. It was a loose confederation of states, with Prussia and Austria standing out as the strongest (Abrams,6). One of Bismarck's first objectives, upon being selected as prime minister,

¹ If politics was a chessboard, Bismarck was arguably a grand master. He was a generational talent when it came to strategic political maneuvers and negotiations.

² The particular "style" of Christianity he adopted bordered on agnosticism and was quite distant from prescribed orthodoxy.

was to unite the German states under Prussian rule.³ Bismarck soon realized that this goal could only be accomplished through the neutralization of Austria, the powerhouse that threatened them from the southern border.

In 1864, Prussia and Austria fought together to wrench the territory of Schleswig-Holstein from Danish control. This collaborative effort succeeded, and land partitions were fleshed out at the Gastein Convention of 1865. This cooperative venture was short lasting, however. Austria violated one of the terms of the Gastein Convention in June of 1866, shocking Prussia (Ullrich, 63). Bismarck saw that this as a prime opportunity to establish Prussian dominance and push Austria out of the way by conquering them in battle. He allowed the quarrelling to fester and used it to justify the Seven Weeks War. Prussia won handedly and accrued a significant amount of perceptual power by overcoming one of their closest contenders. Shortly afterwards, the Northern German Confederation was officially created (Abrams, 7). However, complete German unification was yet to occur because the Southern German states (bordering Austria) still clung to their autonomy (Ullrich, 72). Bismarck was forced to do more maneuvers to get them on board. Nietzsche made his debut in the Prussian military forces shortly after the Seven Weeks War, beginning his service for the Prussian artillery division at Naumburg in 1867 (Holub, 87). At this point, Nietzsche admired Bismarck's military prowess. In fact, he celebrated the defeat of Austria and was enthralled with the idea of conquering France in the next military campaign (Holub, 86). However, after his short bursts of

³ Unification was not Bismarck's original idea. The Liberals were the first to introduce the plan. Originally, Bismarck opposed it. However, he had a change of mind and eventually saw it as a way to secure Prussian power.

military activity ended and he settled into late adulthood, he would soon become disillusioned with the man he held in such high regard (Drochon, 154).

France presented another opportunity to push forward the unification agenda. Following the Schleswig-Holstein crisis, the French were on their toes. Having witnessed Bismarck conquer Austria so decisively, they began to see Prussia as a rising threat to the balance of power. Every move Bismarck made was viewed by Napoleon III with building suspicion. French anxieties climaxed when a coup in Spain cleared the seat formally occupied by Queen Isabella II, opening the door for the Prussian, Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, to occupy the throne (Abrams, 8). Bismarck supported this move. This sparked a telegram exchange between France's foreign minister and the Prussian Kaiser. Bismarck meddled with the wording of the telegram sent between the two, painting France as the aggressor. The public release of this edited edition inflamed the French citizenry, stirred up anti-French sentiment in the Prussian public, and sparked the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 (Abrams, 8). Nietzsche jumped into military action for this war in 1870, even though he was relegated to the position of a medic isolated from combat (Holub, 90).⁴ The Prussians won the war and, with the defeat of France, finally had all the pieces in place for unification. The defeat of France pushed the previously stubborn southern states towards annexation with the North German Confederation, which was headed by Prussia. They openly accepted annexation because Bismarck had protected them from the French; it was a quid pro quo.

⁴ The reason why he made this decision is still a point of debate among scholars.

All in all, the swift defeat of Denmark, Austria, and France marked the emergence of the united German powerhouse under Prussian rule (Edelstein, 38). The arduous process of “unification from above” (Holub, 76) was finally complete. After these three bursts of military activity, Germany settled and took up a more pacific posture that would invite the cooperation of other European powers in the years to come (Edelstein, 40). In the years leading up to unification, Germany was hawkish. In fact, many people saw Bismarck as the “conflict minister” (Ullrich, 65). However, after unification was established, Bismarck proclaimed that Germany had reached its “saturation point” (Abrams, 34) and was ready to construct alliances. This newly satiated version of Germany was advertised by the of formal treaties Bismarck entered into, including the Dual Alliance with Austria and the Three Emperors Treaty, which brought together Germany, France, and Russia under a pledge of neutrality in 1881 (Ullrich, 85).

Bismarck's Post-Unification Agenda

Bismarck instituted a number of domestic policies to keep his newly unified Germany intact. This is not an exhaustive list of his policies nor are they arranged in chronological order. Nevertheless, they do provide an accurate snapshot of the political changes that were occurring in the newly united Germany.

First, Bismarck enacted a series of laws as a part of a broader political movement known as *Kulturkampf* (“cultural struggle”). After unification, Catholics were strewn throughout Germany. Bismarck saw the Catholics as disruptive to national cohesion because they, in his view, honored the Pope’s authority more than his. This perception was “confirmed” when the Vatican Council issued the doctrine of Papal Infallibility in

1870, which asserted that whatever the pope decrees is final and without error (Abrams, 22). This served as “proof” that the Catholics were loyal to another authority, which hastened the arrival of his repressive policies:

The Kulturkampf of the 1870s, was directed against the third of the Prussian population that was Catholic. Bismarck saw Catholics and the clergy as potential fifth columnists who could be manipulated by Catholic Austria (which he had kept out of the empire) and the Vatican (Bernhard, 152).

The Progressive and National Liberals rallied behind this policy and its discriminatory objectives were crystallized in the May Laws of 1873 (Retallack, 26-27).

Bismarck was also known for promoting anti-socialist legislation. Bismarck sought to de-radicalize them because they contradicted the aristocratic values that had been instilled in him from his Junker upbringing. Additionally, they agitated against the conservative, monarchical values of the Prussian crown. He attacked them through a tactical scapegoating campaign:

After two failed assassination attempts on the Kaiser in 1878, Bismarck was able to convince both conservatives and liberals to pass restrictions on the rapidly growing socialist movement, denying socialists the right to publish or assemble (Bernhard, 153).

Interestingly, these repressive measures were softened by concessionary policies, such as health insurance, accident insurance, and retirement pensions for the working class (Bernhard, 153). This illustrates Bismarck’s masterful strategic mind. He engaged in an impressive, though ultimately ineffective, balancing act. He wanted to pin blame on and alienate an enemy (the Socialists), while at the same time garnering support from the working class, which was frustrated with current economic conditions and sympathized with the Socialist cause. Bismarck’s targeting of the Catholics operated similarly to his targeting of the Socialists insofar as he painted both as impediments to national unity.

Bismarck dominated Germany's parliamentary body, the *Reichstag*, by artificially generating partisanship and bending deliberation towards his goals from behind the scenes. He employed a divide and conquer strategy to insulate the Prussian crown from opposition. This was illustrated in the maneuvers he executed in 1866:

When he gained the impression that liberals might eventually gather sufficient strength to impose parliamentary government, he broke up the liberal party by buying the continued backing of the right wing with the gift of industrial protection and maneuvering the remaining left liberals into a forlorn opposition (Holborn, 93).

At the time of his leadership, there were several major political parties that comprised the *Reichstag*: the Socialist Party, the Catholic Centre Party, the Liberals (split between the Progressives and the Nationals), and the Conservatives (Abrams, 10). These were Bismarck's manipulable chess pieces. He held no reservations about appeasing particular parties, abandoning others, and striking up battles between them to achieve his political objectives. Instead of being vested with actual transformative power, the parties of the *Reichstag* were simply mouthpieces he used to give the citizens a semblance of representation in the lower house, hence the reason why it was a "talking shop for political parties" (Abrams, 10). Bismarck's political system seemed to have "competitive authoritarianism" as its operating system (Bernhard, 154). He created simulations of deliberation to make it seem like the parties were the ones calling the shots, when actually, the Crown was (Bismarck being its most ardent defender). Competitive authoritarianism also shaped Bismarck's engineering of the German constitution. Though it carved out space for popular representation via the *Reichstag* (Ullrich, 69), nearly every article tilted in favor of the Prussian crown. For example, the highest position in the land was occupied by the Prussian crown and Prussia was the only state in the Confederation

to have an ultimate veto (Ullrich, 68). Thus, the constitution he engineered “transmitted to the united Germany after 1871 all the defects of Prussian kingship” (Steinberg, 268). It also provided him with a cushioned position that placed him below the king nominally, but above the king in reality: “Bismarck built this fragile structure not only to suit himself, but also to suit an arrangement in which a strong Chancellor bullies a weak king” (Steinberg, 268).

Bismarck was a strong proponent of nationalism. After unification, this was one of the main adhesives he used to bind Germany together. He weaved narratives and manufactured propaganda that painted an image of a pure Prussian crown:

From 1871 on Bismarck used increasingly national tones in his public utterances. He...liked to talk of the perennial qualities of the German race which he discovered in all of German history and Teutonic pre-history. Here it was demonstrated that the Germans had always prospered when they followed their kings and exhibited their best virtues, such as supreme bravery, to support their leaders. There was also the reverse side, the stories about the endemic party spirit that ever so often had spelled disaster to the nation (Holborn, 97-98).

In addition to public addresses, Bismarck, in joint effort with the Kaiser, turned the education system into an echo-chamber for nationalist messages. He viewed the impressionable minds of children as “the fount of national regeneration,” that could be used to promote the veneration of the state (Retallack, 19). At this time, the German education system sought to “Germanize” non-Germans and pushed different groups towards assimilation to minimize social disorder (Abrams, 29). These interventions into the education system were key components of the state’s project of “political self-justification,” the instillation of ideas that would support its authority and undercut enemies (Shaw, 5).

A consequence of these narratives was the creation of out-groups that German citizens would come to despise: “Jews as well as Catholics were the target of nationalists obsessed with the need to define and defend a confessionally homogenous nation-state” (Retallack, 18). Soon, this practice of out-grouping would shift from a cultural reflex to a politicized norm through the term *Reichsfeinde* (“enemy of the *Reich*”):

The tactic of labelling certain outgroups “enemies of the Reich” seemed to offer Bismarck the opportunity to create an alliance of state-supporting parties in the Prussian Landtag and the national Reichstag. Among such “enemies” Bismarck focused his attacks on German Catholics from 1871 onward, on Social Democrats after 1878, on left liberals in the early- and mid-1880s, and on the Poles of eastern Prussia starting in 1885 (Retallack, 26).

The term would also grow to encompass Danes and citizens of the Alsace-Lorraine region acquired from the French in the Franco-Prussian War (Abrams, 24). Historians suggest that references to enemies of the *Reich* reached a fever pitch around the stock market crash of 1873, a time when the Prussian government needed scapegoats to blame for the downturn the nation was experiencing (Ullrich, 90).

It would be a mistake to presume that nationalism was a novel invention brought about by Bismarck’s administration. Nationalist rhetoric pre-dated Bismarck’s rule. For example, nationalistic reflections on Germanness could be found in the work of the poet, Ernst Moritz Arndt, who published “What is the Fatherland of the Germans” to wide acclaim in 1813 (Holub, 76). The same can be said for August Heinrich Hoffman who stirred up patriotic sentiments in 1841 (Holub, 76). Nietzsche, in the early years of his education, encountered some, if not all, of these nationalist writers and artists (Holub, 77). The Bismarck administration did not conjure up nationalism out of thin air, but it did adjust the texture of it through intensification (increasing the volume and repetition of

messages) and application (applying the messages to demonize new and distinct “out-groups”).

Nietzsche's Critical Outlook

Nietzsche was alive and sane for a good portion of Bismarck's rule. Bismarck's policies played out in front of him, and they percolated into his works most notably in his critique of politics. There are two terms Nietzsche uses frequently when he indicts Bismarck's brand of politics: “petty politics” (*Klein Politik*) (Drochon, 155) and “power politics” (Drochon, 156). The difference between these two terms is difficult to flesh out (to a degree they appear almost interchangeable). To minimize confusion, I will unpack Nietzsche's political critique in a way that fuses these two terms together. Though this may come off as sophomoric, I see a very low risk of nuances being destroyed in this fusion. Nietzsche's critique of politics is best represented as a swiss army knife. It has multiple blades, each of which have the capacity to slash and chip at different aspects of the Bismarck regime. Nietzsche's critique addresses a number of political events and tendencies. Since the Bismarck's politics had both foreign and domestic manifestations, the objects of Nietzsche's critique can be investigated at both of these levels.

Foreign Policy

For Nietzsche, militarism was a stain in German foreign policy.⁵ This informed his disagreement with Bismarck's *Machtpolitik*, a foreign agenda centered on the creation of conflicts to consolidate Prussian power. Historians trace the source of this foreign policy outlook to a fiery speech Bismarck delivered in 1862 when he stated: "The great questions of the day will not be settled by speeches and majority decisions – that was the great mistake of 1848 and 1849 – but by *blood and iron*" (Steinberg, 465). Nietzsche argues that this philosophy of foreign aggression contracted the field of human flourishing. Nietzsche makes somewhat of a "brain-drain" argument, claiming that Germany's string of military engagements (brought about by Bismarck's hawkishness) tugged individuals away from the paths that would've led them to richer lives:

For Nietzsche, the greatest cost of power politics is that those predestined for the 'life of the soul,' instead of accomplishing their destiny in furthering culture, will either be sacrificed for the good of the nation in one of its wars of expansion, or see their energy misdirected and wasted (Drochon, 157).

This is why Nietzsche held an unpopular outlook on the result of the Franco-Prussian war. Whereas others saw it as a triumph worthy of celebration, Nietzsche saw it as an ominous foreshadowing of decline (Drochon, 157). Nietzsche also argued that military victories leached away at higher values because they caused the citizenry to become

⁵ For some, this is peculiar. Wouldn't Nietzsche, the prophet of the will to power, admire military aggression? Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power answers this question because it is a theory concerned with the *quality* of power, not the *quantity* of it. Though militarism represents a large *quantity* of power being expressed, it can still be of a bad *quality*. Andrew Huddleston outlines this clearly in his article, *Nietzsche on the Health of the Soul*: "the issue is not with the presence or strength of the will to power, but rather with its mode of expression" (Huddleston, 142). In other words, there are both healthy and unhealthy manifestations of the will to power. Healthy expressions lift up and improve the human condition (either directly or obliquely). Unhealthy expressions do the opposite. Mark E. Jonas agrees with this reading: "Nietzsche believes there are certain types of expressions of power that lead to greater power. The goal of the higher men is not merely to discharge their will to power in haphazard and impulse driven ways, but to moderate, control, and direct them thoughtfully, even rationally" (163). It is worth noting, however, that this interpretation of Nietzsche is complicated by his admiration of Cesare Borgia, who was notorious for his outbursts of cruelty (Phillips, 358-359).

passive, living their lives vicariously through the prowess of a ruler instead of carving out their own paths of greatness. Why would the citizens have to aspire to be great themselves if they could sit back and watch a great statesman, with his imperial aspirations, do the heavy lifting for them?

Bismarck stirred up most of his military conflicts in the time span when he was unifying Germany. After unification was complete, his military aggression leveled off. On the surface, this seems to de-fang Nietzsche's argument. However, I think Nietzsche's critique still holds weight. Post-unification, Bismarck remained obsessed with accruing power and having all the chips in his hands despite his more pacified posture. This was proven during the *Kulturkampf* campaign. He used the agenda to "drive a wedge between France and Russia" (Drochon, 158). Since France was comprised of many Catholics and Russia openly promoted the oppression of Catholics, the *Kulturkampf* created a controversial hot topic that barred any effort to build an alliance (because while the French hated what Germany was doing, the Russians were relatively indifferent) (Drochon, 158). This illustrates how Bismarck's thirst for power was not quenched following unification. Instead, it had carried over from the military realm to the diplomatic realm.⁶

Democracy is another distorter of politics that Nietzsche highlights. For Nietzsche, the democratic spirit holds Christianity as its progenitor (Ikuta, 347). It is a moral apparatus that strives to equalize everyone and level anything that approaches the zenith of distinction. Nietzsche sees this as a form of herd mentality. Similar to how the

⁶ He retained a warlord *mentality* even though he ceased to be involved in actual military engagements.

Christians inverted the table of values in a way that demonized the strong and propped up their weak position, the democrats hurl moral frustrations at the distinguished by positing equality as the ultimate good (Ikuta, 349). Nietzsche argues that this creates a straitjacket that “circumscribes the range of values that individuals can create” (Ikuta, 350). What is interesting about this aspect of Nietzsche’s political critique is that the German state of his time was far from a democracy. It held democratic features (for example, the *Reichstag* housed elected officials and a system of universal suffrage was instituted by Bismarck), but these were merely smokescreens for the monarchical, Bismarck-dominated order. Perhaps Nietzsche directed his anti-democratic musings against the Socialists, who espoused the values of equality and anti-elitism in the economic sphere. The stronger case is that Nietzsche saw democracy as a continental affliction that was creeping across Europe (Cunningham, 185).⁷ Though Nietzsche’s perspective on democracy is undoubtedly a critical one, his harshness is tempered at points. He sees democracy as a life-denying system of value, yet it is a necessary obstacle. It creates the preliminary conditions, the backdrop, for greatness to triumphantly emerge in the future (Thiele, 44).

Nietzsche also disagreed with how Bismarck’s foreign policy promoted isolationism and division. For example, even during his period of peaceful alliance-building, Bismarck circled Russia and France in red, isolating them as discreet threats that could squish Germany if they decided to come together. For Bismarck, Europe was a sensitive field of competing, self-interested actors. Hugo Drochon broaches this topic in

⁷ This is why I placed democracy in the “foreign” category. Though Nietzsche doesn’t explicitly associate democracy with anything Bismarck did, he does see it as a continental epidemic that Bismarck’s regime is surrounded by.

is article, *The Time is Coming When We Will Relearn Politics*. Nietzsche saw Bismarck's outlook as responsible for turning Europe into a disheveled patchwork of quarreling and paranoid states instead of a system united by healthy, life-affirming values, what Nietzsche calls a "single will" (Drochon, 71).

Domestic Policy

In the domestic context, nationalism was an agent that infected politics.⁸ Nietzsche was allergic to *Volker-selbstsucht*, or "national egoism" (Abbey and Appel, 90). This is an interesting outlook, considering how Nietzsche was enraptured by nationalism in his youthful years. He gladly partook in nationalist ceremonies, gorged himself on German great texts, and even kickstarted a German-affirming cultural club named "Germania" as a teenager (Holub 80-81). He abandoned these obsessions as his perspective on nationalism coarsened in his latter life.⁹ He came to see it as an afterlife of herd mentality, a restricting form of groupthink:

The product of the herd is the guilty, but domesticated man who is totally dependent on the system, who cannot take initiatives and unable to legislate onto himself... One owes to the ancestors, to the state, to the parents, to the fatherland; it is a moral duty (Durgun, 22).

⁸ Though nationalism is generated in large part by foreign military endeavors, I grouped it in the domestic category because that is where its effects manifest. I viewed nationalism as a psychological phenomenon. It provided form to the consciousness of the German citizens, organized their goods, shaped their historical perspectives, and provided them with a coherent idea of a collective "we."

⁹ This gradual coarsening would be influenced by a number of events, one of them being Nietzsche's split with Wagner.

Abstract duties, imposed on the subject from above, suffocate the possibility for affirmative living by endorsing an almost ascetic posture of reverence (Durgun, 22-23). For Nietzsche, nationalism robs subjects of “evaluative independence” (Shaw, 7). It turns them into conformists who merely regurgitate the values that are impressed upon them instead of generating their own. The horizon of right and wrong becomes restricted by what the state, predecessors, and social norms deem to be right and wrong (Michalski, 17). This crowds out individualism and the organic production of value. Nationalism was a virus that established itself in a host, the state, and spread, transforming it into a “more complicated version of the herd” (Kaufman, 176). This is why Nietzsche refers to nationalism as the “nevrose nationale” that was devastating the German state (Abbey and Appel, 90).

I believe that Nietzsche’s critique of God and transcendent morality also intersects with his outlook on nationalism in an interesting way. Nietzsche famously proclaimed that “God is dead” (GS, 181).¹⁰ He identifies the atheism woven into 18th century philosophy as one of the culprits for this event, along with how society had drifted into secularism in general (Berman, 276). Nietzsche emphatically points out that this “murder” did not mark the end of God’s presence for it introduced a peculiar “time lag” (Berman, 276). Though God was “dead,” his “shadow” lingered in “caves for thousands of years” afterwards (GS, 167). Nietzsche argues that after his “death,” God began to metamorphosize, taking up new disguises and valences (Berman, 279). God found surrogates in, for example, the “will to truth,”¹¹ which was housed in moral

¹⁰ This is a tragic announcement, not a joyous declaration of atheism.

¹¹ Viewing everything in the world through a set of truths that exist in an abstract or “divine” realm (Berman, 281).

philosophies that presupposed the existence of a transcendent realm. This explains the ferocity behind Nietzsche's critical spadework. He took up the task of exposing the plethora of ways in which Christianity became sublimated into different thoughts, practices, and mouthpieces (Berman, 278). For Nietzsche, nationalism was another "God surrogate." It provided the state with a sanctified veil, inviting veneration and submission (Hunt, 456). Through a cocktail of ideological messages, historical allusions, and rituals, nationalism props up the state as an idol to be worshipped, as something citizens should surrender our individual wills to, as something that provides direction and higher meaning to their daily drudgery. Nietzsche took particular offense to how the education system had become appropriated to impress these ideas upon the youth (Cominos, 95). To him, nationalism uses abstractions as narcotics to keep the citizenry pacified and obedient. This is one of the many iterations of God's resurrection that Nietzsche critiques:

The *Reich*, however, promotes the state as the highest goal of humankind (SE 4). The state has become the 'New Idol' and aims to harness, for its own ends, the veneration once accorded to the church (Cominos, 96).

This also provides a point of clarification for Nietzsche's argument. Instead of claiming that the *Reich* facilitated the disappearance of culture, he argues that it (through nationalism in particular) fundamentally bastardized it (Cominos, 95). Nietzsche sees the state as the great thief of everything cultural (Z, I, *On the New Idol*).

Nietzsche also acknowledged how nationalism frequently became the stepladder to racist scapegoating. As established before, Nietzsche was far from a defender of racism. He believed that "exceptional human beings can come from any culture" and that racism was a manifestation of a warped will to power (Solga, 6). He disapproved of how

nationalist rhetoric and race hatred congealed into slogans such as *Reichsfeinde*.

Nietzsche analogizes this to a physical ailment that the nation had contracted:

No. We do not love humanity; but on the other hand, we are not nearly German enough, in the sense in which the word .. German" is constantly being used nowadays, to advocate nationalism and race hatred and to be able to take pleasure in the national scabies of the heart and blood poisoning that now leads the nations of Europe to delimit and barricade themselves against each other as if it were a matter of quarantine. (GS, 339).

Nietzsche saw nationalism as a fuel for both domestic and international division (as states formed essentialist assumptions about other states merely on the basis of their ethnic and cultural composition). This further establishes the wedge between Nietzsche's thinking and the vile philosophies of Nazism.

It is clear that Nietzsche viewed nationalism with contempt. Interestingly, this negative outlook manifested in how he treated the great German thinkers later in his life: Goethe, Heine, Hegel, and Schopenhauer (Cominos, 100). Nietzsche was sickened by how innovative thinkers were frequently transformed into cogs for the nationalist machine. Because of this repulsion, Nietzsche "de-Germanized" these thinkers; he stripped away their association with the nationalist enterprise to preserve their sanctity. To Nietzsche, these minds were no longer emblems of German greatness, they were mouthpieces of a grander (and healthier) European spirit.¹² Nietzsche viewed their greatness "from the perspective of 'the history of European culture' and a 'European point of view'" (Cominos, 100) instead of the tunnel vision of the German nation-state.

Parliamentarianism and philistinism are the final components of Nietzsche's domestic critique. In the Germany of Nietzsche's time, higher values were decaying, and

¹² This aligns with Nietzsche's pan-European ambitions.

lower values are experiencing an upsurge. Nietzsche identified “parliamentarianism...and philistinism” as causes of this (Drochon, 157). For Nietzsche, there is a “daily tribute” that political activity or “participatory republicanism” extracts from individuals (Yack, 360).¹³ These activities are both physically and mentally draining. As the bustle of politics comes to dominate the lives of the citizens, the only good they strive after is the augmentation of their own influence and the defeat of their enemies: “people greedy for political glory [are] ruled by this greed and no longer [belong] entirely to [their] own cause as [they] once did” (Drochon, 156-157). They become sucked into a Machiavellian wrestling match with no end. In the midst of this bustle, the state becomes an instrument appropriated by one individual after another. It devolves into a cauldron of “egotism,” despotism, and “lavishness” (Kaufmann, 166). In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche distills this argument into a vivid metaphor:

Watch them scramble, these swift monkeys! They scramble all over each other and thus drag one another down into the mud and depths. They all want to get to the throne, it is their madness – as if happiness sat on the throne! Often mud sits on the throne – and often too the throne on mud. Mad all of them seem to me, and scrambling monkeys and overly aroused. Their idol smells foul to me, the cold monster [the state]: together they all smell foul to me, these idol worshipers. My brothers, do you want to choke in the reek of their snouts and cravings? Smash the windows instead and leap into the open!...There, where the state ends, only there begins the human being who is not superfluous; there begins the song of necessity, the unique and irreplaceable melody. There, where the state ends – look there, my brothers! Do you not see it, the rainbow and the bridges of the overman? (Z, I, *On the New Idol*).

This allows Nietzsche to present the following zero-sum relationship: “a total investment in politics results in an equal loss in the domain of arts and culture” (Drochon, 157). He packages this same idea in more radical wordage in *Twilight of the Idols*: “All the great

¹³ Nietzsche is qualified in making this point insofar as he indulged in political campaign work for the National Liberals during his youthful years. He is likely conveying lessons instilled in him by direct experience.

ages of culture are ages of decline, politically speaking” (TI, 45). Nietzsche preaches that political pursuits are vacuous, only culminating in philistinism, a collective ignorance to great things. The end goals of political activity are ephemeral, as rulers and parties reach the top of the political pyramid only to be hurled off by a contender trailing after them. In Nietzsche’s view, parliamentarians and state functionaries were clawing to establish their superiority, but in this effort, they dodged the question of what it truly means to be superior in the first place: to possess higher values (Strong, 39). As such, Nietzsche believed that entanglements with the political dulled the mind, distracting it from what mattered most (Cominos, 94). He proposed a posture of detachment from the political. These critiques beg the question of why German citizens continued to hedge value in such a broken system. Unfortunately, where Nietzsche saw depraved institutions, the citizenry saw well-functioning ones. The German people were fooled by the “appearance of legitimacy” to “cooperate in their own subordination” (Shaw, 31).

Nietzsche’s disapproval of parliamentarianism is couched in his disagreement with the *Kulturkampf*. Whereas others saw it as a victory for higher Prussian culture over the Catholic Church, Nietzsche saw it as the exact opposite. It was a shallow political battle contained within a bubble of slavish thinking. It was a contest between two variants of the poison of Christianity, Protestantism and Catholicism, the Crown versus the Catholic Center Party (and other Catholic sympathizers). The campaign demonstrated to Nietzsche that the state is a site of phony struggles that never result in anything truly transformative. With its parliamentary clamor, the state swallows up every aspect of life, crowding out greatness in the process. Like the distinction between fast food and a gourmet meal, politics provides subjects with mediocre victories (such as the

Kulturkampf) that taste good in the moment but degrade spiritual health in the long run. Nietzsche strove for something richer and more nourishing.

From these criticisms, it appears that frustration is the emotion that animates Nietzsche's position. Though this is true, this misses how Nietzsche's critique was also driven by sorrow and despair. The voice of his critique had multiple emotional inflections at once. Behind his coarse tenor, Nietzsche was genuinely concerned for humanity:

For all his blasts at the slavishness and herd-morality of the many, it [pained] Nietzsche to see individuals who do not realize their full humanity...he longs for a transformation of modern institutions that will turn contemptible individuals into fully human beings (Yack, 321).

Nietzsche saw the state as a ceiling that contained man's potential, keeping it degraded and animalized (Yack, 320). This sad condition is what provides thrust to Nietzsche's project of reconstruction.

CHAPTER THREE

Refurbishing the State and Politics: Nietzsche's Reconstructive Project

Nietzsche's Problematic Solutions

So far, we have addressed the first half of Nietzsche's *liberum veto*, the resounding "No" he screamed at the "prevailing forces of [his] time" (Cominos, 99). Now it is time to unpack his affirmative vision, the "higher Yes" that this critique paved the way for (Cominos, 99). Though it reveals his anti-political stance, Nietzsche's critique of the state is peculiarly shaped. Similar to how excessively exercising one muscle group at the expense of others results in a disfigured body frame, Nietzsche's critique is uneven and dysmorphic. This is largely a consequence of his polemic style. When discussing the state, Nietzsche invests significant effort in critique and deconstruction and relatively little in his reconstructive vision. Nietzsche has an ultimate telos in mind. He believes that political structures and activities should be shepherded by the following question, "what ought man to become?" (Drochon, 164). It is a mistake to presume that Nietzsche is silent on the question of solutions. However, a problem emerges when evaluating the quality of these insights. Nietzsche is neither practical nor pragmatic when it comes to how he frames his solutions. The strategies Nietzsche lays out to correct politics and revive culture are grand, speculative, and sweeping, as if they were inspired from a dream. This is why Nietzsche's idea about political restoration are difficult to digest. He does not have a formalized program or a step-by-step guide that can spawn a new community from scratch. Instead, he broadcasts creative and unprecedented ideas that

shift away from the political problems that weighed on his mind. For example, Hugo Drochon explains that one facet of Nietzsche's reconstructive project is a breeding program designed to promulgate greatness. It measures the potential of individuals "according to the guaranty of life that their future contains—it puts to an end without pity all that is degenerate and parasitic" (Drochon, 167). This runs into several practical speedbumps, inviting many questions: will there be an administrative body overseeing this grand operation? How would data collection, surveillance, and genetic research proceed? Would there be a ranking system to distinguish prime reproduction candidates from those who are "blacklisted"? These questions illustrate how the back half of Nietzsche's anti-political critique is just as disorienting as it is unique.¹

Is there a reason why Nietzsche's critique is disfigured as such? Is there a hidden logic behind his solutions being so lofty? I believe Nietzsche's vagueness is an outcome of intentional design. There are several reasons for this. First, Nietzsche is a visionary writer. He was a perceptive mind, a genius who could speak beyond his time with ease. For example, Nietzsche's descriptions of the "last man" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* bear a striking resemblance with man's condition in the 21st century, a period he never knew.² His thoughts have a timeless dimension. This reflects his belief on how philosophy should operate temporally, the philosopher is a "person of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow" (BGE, 212). This can explain the vagueness of Nietzsche's correctives. He

¹ These questions do not devastate Nietzsche's work, however, because they are questions posed in light of the capabilities of our present age, an age Nietzsche never inhabited.

² For Nietzsche, the last man is the antithesis of the *Übermensch*. Instead of striving, creating, conquering, and overcoming, the "last man" settles into complacency, strolling through life with risk-avoidance and comfort as his only goals. This is an accurate diagnosis of Man's current condition. We are immersed in a society of pleasures, technology-induced idleness, and "get rich quick" schemes (which assist us in our efforts to dodge hard work and failure).

departs so starkly from the political events, structures, and possibilities of his time (and even of today) that, when we attempt to square his ideas with them, a slippage occurs. Perhaps “vague” and “lofty” are the terms we use to describe this slippage. It is common for prophets and other visionaries to be perceived as “crazy,” and their statements to be viewed as cryptic and confusing. It is possible that Nietzsche is stuck in a similar dilemma. I also believe that the more timeless a work or a set of ideas is, the harder they are to decode (the Bible and other religious texts come to mind here).

Second, Nietzsche’s philosophy of individualism could justify his vagueness. He values the organic discovery and creation of values. As displayed by his critique of nationalism, he detests impositions and mindless conformity. This may be why he leaves a question mark lingering over his reconstructive vision. He cuts the instructions short, but this arguably provides readers with room to create for themselves, to sketch out their own revolutionary ideas and plans. Tracy Strong argues that this proves a truth about Nietzsche’s work. Nietzsche wants to reader to listen to his messages, but he also wants them to become “his or her own authority” (Strong, 16). He wants them to transition from passive sponges to active experimenters. Nietzsche conveys this message in the first part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: “One repays a teacher badly if one always remains a pupil only...Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you” (Z, I, *On Bestowing Virtue*). Nietzsche does not want to be worshipped as the thinker with the last word. He is inviting us to think and craft for ourselves, for those undertakings would symbolize our maturity as free spirits or *Freigeist*. In this sense, Nietzsche’s solutions are designed to ween us off him, to inspire us to take up the yoke of revolutionizing values. They are designed to initiate the

prescriptive conversation (“what is to be done?”), but not to end it. This passing of the torch echoes Nietzsche’s dislike of systematic thinking (TI, 26). If Nietzsche laid down an air-tight program, it would snuff out creativity, replacing it with conformism and rigidity. Even if Nietzsche’s ideas appear lofty and infeasible, it is a mistake to presume that they are missteps or that they are valueless. This would be a tragic error. It would miss that there is a philosophical message woven into the way Nietzsche writes and communicates his thoughts about politics.³

Nietzsche’s project presents a teleological problem. A coherent political program (that is designed to correct a problem) is usually organized according to means and ends.⁴ For example, if I have an end-goal of instilling ethical values in the students of the American schooling system, the means I would use to achieve that goal are education reforms. The mental heavy-lifting does not stop here though. The means-end paradigm must be supplemented by auxiliary means, otherwise, it will never get off the ground. Auxiliary means are the actions that unpack and particularize the primary means of “education reform.” They fill in the gaps, supplying wholeness and specificity to the primary means. The following comment illustrates a person taking auxiliary means into consideration: “So, your goal is to institute education reforms to bring virtue to the American youth. That sounds fine and dandy, but how do we go about doing that exactly? What specific type of reform do we need to pass? Do we have to pack congress with certain politicians who the policy would appeal to? Do we have to get rid of

³ I believe there are two “tracks” readers should use when analyzing Nietzsche: the explicit track (what is said) and the implicit track (how he says what he says); content and form. I believe this would allow Nietzsche’s brilliance to be appreciated more fully.

⁴ Though this is me thinking “off the cuff,” I believe this is a reasonable position to take.

particular policies that stand in the way or would impede the positive effects of the reform from coming to fruition? Should we reach out to thinktanks to do some research for us about the benefits and drawbacks of our reform strategy?” Having “means behind the means” makes reaching an end-goal more feasible and rescues plans from the pitfall of idealism. It is precisely these auxiliary means that Nietzsche’s political project lacks.⁵ That is why, from a practical vantage point, Nietzsche’s ideas seem to crumble under their own weight. I believe this weak spot is a testament to Nietzsche’s unique position. He is not a political scientist, a traditional political philosopher, or a public policy specialist. He had no formal training in pragmatism. Instead, he is a philologist and a moral philosopher who tackles problems in a way that is idiosyncratic and against the grain.

Though there is a purpose behind Nietzsche’s vagueness, this does not make his ideas any easier to grasp. At some points, Nietzsche’s rhetoric is either opaque or presents the reader with multiple paths of interpretation. The following section is my attempt to clear up Nietzsche’s revolutionary vision.

Nietzsche & Restoration: Four Ideas

There are four solutions that Nietzsche lays out to refresh politics.⁶ First, he sought out to unify Europe under a single, life-affirming will.⁷ Nietzsche saw nationalism

⁵ Scholars such as Alexander Nehamas agrees with me on this point (Abbey and Appel, 95).

⁶ This is my best effort at a distillation. Nietzsche arguably has far more than 4 ideas about how politics can be revamped. These are simply the ideas that I found were the most developed, emphasized, and frequently repeated.

⁷ In my view, the other solutions Nietzsche presents should be understood as subpoints underneath this larger header. This solution presents a broad transnational framework that all the other solutions settle into (i.e. none of his solutions are restricted in the domestic realm). It provides a sense of scale and scope that organizes everything else he proposes.

as the cause of Europe's fractured and atomized condition at the time of his writings. He did not voice this concern pessimistically, however. Nietzsche claimed that there was a latent potential to "become one" in Europe that simply had not been activated yet (Glendinning, 1). The individuals tasked with awakening this potential are the higher types. They are distinguished by:

Their growing detachment from the conditions under which climate or class-bound races originate, their increasing independence from that determinate milieu where for centuries the same demands would be inscribed on the soul and the body...an essentially supra-national and nomadic type of person who, physiologically speaking, is typified by a maximal degree of the art and force of adaptation (BGE, 242).

These are people who have jettisoned nationalism in favor of a broader, cosmopolitan perspective. In discussing these individuals, Nietzsche is approaching the concept of a new man (who contrasts greatly with the men of his time). Nietzsche intends for this unification process to unfold slowly. He conveys this intention in two places. First, when describing his goals for European unification, he uses the temporal phrase "day after tomorrow" instead of "tomorrow" (Glendinning, 1). This displays how far-stretching Nietzsche's project is; he is thinking in terms of centuries and millennia. Similarly, Nietzsche explains that it took thousands of years for Europe to reach its current degenerative state. He recognizes that it would take the same amount of time, if not more, to reverse this degeneration (Glendinning, 14). Nietzsche states that the frontrunners of the unification effort will march ahead on the paths carved for them by pioneers like Schopenhauer, Napoleon, Goethe, Heine, Goethe, and Stendhal (Toscano, 239). It is important to note that unification is not an end-in-itself. For Nietzsche, it is an intermediary stage in his broader goal of revolutionizing values for the entire world (Drochon, 161).

The second facet of Nietzsche's vision is a breeding program to cultivate great men (Drochon, 167). Nietzsche wanted greatness to be sustainably produced. He wanted to set up an intergenerational "machine" that would make greatness a norm instead of an anomaly. With such a program, Nietzsche intends to cancel out all that is contrary to nature. He is not satisfied with mere reproduction, he desires "surproduction," which aims at the Overman (Z, I, *On Child and Marriage*). This abstract idea gets complicated quickly. Nietzsche's program would reward fathers for procreation, punish bachelors, provide provisional marriages to stem prostitution, create communal oversight for marriages in general, and would require a medical certificate (which verifies and analyzes family history) for marriages to be validated (Drochon, 170).⁸ In certain situations, procreating would be a crime and would invite severe punishment, such as castration (Drochon, 170).

Not only is "breeding" already a freighted term, but the scattershot nature of Nietzsche's program digs the hole deeper, it invites confusion instead of providing clarity. Several questions can be raised: does Nietzsche propose a standard of purity for births? Would he be comfortable with mandating infanticide for babies with disabilities? Would "family history" investigations allow communal prejudices (for example, against interracial mixing) to dictate which marriages are acceptable and unacceptable? Though Nietzsche does not present explicit responses to these questions, he does provide us with clues that hint at his stance. For example, in explaining how he wants to wage war against life-denying values, Nietzsche draws a definitional distinction between his war and wars

⁸ Though Nietzsche does present a "wish list" of what he wants to accomplish that appears specific, there still is a large gap between these ideas and practical reality (which is why they cannot be considered auxiliary means in the proper sense). A lofty plan with dashes of specificity is distinct from a specific plan.

as they are commonly understood. Nietzsche's war is not directed against a class or a race (or any identifiable group for that matter), instead, it is a battle between ascending and descending models of life (Drochon, 166-167). Unlike Nazism, which scapegoated a select ethnic group and targeted them for elimination, Nietzsche's project targets a life-denying force that all races and ethnicities can be responsible for propagating. In this sense, Nietzsche's mission is far broader, its more about *how* one lives and less about *who* one is. Though this is speculation on my part, I believe this smooths out the wrinkles isolated above. For example, if a medical professional in Nietzsche's system was responsible for tracing a family's history to either condone or deny a marriage, it seems as though he would look for life-denying behavior (for example, a line of priests and missionaries) instead of a particular ethnic ancestry.⁹ Perhaps it is in these situations (marriages in which one of the parties is a devout Christian) where Nietzsche intends to apply his norm of punishment.¹⁰ How this system of ancestral tracing would be regulated effectively is a question that Nietzsche fails to address.¹¹

Nietzsche also expresses ideas about "crossbreeding" in addition to his marriage system. For Nietzsche, there are certain groups who are prime candidates for breeding

⁹ This raises another interesting question: do the life-denying activities of an ancestor or a relative "roll over" to succeeding generations? Is there a point where this "roll over" would be nullified? For example, would a young man be blacklisted if his grandfather 5 generations back happened to be a priest? This is an incredibly complicated philosophical question: how culpable should current generations be for the transgressions of their ancestors?

¹⁰ Scholars such as Robert Bernasconi disagree with me on this point. He sees Nietzsche as arguing for the elimination of misshapen babies and the active prevention of misbirths, almost in a eugenic sense. However, I think it is possible for these statements to be read in a non-eugenic light. What if Nietzsche's conception of a misshapen child is different from our normal assumption of what that implies? What if a child is "misshapen" if one of their parents are steeped in life-denying values, even if they come out physically non-deformed?

¹¹ The program seems particularly daunting because, at the time Nietzsche was writing, genetic sciences were in infancy. He is speaking beyond the technical and scientific capabilities of his time.

and others who are not so high on the list.¹² He groups the Jews in the former category.

He sees them as possessing a power that should be tapped into:

Nietzsche wittily alludes to the wondrous cross-breed one could get when the Jewish genius of money and patience would mix with the commanding and obedient character of the officers from the district of Mark Brandenburg...he points out that in fact we have to be serious about this because we must be 'breeding a new caste which will reign over Europe' (Bassina and Bas).

Nietzsche also saw the Jews as one of the most tightly banded groups in Europe, despite their dispersion across different nations and cultures.¹³ He admired this "stickiness" and sought to replicate this trait on a grander scale (Drochon, 168). Nietzsche did not confer the same judgement on the British, particularly because he thought that their culture was still too encumbered by Christianity (Bassina and Bass). Britain also hosted a number of philosophical influencers that nauseated him. The French are middle-tier candidates for Nietzsche, not terrible but also not great. Though he saw them as somewhat infected by British influence, he recognized that they held a unique artistic taste that harmonized with his visions of greatness.

Interestingly, Nietzsche is not the first philosopher to forward a breeding program. For example, in Plato's *Republic*, a breeding program is proposed to control the quality of offspring. Official marriages had to be approved by external authorities, mates were organized through a system of rank and age constraints, and parents were prohibited from knowing who their children were (Grube, 95-96). Nietzsche did not conjure up an

¹² Nietzsche appears to blacklist countries instead of specific races, once again demonstrating how he hovers close to, yet does not quite enter the domain of racism.

¹³ Though Nietzsche looks upon the Jews positively in his scattered remarks on crossbreeding, some of his comments can be interpreted as anti-Semitic. For example, his description of Jews as "geniuses of money" (Bassina and Bass), though a commendation, plays into an array of stereotypes and racial conspiracies that posit Jewish people as the secret masterminds behind banking and money laundering operations.

unprecedented idea, he simply stylized an idea that had already been formulated in the political tradition. Nietzsche was a nonconformist and a radical, but he used old tools to shape his new ideas.¹⁴

The breeding program is one of the clunkiest parts of Nietzsche's reconstructive vision. This all the more necessitates a gentle handling of what he says. Instead of approaching Nietzsche's statements with pre-generated conclusions in mind and cherry-picking evidence to confirm such views, I think it is far more rewarding to pose questions and observe how the text responds: "This part seems strange. Is there a way this statement could be read in another light? Does Nietzsche mean something different than what I perceive him to be saying? What is the relationship between this idea and the other ideas that Nietzsche espouses throughout his corpus?" I believe this strikes a middle ground between being a dismissive apologist and an overzealous critic. It recognizes the reality of controversy but uses it as a prelude to investigation and probing instead of a stop sign that bars further engagement (or filters everything that is read in a negative light). I believe this disposition is vital if we are to avoid throwing the baby out with the bathwater when faced with controversial comments. In an interview in 1951, French existentialist and writer Albert Camus captures this point about Nietzsche's work: "What is admirable, in Nietzsche, is that you always find in him something to correct what is dangerous elsewhere in his ideas."

Third, Nietzsche wants the party of life to rise up and conquer the party of Christianity. He desires for a war to be waged between these two competing poles of

¹⁴ This is one of many "conservative" aspects of Nietzsche's work.

value: master and slave. Nietzsche clarifies what he means when he voices this battle cry. First, when he references war, Nietzsche is not condoning traditional military activity. This would fall prey to the trigger-happy politics that he accused Bismarck of endorsing. Instead, Nietzsche sees his war as an intellectual and spiritual struggle. It does not involve trenches or artillery, it targets the unhealthy inclinations that have been housed in society for millennia. The goal is to wipe out these values, building up something new from debris. The war would shed light on other understandings of life and being outside of the Christian frame (Drochon, 174).¹⁵ Additionally, when Nietzsche references parties, he is not implying that he wants to introduce a new association into the *Reichstag*. He does not desire to create a platform, collect donations, or kickstart a campaign. These are the activities that a shallow parliamentarian would pursue. Rather, “party” in Nietzsche’s lexicon translates to a network of like-minded free-spirits. It is a “party” that breaks away from the conventional understanding of what a “party” is. In this way, Nietzsche uses a political term to describe an association that exceeds politics.¹⁶ Likewise, the party of Christianity is not a political association. It is a diffuse force that manifests in religions, philosophies, and political ideas (egalitarianism and socialism). The heartbeat of the party of life would be the ideas that Nietzsche treasures: an appetite for artistry and creation, a reverence for the “Dionysian state,” and a skepticism of behaviors that contradict nature (EH ,74).

¹⁵ My use of the term “Christian” extends beyond the faith, including, for example, otherworldly and transcendent philosophies. Nietzsche wants to fight against Christianity and everything else that represents its afterlife.

¹⁶ I think Nietzsche does this strategically. Nietzsche describes how the party politics that dominated Bismarck’s state was defined by intense conflict. Politicians were addicted to power and struggled to attain it at all costs, creating a vicious scramble to the top of the pyramid. In using the political term “party”, Nietzsche signals to us how intense he wants his war to be.

Similar to how a prudent general sends his men into the battlefield in waves instead of unleashing them in one sweep, Nietzsche's war has an element of restraint built into it. He does not want to destroy the party of Christianity, he wants to delegitimize it, shaking up the monopoly it holds over values. Though perplexing, this is consistent with Nietzsche's ideas about antagonism and conflict. Especially in his early period, Nietzsche admired how the *agon* was the center of gravity for Greek culture. The Greeks placed a premium on contests and tests of prowess. The Greeks believed that life was constituted by constant strife between opposing forces. This idea, which harmonizes with Nietzsche's own thinking about nature, was woven into their understanding of the cosmos (Wilson, 207). Nietzsche was particularly enthralled by how this theme colored multiple aspects of Greek life, including "the lawcourt, the theatre and the assembly," and even Olympic competitions (Wilson, 206). Nietzsche thought the centrality of the *agon* in the Greek tradition created several benefits. First, the *agon* preserved stability and order. Open contests provided a safety-valve that the *polis* could use to placate destructive drives. For example, instead of venting their frustrations violently against the state, open contests provided an avenue for citizens to channel their zeal in non-destructive ways. Second, Nietzsche saw the Greek emphasis on open contest as a stimulant for higher values and excellence (Lemm, 15). For Nietzsche, greatness is the byproduct of overcoming the strongest foes and daunting resistance. Greatness cannot emerge in a vacuum. It is a result of friction and struggle: colliding with other individuals, conquering them, and then seeking out new foes. Nietzsche saw open contests as stimulants for greatness because they were brimming with rivals and challengers.

Nietzsche's admiration of the *agon* shapes his outlook on how the war against the party of Christianity should play out. Though he remained a vehement critic of the Christian brand of values, Nietzsche's hostility was tempered. He wanted to circumscribe Christianity instead of annihilating it. Nietzsche adopted this stance for several reasons. First, such a drive to annihilate would deprive the party of life of an opposing force that it needed to grow. Similar to how the body of a professional athlete softens after retiring from competition, this would eventually cause the party of life to stagnate. Second, Nietzsche thought that if total annihilation was pursued, it would signify the party of life disgracefully stooping down to Christianity's level. The Christians were the ones animated by the spirit of revenge. In seeking out their destruction, the party of life would be returning an evil for an evil. This would be a deformed reversal instead of a true re-valuation. In other words, Nietzsche admonishes the party of life to take the higher road:

In every age, the Church wanted its enemies to be destroyed; we, we immoralists and anti-Christians, see our own advantage in the Church's continued existence . . . In the political sphere, too, enmity has now become more spiritual—much more clever, much more reflective, much more considerate. Almost every party grasps that its own interest, its own self-preservation, depends on the opposing party's not losing its strength; the same applies to politics on the grand scale. Above all, a new creation, such as the new *Reich*, needs enemies more than it needs friends; only in opposition does it feel that it is necessary, only in opposition does it become necessary (TI, 3).

Building upon this view, Nietzsche states that his re-valued political world would be split into two hubs. Those who uphold life-denying values would have their own realm, and those who espouse life-affirming values would be entitled to theirs.¹⁷ Instead of the society having a single core of values, it would have two cores thriving at once (Abbey

¹⁷ In this society of two hubs, it is likely that there would also be two levels to the *agon*. The first would be between the higher types and the lower types. The second level would be between the higher types themselves. The second level would exist so the higher types can continue to grow and improve themselves (Wilson, 220-221).

and Appel, 110). Nietzsche argues that the “new elite” or his brand of philosopher rulers would be in charge of legislating values for and managing these two spheres, ensuring their peaceful co-existence (Abbey and Appel, 110).¹⁸ It appears this social divide would be reinforced at the level of education, as the higher-types would receive specific forms of rearing in their “hub” that the lower-types would be deprived of (Michalski, 4).¹⁹

Lastly, Nietzsche wanted to institute a caste system.²⁰ Nietzsche’s preference for a system of rank is strongly communicated in the praises he heaps upon the Law of Manu, the colonially-imposed cornerstone of Indian morality.²¹ Nietzsche sees this code as admirable compared to the wretched stench of Christian doctrine. He commends it for laying down caste rank as natural law, explaining the characteristics and proper placings of the “different physiological types,” and slashing through the myth of egalitarianism.²² He approves of how it sorts individuals into “[the] priestly race, [the] fighting race, [the] race of merchants and farmers, and...the shudras,” (TI, 3) and the pyramidal structure in which these classes are situated: “A high culture is a pyramid: it needs a broad base, its first presupposition is a strongly and healthily consolidated mediocrity” (AC, 57). The Law of Manu is in harmony with Nietzsche’s anti-Christian and anti-democratic

¹⁸ These ideal rulers would be creators of almost the artistic sort. They would be skilled in conquering, shaping, and ordering the people positioned beneath them, like potters with clay. In this sense, they share similar features with the “blonde beasts” that Nietzsche noted as the inventors of the modern state.

¹⁹ Mark E. Jonas touches on this: “The spiritual elite need a pedagogy that will ultimately liberate them from the decline of the herd and their decadent, nihilistic values. The herd on the other hand ought to be acculturated in ways that promote social and economic stability” (165).

²⁰ This qualifies his idea about the separate spheres. Instead of them being co-planar, one (the sphere where master values reside) would be positioned above the other (the sphere where slavish values reside) in terms of authority.

²¹ Strong comments can also be found in *Beyond Good and Evil* at the beginning of Aphorism 257.

²² Nowhere is Nietzsche’s distaste for egalitarianism (and his preference for stratification) expressed more clearly than in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, where he writes: “And whomever you cannot teach to fly, him you should teach – to fall faster!” (Z, III, 20).

diatribes. Instead of disparaging greatness through religious and moral assaults, it elevates and promotes it. Though Nietzsche does not desire to copy and paste the Law of Manu into his new society, he does want to preserve the spirit of the code.²³ I believe Nietzsche would customize the Law of Manu with his own spin. Instead of an individual's social position being determined by class membership, Nietzsche's system would be stratified according to master and slaver values. If a person subscribes to the former, they would find themselves at the top of the pyramid. If they subscribe to the latter, they would be placed at the bottom.²⁴

Similar to the breeding program, this aspect of Nietzsche's program has been heavily criticized. Though I do not believe all of these criticisms are correct, I do believe that they deserve to be voiced. I believe most of this controversy can be attributed to his outlook on slavery. For Nietzsche, this is the core of his caste system. Nietzsche makes this point through an argument about physical labor. He argues that slavery is necessary for greatness primarily because it relieves the higher class of the drudgeries of manual labor, providing them with time and energy to actualize their greatness. The inspiration for this argument was the Greek state. Nietzsche was fascinated by Ancient Greek civilization. Most of all, he was interested in what made the system run. Through his

²³ For example, in Nietzsche's ideal political realm, there would not be as many classes as laid out in the Law of Manu. The only groupings to be established would be between the higher types and the lower types.

²⁴ Does Nietzsche's "pyramid"/"two hubs" setup preserve the possibility of social mobility. If an individual with slavish values toils to recalibrate and refine themselves, adopting the values of the higher types, would they be granted admission into the master class? Mark E. Jonas seems to think that some semblance of social mobility would exist: "While Fennell is right that Nietzsche distinguishes between those of superior artistic predominance and those who are average, this distinction does not acknowledge the fact that the average have—by virtue of being human and thus motivated by the will to power—the capacity to learn self-mastery and develop into higher individuals, even if they will never become one of the few and rare "unfathomable ones" (164).

studies, Nietzsche came to the realization that: “Mediocrity is needed before there can be exceptions: it is the condition for a high culture” (AC, 57).

For many scholars, especially those subscribed to the Fascism camp, this is a stain in Nietzsche’s philosophy that can never be scrubbed away. It is a blemish that pokes through the makeup “apologists” attempt to apply to his corpus. It has been used to dismiss him as bigoted, unethical, and racist.²⁵ Though I was jarred by Nietzsche’s candid approval of slavery, upon further reading, I discovered that he had more to say on the issue. His idea left a sour taste in my mouth, but I quickly realized that there was more to unpack. There are three nuances surrounding Nietzsche’s caste system and slavery that are worth analyzing. First, there is a possibility that Nietzsche views slavery as a necessary evil instead of something that should be praised.²⁶ This is suggested in his short essay entitled “The Greek State”:

Culture, which is chiefly a real need for art, rests upon a terrible basis: the latter however makes itself known in the twilight sensation of shame. In order that there may be a broad, deep, and fruitful soil for the development of art, the enormous majority must, in the service of a minority be slavishly subjected to life’s struggle, to a greater degree than their own wants necessitate (Gst, 2).

²⁵ I believe that America’s progress makes it easy to direct criticism at past thinkers. Our current society is completely different from Nietzsche’s times. For example, we have the Equal Protection Clause which provides civil liberties and freedoms to a host of minority groups (African Americans, Women, members of the LGBT community, etc). We also have a more refined understanding of human dignity and fairness brought about by social movements, legislative reforms, and supreme court rulings. This creates a reflex where we look back on past thinkers and castigate them for their immoral opinions. Andrew Huddleston agrees with me on this point (Huddleston, 147). Though I think this criticism should be raised, it should be done with two caveats. First, criticism should not end textual exploration before it begins, it should initiate it. Second, criticisms should consider that, at the time the thinker was writing, his “immoral” ideas were likely considered acceptable. We should acknowledge the influence historical circumstance because 200 years from now, we will likely be looked back on as bigoted barbarians ourselves. We should spare others in proportion to how much we desire to be spared ourselves.

²⁶ Though both of these outlooks are a source of discomfort, I believe the latter is more discomfiting than the former.

Though this was the outlook the Greeks held on slavery, Nietzsche suggests later in the essay that he shares this viewpoint: “Accordingly we must accept this cruel sounding truth that slavery is of the essence of Culture; a truth of course, which leaves no doubt as to the absolute value of Existence” (Gst, 2). Instead of heaping unqualified praise upon slavery, Nietzsche viewed it as an institution that was dirty and unsettling, but required nevertheless: “This truth [the necessity of slavery] is the vulture that gnaws at the liver of the Promethean promoter of Culture” (Gst, 2).

Second, Nietzsche did not view slavery as a “unique” event. This does not mean he did not care or express concern about it. Rather, he viewed it as an extension of a norm that permeated political life: there will always be a divide between the strong and the weak. Nietzsche believed that “there [would] always be a certain ruling class,” and that the divide between “a stronger and a higher [class] and a weaker and lower [class]” was a “piece of inherited political sensibility” (Drochon, 183). This explains Nietzsche’s sobered tone whenever he broached the slavery question. To him, slavery reflected a fundamental truth about existence. Thus, cleansing the political world of subordination was a non sequitur. Here, Nietzsche shifts the terms of the slavery question. Instead of asking the morally infused question “should subordination exist?” Nietzsche asks, “who should we be subordinated to?” Instead of asking whether there should be a social pyramid at all, Nietzsche asks who should be at the top: “The true question of politics thus becomes with Nietzsche, what type of elite do we want to rule?” (Drochon, 183).

Third, Nietzsche’s outlook on slavery is an outcome of how he assesses what “the good” is. Contrary to utilitarian thinkers, Nietzsche does not equate the good with whatever benefits the most amount of people. To him, that thinking is the brainchild of

the defective democratic ethos.²⁷ The good is what benefits the few, that being the higher types (Abbey and Appel, 106). Though this reeks of elitism, there is a subtle nuance. For Nietzsche, the higher types bear the weight of humanity on their shoulders. They are tasked with pushing the race forward and helping it overcome itself. Just as the craftiness of the Christians and ascetics had a seismic effect that lasted thousands of years, so too will these efforts have a tremendous effect on future societies and unborn generations. In light of this grand scope, Nietzsche views the drudgery of slavery (which allows the higher types to flourish) as a minimal concern. It is indeed a blemish, but not one that compromises the beauty of the entire masterpiece. For Nietzsche, slavery is a minor misfortune that pales in comparison to his epochal goal: the transformation of the human race. Considering this, Nietzsche's approval of slavery "makes sense."²⁸ He thinks the toils of the slaves today is outweighed by the new, vibrant race their efforts will create tomorrow.

Fourth, slavery has a specific meaning in Nietzsche's lexicon that differs from our modern definition (chattel slavery). This is displayed when Nietzsche uses the phrase "in some sense" to qualify his statement about slavery (BGE, 257). Scholars point out that, at this moment, Nietzsche is disclosing his unique understanding of slavery:

To be a slave "in some sense or other"—that is, to be at the base of this pyramid of high culture—need not involve being the literal possession of someone else, though it can take that form in some societies. It need not, likewise, be a socio-

²⁷ Perhaps scholars disapprove of Nietzsche's position because they are implicitly viewing his work through moral lens (egalitarianism) that he critiques. This would make Nietzsche's work not *intrinsically* appalling, but *relatively* appalling based on the lens it is viewed through.

²⁸ According to the criteria, values, and priorities that Nietzsche lays out. Just because the slavery argument "makes sense" within Nietzsche's universe of values and priorities, we should still approach the idea with caution. It is this ends-justify-the-means thinking that laid the groundwork for atrocities such as the Holocaust, and Maoist and Stalinist purges. It is usually the most appealing ideas that become the instruments of evil.

political designation, enforced by government authority... It primarily is a functional role that one fills in the cultural whole (Huddleston, 147).

In this sense, a “slave” is anyone who provides a service or fulfills a role that keeps the pyramidal society running (doctors, economists, writers, bakers, lawyers, etc).²⁹

Nietzsche states that this type of labor is vitalizing (though it can be rough at times), because living a life where one’s function is pursued is the best life a lower classed person can live.³⁰ In other words, Nietzsche believes there is no shame in being a cog in a machine that propagates greatness. Though the lower types are positioned beneath the higher types, they are still afforded a sense of dignity (their work has meaning). This is what some scholars identify as Nietzsche’s “paternalism.”

Altogether, these nuances and qualifications make Andrew Huddleston’s comment on Nietzsche and slavery persuasive: “Nietzsche’s remarks about slavery are less odious than they can sometimes seem, even if they ultimately leave us unsettled” (136).

Takeaways from Nietzsche’s Solutions

There are several trends that stand out with Nietzsche’s solutions. First, there is a lot of overlap between them. For example, it seems as though the people put in charge of the breeding program would also spearhead the pan-European unification effort and consolidate the party of life. This may be a clue that Nietzsche intended his ideas to be

²⁹ Though this appears to be an extremely generous reading of Nietzsche, Andrew Huddleston locates reference-points throughout Nietzsche’s corpus that support this position. Additionally, Nietzsche himself makes this point clear in *Human, All-Too-Human*: “All mankind is divided, as it was at all times and is still, into slaves and freemen; for whoever has not two-thirds of his day for himself is a slave, be he otherwise whatever he likes, statesman, merchant, official, or scholar” (HH, 283).

³⁰ If we are to launch criticism at this point, we would also have to point our fingers at Plato and Aristotle, who defended similarly paternalistic ideas about subordination (Huddleston, 147).

evaluated as an amalgam instead of a compartmentalized program.³¹Second, there is a lack of linearity and clear cause-effect relationships between his solutions. Does the party of life set up the breeding program and then slowly spread their power across Europe as the program “kicks in”? Does the breeding program have to be in full throttle for the party of life to even emerge? Nietzsche does not provide answers to these riddles. This is another moment where Nietzsche displays his strength at the level of description but his weakness at the level of prescription and practical specificity. Third, there are some plausible contradictions that add wrinkles to Nietzsche’s solutions. For example, his pan-European exhortations seem to contradict his critique against Bismarck’s drive for continental dominance. Nietzsche called out Bismarck’s brutish power-politics. He scoffed whenever Bismarck posited his new *Reich* as the continent’s dominant force. Does Nietzsche, in saying that his values should be diffused across the continent, replicate the same mistake? What prevents the ailment of nationalism from being revived in Nietzsche’s project (as citizens enshrine a grandiose image of Europe, instead of Germany, as their new idol)? What about the philosopher rulers and the artist-tyrants, the higher types who will lead the wave of revaluation? What prevents them from warring amongst each other, creating factions, and seeking out each other’s destruction (falling into the “monkey and the throne” crisis Nietzsche depicts in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*)? Many of Nietzsche’s solutions activate tripwires when they are read in light of his previous ideas; they are beautifully unsatisfying. This is why we should approach them flexibly, instead of rigidly. They should invite further excavation and analysis.

³¹ Perhaps, in separating and numbering his solutions, I imported my own sense of order into something that is designed to be a bit messier.

The tension between rigid and flexible readings of Nietzsche is reflected in academia. For example, when Nietzsche exhorts the party of life to wage war against all that is degenerative, some authors take this with a grain of salt and others fixate on it as a genuine war cry. Whereas Hugo Drochon argues that Nietzsche uses war as a metaphorical device (and that his project is a non-violent, intellectual revolution), other authors take them literally, believing that Nietzsche is all in favor of employing bloodshed, violent coercion, and foul play to bring about his new era (Yack, 362). Thinkers in the Fascism camp find rigid interpretations particularly palatable. I believe we should adopt a flexible perspective on Nietzsche's work whenever we can. Some may say this incentivizes beating around the bush when it comes to analyzing Nietzsche's controversial ideas. Instead, I think it allows us to extract more meaning from his work. Rigid and literalist interpretations simply do not work as well with Nietzsche. This can be seen in the legacy of misappropriation that followed Nietzsche's death. The Nazis latched onto catchphrases such as "blonde beasts" with surface-level, literalist understandings and integrated his writings into their propaganda machine. They ended up distorting and bastardizing the text they claimed to understand. Face-value readings promote knee-jerk reactions and premature boasts of understanding, both of which trade-off with the mentality that is needed to digest Nietzsche: a prodding, investigative outlook animated by patience.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Inner Domain of Nietzsche's Politics

The "Camps" as Semi-porous Containers

Nietzsche is properly placed in the anti-political camp. However, this does not mean that I see him as completely insulated from the other camps (or that the other camps have no fruitful insights to offer). In my view, the camps are not air-tight containers. Instead, they are semi-porous. At some points, Nietzsche migrates between them. Chapter 3 illustrated this. Nietzsche's outlook on the Law of Manu reveals his admiration of aristocratic values (along with his desire to import those values into social relations). This meshes well with the arguments in the aristocratic distinction camp. His arguments about the necessity of slavery prove a similar point. Though it may be subtler, Nietzsche's vision of politics also adopts ideas from the apolitical camp. On the surface, the apolitical and anti-political camps appear to radically diverge from each other. One states that Nietzsche was conscious of politics and analyzed it with a unique style, the other claims he hardly valued political concerns at all. I believe this surface-level reading hides a deeper truth: Nietzsche's work is nourished by both of these streams.

Focusing on the interrelated and overlapping nature of the camps is valuable for several reasons. First, it respects the fluidity and complexity of Nietzsche's thoughts. Nietzsche is slippery and his writings are hard to pin down conceptually. Thus, if we are to approach Nietzsche equipped with certain interpretive boxes ("camps"), it is wise to not view those boxes too rigidly. This could create a Procrustean bed dilemma where we

denature Nietzsche's work in the process of trying to grasp it. Second, I find that my outlook on the camps instills intellectual humility and dodges the snare of dogmatism. This was revealed to me through self-reflection. The objective of this thesis was to accumulate evidence that demonstrated Nietzsche's anti-political stance. However, forcing myself to evaluate points where the other camps were right revealed to me that my argument is not infallible or "too good" for recalibration. Like all interpretations, it has shortcomings and blind spots. This is a truth that all thinkers have to grapple with. They have to make concessions and iteratively adapt their ideas because no interpretation is invincible. The practice of acknowledging the fallibility of our interpretations is a valuable one and I think we are wise to ingrain it in our academic and daily lives.

The core argument from the apolitical camp is that Nietzsche is a solitary thinker. The magnifying glass of his philosophy is placed on the individual. He is concerned, almost exclusively, with the psychology of self-mastery and self-overcoming. He wants us to conquer the inner citadel of drives and passions lodged within us. Since these strivings take a significant amount of effort, they reasonably trade off with a number of external activities (for example, dedicating one's life to being a politician).¹ I believe the self-mastery argument from the apolitical camp connects with the broader thesis of the anti-political camp. Nietzsche is oppositional to the politics of his time. This opposition fuels his transformative project. But Nietzsche's politics has two dimensions: the internal and the external. Almost in a quantum sense, I believe that Nietzsche's project of

¹ When the member of the apolitical camp claim that Nietzsche did not place a high priority on political concerns, I believe they are referring to parliamentary activity. If this is true, this illustrates the compatibility between the apolitical and anti-political camps. It means apolitical scholars could be receptive to the "political correctives" isolated in Chapter 3 because those are not traditional parliamentary reforms. They are grander, more revolutionary, and grounded on a philosophy of individual excellence.

transformation exists in both of these dimensions at once. For Nietzsche, the political transformation of the world outside the self (for example, ridding the world of power-hungry Bismarcks) is an intimation of the “political transformation” he wants us to conduct internally. This begs the question: does Nietzsche view the soul as a political entity? If so, how?

Nietzsche's Politics for the Soul

Nietzsche was concerned with the condition of the soul. He held an interesting outlook on its dynamics. He argued that the human soul is a multiplicity (Thiele, 51). It is an amalgam of multiple drives and passions: “That is to say, his political anthropology leads to the conclusion that human beings are not only divided among themselves, but also within themselves” (van Tongeren, 81). This theory of multiplicity was not unique to Nietzsche. For example, Plato introduces a similar idea in *The Republic* when he describes the function of political philosophy. It instructs men on how to establish a city within themselves, providing order to the soul’s plurality (Thiele, 52). From this vantage point, it becomes clear that Nietzsche is following in the footsteps of the Ancients.² Like Plato, Nietzsche views the soul as a political entity. He likewise saw the management of the soul as a political act: “Nietzsche observed that organization, cooperation, and patterns of domination – in short, politics – allows pluralities to bear the appearance of unities” (Thiele, 52). The soul appears as a microcosm of the political world, and the political world appears as a blown-up image of the soul, making “the

² This is ironic considering he frequently barrages them (especially Socrates) with criticism.

politics of statecraft and soulcraft are analogous” (Thiele, 52). This qualifies the critiques Nietzsche voiced against politics in Chapter 2. Though Nietzsche disapproved of the frenzied drive for political dominance (a drive that he saw the parties of his time and Bismarck falling prey to), he approves of a particular brand of dominance when it comes to the soul, as that is what makes it well-ordered and healthy.

For Nietzsche, the soul is stratified into three layers.³ The first layer is comprised of the “drives, instincts, or affects” (Thiele, 55). This is the most obscure layer of the soul because its operations are conducted unconsciously. The second layer is composed of “feelings or emotions” (Thiele, 55). This is the intermediate layer. Unlike the first, it holds a mixture of conscious and unconscious elements. The third layer is where conscious thoughts exclusively reside. For Nietzsche, the boundaries separating these layers are permeable. Whatever occurs in the lower layers bubbles up into the higher layers.⁴ Thus, the first two layers are the primary motivations for action, not the first. This understanding of the soul is observed in the elephant-rider model (where emotions and instincts are the “elephant” and reason is the “rider”) used by Jonathan Haidt in *The Righteous Mind*. Using this metaphor, Haidt argues that “intuition comes first, strategic reasoning second” (Haidt, 52) and that, in general, “elephants rule” (Haidt, 55). Emotions and affective responses provide most of the thrust to our activities. Reason only comes into play *post facto*.⁵ Additionally, Nietzsche organizes the layers of the soul in terms of

³ This is Thiele’s attempt to distill Nietzsche’s confusing thoughts about the dynamics of the soul, which is why he maintains that this model is “never strictly maintained” throughout Nietzsche’s corpus (Thiele, 55). Whatever shortcomings it may have, I find this model conceptually useful.

⁴ From my readings, it seems that Nietzsche sees this “bubbling” process as occurring only in one direction (bottom-up).

⁵ Haidt’s psychological model grants reason some power: “[elephants] are sometimes open to persuasion by riders” (Haidt, 55). This distinguishes him from Nietzsche, who is far less lenient when describing reason’s function in the soul: “[the status of reason] is consistently depreciated in his writings” (Thiele, 56).

complexity. The bottom layers are fuller, they are multidimensional, intricate, and labyrinthine. In contrast, the top layer of reason is painfully simple. It captures a measly portion of this intricacy: “Thoughts are the shadows of our feelings – always darker, emptier, simpler” (GS, 203). This is not a neutral statement of fact; Nietzsche conveys this as an indictment against reason.

Nietzsche’s hierarchy holds important philosophical implications. In particular, it chafes against the Ancient understanding of the soul. For the Greeks it is both possible and advised for reason to tame and subordinate the passions to itself. In the Platonic school, this was the hallmark of a well-ordered and virtuous soul. Nietzsche’s hierarchy points out two errors in this idea. First, it presumes separability. It falsely thinks that reason can be disentangled from the passions. For Nietzsche, reason cannot stand alone above the other elements of the soul, for it is simply an accretion of the passions. He expresses this point through the following image (in which “vanity” is supposed to represent the superficial topsoil of reason):

Just as the bones, flesh, intestines, and blood vessels are enclosed by skin, which makes the sight of a man bearable, so the stirrings and passions of the soul are covered up by vanity: it is the skin of the soul (HH, 82).⁶

Similarly, Nietzsche argues that reason is a “certain behavior of the instincts towards one another” instead of an independent entity (GS, 333). The Platonic school also falsely assumed that reason could rule over the passions. Nietzsche flips this idea on its head:

“[man’s] head is only the entrails of his heart” (Z, I, *Zarathustra’s Prologue*). Nietzsche

⁶ Though this image seems to suggest that reason holds everything together and is thus the superior influence in the soul, this passage can be read in another light. I believe that, in positing the passions as the meat and bones of the soul, Nietzsche is arguing that they occupy the “driver’s seat.” In contrast, reason is just skin. It does not play nearly as big of a part. It is the paint on the outside of the car, but it’s not the one driving.

argues that whenever we experience changes in our thoughts, those changes are byproducts of fluctuations and battles occurring in the lower strata of our soul. Thus, our thoughts mark the end of a chain-reaction started by our passions.⁷ Nietzsche claims that the philosophers before him mistook the end of this process for the beginning. This provides a critical insight. Whenever Nietzsche discusses mastering the soul, he does not mean reason (or at least the Ancient's understanding of reason) should be the dominating force.⁸ Reason dominating at all is simply a non sequitur, for it is the puppet of subterranean drives and passions. Instead, the mission of mastery can only be conducted at the level of "drives and their political relations" (Thiele, 57). Mastery takes place in the thicket of the lower layers, not the upper layer.

Nietzsche personifies the drives in an interesting way.⁹ He describes them as if they are politicians. They compete and forge coalitions, all to assert supremacy over the other passions (Thiele, 58). In this view, the human soul is a space where invisible battles are waged. At one moment, drive "A" sits on the throne after defeating the other drives. Shortly thereafter, drive "B" supplants drive "A" and rules the soul according to its own perspective. Drives "C" and "D" recognize that they are too weak on their own to take the throne from drive "B", so they combine their strength to establish themselves as the new rulers. Nietzsche approves of these internal regime changes, for they represent multiplicity at work. However, he tempers his approval with caution. He warns us that

⁷ Nietzsche interestingly depicts the activities in the lower levels of the soul as a sort of deliberation process, almost like a debate that is ended by a "contract" (GS, 333) or an agreement (which is then "shipped off" to the third layer of the soul). This illustration suggests that, even if reason does not rule over the soul, each of the passions has a "reason of their own" that they employ to compete with the other passions.

⁸ If reason can never be the supreme ruler of the soul, can it be a co-ruler with other drives. Can it rule in conjunction with other passions? This is a question that I have yet to answer.

⁹ I will employ a loose definition of "drives" as anything located within the first and second levels of the soul (the elements of the soul not grounded in rationality).

“frequent regime changes should not be invitations to anarchy” (Thiele, 63). Similar to how our country allows regime change through the controlled process of periodical elections, Nietzsche wants these changes to occur in a stabilized way. Such stabilization is what Nietzsche means by “style,” it is “the coordinated exploitation of powerful instincts” for the purpose of cultivating greatness (Thiele, 63). Like a carousel, Nietzsche wants rotations to occur, but he wants them to be graceful and masterful instead of abrupt and spastic.

I believe this complicated idea can be unpacked by the following metaphors. Say a writer is busy composing a poem for his wife to commemorate their anniversary. There are a number of sub-rational drives he taps into to accomplish the task. He establishes a coalition between some drives (for example, lust and love) and allows that coalition to rule his soul.¹⁰ This allows him to apply a rich layer of passion over the poem, making it sincere, genuine, and heartfelt. He switches gears and gives priority to other drives (for example, his appetite for aesthetic order) to polish the poem, providing it with structure and rhyme. In the end, he composes the best poem imaginable. He took advantage of the diverse tools that his soul contained to create something excellent.

An orchestra provides another apt image. A conductor is faced with a multiplicity of musical elements: string, woodwind, brass, and percussion. At one point in the performance, he directs the brass section to play with more intensity to transmit a certain emotion to the audience. At another point, he allows the woodwind section to provide the

¹⁰ Though this example seems a bit cartoonish, it actually is connected to drives that Nietzsche touches on: “Here is a small sample of things Nietzsche refers to as drives: the creative drive, the sex drive, the property drive, the dominance drive, the agonistic drive, the lust for adventure drive, the drive to obey, the tyrannical drive, the drive to honesty about oneself, the drive to justice about things, the sociable drive, and the aesthetic drive” (Phillips, 351).

dominant sound, transmitting a completely different feeling to the listeners. The performance is full of these controlled fluctuations. The conductor manages to seam a diverse number of sounds into a wordless story. He turns what otherwise would have been a cacophony into a symphony that elicits applause and cheers. I believe this captures what Nietzsche means by style. Instead of allowing internal regime changes to happen sporadically (this is a symptom of an unhealthy, anarchic soul), style entails exercising control over the regime changes (not eliminating them but coordinating them).¹¹

Nietzsche ultimately posits *e pluribus unum* as a mantra for the soul (Thiele, 63). He wants us to respect the soul's multiplicity while simultaneously channeling it towards a single mission: the creation of great things and the accomplishment of great acts.

Interestingly, this provides the thrust to Nietzsche's critique of Christian moral psychology. Nietzsche sees the Christians as excisers. Placing the soul on a Procrustean bed, they chop off and eliminate drives that they deem profane and sacrilegious. This does not respect multiplicity; it attempts to destroy it. Like a farmer burning sections of his field, Nietzsche thinks the Christian approach to the soul ruins resources we can use for the trek towards greatness.¹² Nietzsche urges us to rule our souls in a different way. Instead of purging our "lower" drives, he advises us to sublimate (*Sublimierung*) them.¹³

¹¹ Here, it seems like Nietzsche posits the multiplicity of the soul as an instrumental good, not an intrinsic good. Multiplicity is good because, if it is harnessed properly, great things can emerge from it. It is not good in-itself, because pure multiplicity breeds chaos and disorder.

¹² It also drains color from life. For example, when Nietzsche describes the ascetic habits of priests, he states that such efforts leave them in "a waking sleep, an enduring repose in the lap of a dull, animal, plant-like indolence" (HH, 142).

¹³ Luke Phillips eloquently highlights two aspects of sublimation: elevation (a base drive is elevated to a higher, nobler plane) and preservation (the integrity of the drive is still maintained even though it takes on a more refined expression). He writes: "For Nietzsche, to sublimate a drive, affect, instinct, passion, and so on is to elevate the drive's objects into the imaginative or mental plain while retaining the drive's original character or aim and thereby to achieve a greater satisfaction for the drive" (Phillips, 350).

Instead of eliminating all base inclinations, he instructs us to refine and “spiritualize” (*Vergeistigung*) them towards noble ends.¹⁴ This is how we are to make the most of the passions implanted in us by nature:

Nevertheless, while the passions are in themselves expressions of power, they are not the ultimate expressions. It is in fact the sublimation of the passions that leads to the higher men, the precursors to the overmen (Jonas, 162).

It is critical to note that Nietzsche’s theory of sublimation does not imply that the drives should be “softened, moralized, or defanged” (Phillips, 358). In other words, sublimation does not involve transforming an otherwise base drive into a morally or socially acceptable version of itself (this is Freud’s interpretation). Nietzsche’s sublimation process is distinctly *amoral*; its grand purpose is to “refine and develop [the drives] into healthier, more profound, and more potent expressions” (Phillips, 358). This is the healthy, life-affirming counterpart to the ascetic ideal.

There are two dimensions to Nietzsche’s politics. On the one hand, he seeks the transformation of external conditions. He wants to do away with the brand of power politics that Bismarck promoted. He wants to eliminate the nationalist fever that elevates the state as a new god. He wants to bring an end to the parliamentary activity that snatches men away from higher things. He wants to make higher culture superior to politics instead of the reverse. As explained in the previous chapter, Nietzsche sketches out a number of revolutionary plans to achieve these goals. Though external conditions are a facet of Nietzsche’s politics, there is another dilemma that was on his mind: the internal condition of man. This is the second, more subtle dimension of his politics. For

¹⁴ The one exception to this rule is the passion of *resentment*. Nietzsche preaches that we should avoid letting this passion rule over us at all costs.

Nietzsche, politics was an internal affair just as much as it was an external one. Nietzsche argued that power grabs, conflicts, and tensions are constitutive of the soul, just as much as they were of Bismarck's regime. As such, he designed an ordering principle to unify this internal chaos. I believe this adds an important nuance to Nietzsche's politics: he wanted to transform external conditions without neglecting the soul, and he wanted to transform the soul without neglecting the external world.

CODA

Turning Over the Rocks

Currently, politics is “the buzz” that dominates our society. It has seeped into almost every crevice of our lives. This has inspired us to reflect and raise questions to ourselves: how do we deal with polarization? How can we talk *to* each other instead of *at* each other? Why are we resorting to labelling, name-calling, and silencing? I believe that we scholars have tools at our disposal that we can use to clear up our confusing world: thinkers of the past. These tools are accessible, though at times we have to retrieve them from the back of the shed and dust them off. Though the volume knob on politics has been turned up in our current times, the issues we are witnessing are not new. We are not “special.” Past thinkers lived through the same dilemmas; they were just expressed differently. Most importantly, they documented their thoughts so that we can use them when crafting solutions of our own. We should recognize that the solutions to the dilemmas of today can be mined from the caverns of the past.¹

Though fishing in the past for ideas is a healthy and much needed exercise, I believe we should search in a particular way. We should be flexible in how we investigate. We should not be overly attached to canons. We should not restrict our searching to thinkers who were formally instructed in political science or political philosophy. We should not pledge allegiance to thinkers who refrained from “rocking the boat” and maintained proper decorum. Neither should we gravitate towards the thinkers

¹ Even if we can only manage to recover fragments of ideas from the past, these are the ores out of which groundbreaking solutions can be smelted.

with the most credentials and awards at the expense of the less recognized. Like a child at play, we should not adopt an arbitrary standard to determine which rocks we will turn over and which we will not. We should be eager to turn over everything in sight, to explore indiscriminately, because we never know what will present itself to us. This is how treasures are found in unexpected places.

Nietzsche's work is a rock that has been left, for the most part, untouched by our political discussions. In the rare moments that it is touched, we lift it so we can see a small fraction of the ground underneath, then we let it fall back to the ground. I can attest to this personally. I was first introduced to Nietzsche during the Spring semester of my sophomore year. I left the class with vague takeaways and unanswered questions. It took me a full year of thumbing through books and articles to discover that Nietzsche was a political thinker just as much as Hobbes, Rousseau, and Locke were. He was just a special case. As I had my epiphany, I thought about all my colleagues who would not have theirs. I thought about all my classmates who did not buy extra books, who moved on the moment the course ended, who did not get a full view of the ecosystem under Nietzsche's rock.

In our current political climate, I believe Nietzsche is an untapped resource. Not only does he have a unique political perspective, he has ideas that have political implications, even though they are not explicitly "political." In this project, I highlighted a small cross-section of Nietzsche's political ideas: his outlook on the state and how to

correct its flaws. But he has much more to say. Nietzsche can contribute greatly to our political conversations in several other ways.²

For instance, Nietzsche's theory of *ressentiment* and the spirit of revenge can be used to view politics from a fresh angle. Specifically, these concepts cast light on the fringes of our political spectrum: the alt-right and the radical left. For Nietzsche, the spirit of revenge is derived from a deep-seated intolerance: we cannot bear suffering without a cause or reason. Nietzsche sees this intolerance as the root of most religions (as they provide supernatural explanations and an "overarching purpose" for the pains of life). Most of all, rarely can we suffer without venting our frustrations out on some object, person, or entity outside ourselves. For Nietzsche, every experience of suffering comes with a complimentary desire to make someone (or something) pay for it. Though Nietzsche focused on how the Christians gave into this drive, this dynamic is still playing out before us. For members the alt-right who suffer, the culprits are the left-wing media elites out to brainwash their children, the waves of immigrants disturbing the ethnic balance of the country, and the minorities who are stealing power from their clutches. They seek to exact revenge on the progressives who condone these atrocities. For members of the far-left who suffer, the blaming finger is pointed at abstract structures: patriarchy, racism, classism, and cis-heteronormativity. The culprits are institutions who refuse to accept them and individuals who deny their existence. Because of this, they wage a protracted struggle against the "bigots" who are holding the country back with their vile prejudices and making life miserable for the nonprivileged. Nietzsche believes that both sides of this binary are unhealthy and that we should be cautious of letting the

² These are ideas that I either did not touch on at all or touched on lightly in my thesis.

instinct of revenge saturate our lives. Nietzsche thinks we should look inward before we project outwards; we should investigate our inner selves before we unload blame on others for our pains. For our inner tensions communicate to us through a peculiar language: our treatment of others.

Nietzsche's approval of the *agon* can also be imported into our political conversations. Currently, our culture is stifled by enemyship. We live in a time where people are driven to silence and gag one another so that their values can reign supreme. We live in a time where student advocacy groups with differing opinions huddle up in their designated rooms, refusing to walk across the hall and extend an inviting hand. Nietzsche believes this practice of "sheltering" causes our minds to stagnate. For him, enemies should not be eliminated, silenced, or purged. We should not retreat into "safe spaces" or a "holy ground" to avoid them. This is a life-denying reflex. Instead, enemies should be embraced, for growth is created from the friction between opposing forces. Nietzsche is not a proponent of disorderly clashes. Instead, he says our encounters with challengers should be controlled and moderated.³ Fighting for fighting's sake is deplorable; this would court anarchy. A battle within an arena with rules for combat is what Nietzsche prefers.⁴ Homer provides an illustration of Nietzsche's philosophy. In Book 2 of the *Odyssey*, Telemachus, the son of King Odysseus, was participating in an assembly in Ithaca. One of his primary purposes for attending was to denounce the suitors who were besieging his mother, Penelope, in Odysseus' absence. During the assembly, Telemachus did not launch into a scolding tirade against the suitors at the first

³ Almost all the expressions of the *agon* Nietzsche admired in Ancient Greek culture had these built-in control mechanisms.

⁴ This is one of Nietzsche's "conservative" ideas.

opportunity. Instead, when it was his time to speak, he took the speaker's staff. He battled his foes with his words while simultaneously honoring the constraints and customs of the Greek oratorical tradition. Once we emerge from the trials of contest, Nietzsche argues that our being will be refreshed and refined. I can attest to the soundness of this idea from my own debate career. It was a chronicle of disagreements, challenges, and antagonism (within a complex framework of rules and time constraints). Every piece of evidence I cited would elicit 5 articles from the other side explaining why my position was wrong. Though this experience was jarring at first, it nurtured skills within me (the art of strategic concessions and listening, how to establish criteria for value judgements, etc.) that turned me into the thinker I am today. My rhetorical prowess grew in proportion to every challenger I encountered (growing even more whenever I lost). I believe this frame of mind is helpful for those who are unsettled by challengers: they are not out to destroy you. They are resources, lying in wait, that can facilitate your transformation. Take advantage of them.

Nietzsche's epistemological outlook, though controversial, can also mend our fractured political relationships. Nietzsche's theory of perspectivism asserts that "one knows only one's perceptions" (Thiele, 28). In this view, there is no capital-T truth that governs reality, there are only lower-case-T truths that we unearth from our own experiences: "Man can know the world only as he measures it, as he perceives and interprets it" (Thiele, 29). The closest thing to objectivity we can get is an accretion of these first-person perspectives. Though this idea is freighted with debatable assumptions (for example, that universal moral truths do not exist), I think it is useful to temporarily bracket this debate and embark on a thought experiment: how would we come to treat

others in a perspectivist world? In this world, I believe intellectual humility would be widespread.⁵ We would see others who disagree with us as people with a different understanding of the truth (as opposed to evildoers who are out to trample on everything that is good). We would be inspired to think outside of ourselves and investigate the mind-space of others. We would be introspective and reflective, pausing before we speak to consider how our experiences shape our perceptions of truth (and, accordingly, how the experiences of others differ from our own). Though we should not blindly subscribe to Nietzsche's perspectivism without due criticism, I believe valuable lessons can be extracted from this epistemological lens even if its core assumptions are questionable. If we were to temporarily put on a "perspectivist cap" in civic contexts, I believe we would face our political adversaries with more tolerance and patience.

Lastly, we can make use of Nietzsche's aesthetics in our political culture. Nietzsche placed a premium on music, art, mythology, and other expressions of creative prowess. Though he eventually parted ways with him, he had a deep appreciation of Richard Wagner's operas and theatrical masterpieces. While he was a member of his own youth club, *Germania*, he treasured poetry and essays, original compositions, and lengthy conversations with his friends about the hidden gems of German culture. This habit of aesthetic appreciation remained active as he aged. As an adult, Nietzsche frequented Lake Silvaplana in Switzerland, using the sublime landscape as a stimulant for his deep philosophical thinking (arguably, this kept him functioning in his health began to wane). These experiences demonstrate Nietzsche's respect for the beautiful aspects of life. His

⁵ I admit that this is a rosy reading. There is also the chance that egoism would run rampant in a perspectivist world as everyone wields the assertion "but my truth is my truth" to silence others. Arguably, we are witnessing this behavior in our current political landscape.

manner of living was a testament to his own teachings: “only as an aesthetic phenomenon is existence and the world eternally justified” (BT, 5).⁶ Nietzsche was never one to keep up with the newspapers or drown himself in the never-ending hubbub of political crises.⁷ Instead, he vested his value in higher culture, which he saw as an inventory of endangered aesthetic practices (art, music, literature, and life-affirming philosophies). We live in a time where politics dominates our attention. This is precisely why Nietzsche’s aesthetic lifestyle is relevant; it is something we can take to heart and mirror in our own lives. Nietzsche’s life reminds us that we are surrounded by aesthetic retreats, activities we can pursue to drink in the world and participate in the beautiful drama that is the human experience. Though Nietzsche’s outlook on the political life may come off as pessimistic, it does present the truth that politics is not all there is to life. There are other arenas of experience that politics crowds out. This fact is of great help to us, especially in a time where the political frenzy is at an all-time high and fulfillment is at an all-time low.

These insights are only the first that came to mind. There are many more politically relevant articulations and tucked away in Nietzsche’s corpus, waiting to be discovered. From my experience, I am confident these nuances can be found if one

⁶ Nietzsche frames aesthetic encounters with rich, existential language in other places: “A common thread of Nietzsche’s aesthetics found in the BT is grounded in a unifying theme where powerful encounters (aesthetic phenomenon) with artists, such as Wagner and various art forms such as, music, drama, literature, and so on can unite us with our “primal Oneness”, and this in turn reveals to us our primordial essence (“true self”)” (Stolz, 693).

⁷ Nietzsche conveys his displeasure with newspapers and political chatter in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: “Just look at these superfluous [statemen]! They are always sick, they vomit their gall and call it the newspaper. They devour one another and are not even able to digest themselves” (Z I, *On The New Idol*).

maintains the proper discipline, dedication, and tolerance.⁸ Nietzsche is as much a profound political thinker as he is an unconventional one. His rock deserves to be turned over. While doing so, we should be both curious and meticulous. We should gaze at its underbelly and sink our fingers into the soil to discover the specimen and the layers of life hidden beneath the surface.

⁸ For Nietzsche, who identifies as a philosophical version of dynamite, can be quite abrasive at times (EH, 1).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbey, Ruth, and Fredrick Appel. "Nietzsche and the Will to Politics." *The Review of Politics*, vol. 60, no. 1, 1998, pp. 83–114. JSTOR.
- Abrams, Lynn. *Bismarck and the German Empire, 1871-1918*. Routledge, 1995.
- Bassina, Irina, and Marcel Bas. "A United Europe as an Antidote to a Democratic Nation-State in the Ideas of Nietzsche: Nietzsche's Views on What It Takes to Be 'Good Europeans.'" *De Roepstem Die Roepstem*, Jan. 2002, <http://www.roepstem.net/nietzsche.html>.
- Berkowitz, Peter. "Nietzsche's Ethics of History." *The Review of Politics*, vol. 56, no. 1, [University of Notre Dame du lac on behalf of Review of Politics, Cambridge University Press], 1994, pp. 5–27. JSTOR.
- Berman, David. "Nietzsche's Three Phases of Atheism." *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 3, [North American Philosophical Publications, University of Illinois Press], 1988, pp. 273–86.
- Bernhard, Michael. "The Leadership Secrets of Bismarck: Imperial Germany and Competitive Authoritarianism." *Foreign Affairs*, edited by Jonathan Steinberg, vol. 90, no. 6, Council on Foreign Relations, 2011, pp. 150–54. JSTOR.
- Cominos, Marina. "The Question of Nietzsche's Anti-Politics and Human Transfiguration." *Nietzsche, Power and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche's Legacy for Political Thought*, edited by Herman W. Siemens and Vasti Roodt, Walter de Gruyter, 2008, pp. 85–108, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110217339>.
- Cunningham, G. Watts. "Nietzsche on Democracy." *Texas Review*, vol. 4, no. 3, Southern Methodist University, 1919, pp. 185–97.
- Dallmayr, Fred. "Understanding Nietzsche's Anti-Politics." *The Review of Politics*, edited by Peter Bergmann, vol. 50, no. 1, [University of Notre Dame du lac on behalf of Review of Politics, Cambridge University Press], 1988, pp. 133–39.

- Drochon, Hugo. "Great Politics." *Nietzsche's Great Politics*, Princeton University Press, 2016, pp. 153–79. JSTOR, *JSTOR*, doi:10.2307/j.ctt1wf4chc.12.
- . "Philosophy and Politics." *Nietzsche's Great Politics*, Princeton University Press, 2016, pp. 105–28. JSTOR, *JSTOR*, doi:10.2307/j.ctt1wf4chc.10.
- . "Revaluation." *Nietzsche's Great Politics*, Princeton University Press, 2016, pp. 129–52. JSTOR, *JSTOR*, doi:10.2307/j.ctt1wf4chc.11.
- . "The State." *Nietzsche's Great Politics*, Princeton University Press, 2016, pp. 49–70. JSTOR, *JSTOR*, doi:10.2307/j.ctt1wf4chc.8.
- Durgun, Sezgi. *Nationalism, Nietzsche and Ressentiment*. Central European University, 2004. www.academia.edu,
https://www.academia.edu/1308099/Nationalism_Nietzsche_and_Ressentiment.
- Edelstein, David M. "The Arrival of Imperial Germany." *Over the Horizon: Time, Uncertainty, and the Rise of Great Powers*, Cornell University Press, 2017, pp. 38–70. JSTOR, *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt1vjqr6h.6>.
- Gemes, Ken. "'We Remain of Necessity Stranger to Ourselves': The Key Message of Nietzsche's Genealogy." *Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals: Critical Essays*, edited by Christa Acampora, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006, https://www.academia.edu/3112824/_We_Remain_of_Necessity_Stranger_to_Ourselves_The_Key_Message_of_Nietzsche_s_Genealogy.
- Glendinning, Simon. "Nietzsche's Europe: An Experimental Anticipation of the Future." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, vol. 47, no. 3, July 2016, pp. 276–91. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, doi:10.1080/00071773.2016.1180850.
- Grube, G. M. A. "The Marriage Laws in Plato's Republic." *The Classical Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1927, pp. 95–99.
- Guay, Robert. "Nietzsche, Contingency, and the Vacuity of Politics." *Nietzsche, Nihilism and the Philosophy of the Future*, edited by Jeffrey Metzger, 1st ed., Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. *Zotero*, <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/nietzsche-nihilism-and-the-philosophy-of-the-future-9780567257611/>.
- Haidt, Jonathan. *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*. First Edition, Pantheon Books, 2012.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Edited by Richard Tuck, Revised Student Edition, Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Holborn, Hajo. "Bismarck's Realpolitik." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 21, no. 1, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960, pp. 84–98. JSTOR, *JSTOR*,

doi:10.2307/2708000.

- Holub, Robert C. "The German Question." *Nietzsche in the Nineteenth Century*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018, pp. 75–124. JSTOR, *JSTOR*, doi:10.2307/j.ctv16t6jk0.6.
- Howell, Graham R. "Of the New Idol: Nietzsche's Critique of Leviathan." *Canadian Political Science Association*, June 2012, p. 8.
- Huddleston, Andrew. "'Consecration to Culture': Nietzsche on Slavery and Human Dignity." *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2014, pp. 135–60. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, doi:10.1353/hph.2014.0020.
- . "Nietzsche on the Health of the Soul." *Inquiry*, vol. 60, no. 1–2, Routledge, Feb. 2017, pp. 135–64. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*, doi:10.1080/0020174X.2016.1258147.
- Hunt, Lester H. "Politics and Anti-Politics: Nietzsche's View of the State." *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 4, [North American Philosophical Publications, University of Illinois Press], 1985, pp. 453–68.
- Ikuta, Jennie C. "'Nothing Is Really Equal': On the Compatibility of Nietzsche's Egalitarian Ethics and Anti-Democratic Politics." *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical & Democratic Theory*, vol. 24, no. 3, Sept. 2017, pp. 339–55. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1111/1467-8675.12290.
- Jonas, Mark E. "A (R)Evaluation of Nietzsche's Anti-Democratic Pedagogy: The Overman, Perspectivism, and Self-Overcoming." *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2009, pp. 153–69, doi:10.1007/s11217-008-9107-1.
- Karademir, Aret. "Nietzsche's Politics: Dynamis or Stasis?" *Southwest Philosophy Review*, vol. 29, no. 1, July 2013, p. 18, doi:https://doi.org/10.5840/swphilreview20132915.
- Kolakowski, Leszek. *Why Is There Something Rather Than Nothing?: 23 Questions from Great Philosophers*. Translated by Agnieszka Kolakowska, English Edition, Basic Books, 2007.
- Lemm, Vanessa. "Nietzsche's Agon for Politics?" *Contemporary Political Theory*, vol. 14, no. 1, Feb. 2015, pp. 12–17. *Springer Link*, doi:10.1057/cpt.2014.3.
- Locke, John. *Two Treatises of Government*. Edited by Peter Laslett, 3rd ed., Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Machiavelli, Nicolo. *The Prince*. Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield, 2nd ed., University of Chicago Press, 1998.

- Mencken, H. L. *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche*. 3rd ed., Luce and Company, 1913, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/49316/49316-h/49316-h.htm>.
- Michalski, Jonathan James. *Nietzsche's Aristocratic Radicalism*. Wright State University, 2012. *Zotero*, https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/etd_all/584.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Edited by Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Judith Norman, Translated by Judith Norman, Cambridge University Press, 2002, <https://www.holybooks.com/wp-content/uploads/Nietzsche-Beyond-Good-and-Evil.pdf>.
- . *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*. Edited by Brian Leiter and Maudemarie Clark, 2nd ed., Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- . *Friedrich Nietzsche: On the Genealogy of Morality*. Edited by Keith Ansell-Pearson, Translated by Carol Diethe, 2nd ed., Cambridge University Press, 2006, doi:10.1017/CBO9780511812026.
- . *Human, All Too Human Part II*. Translated by Cohn Paul V., George Allen And Unwin Limited., 1924. *Internet Archive*, <http://archive.org/details/humanalltoohuman033142mbp>.
- . *Human All-Too-Human: A Book on Free Spirits*. Translated by Helen Zimmern, T.N. Foulis, 1910, https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/main/b20790001_v_1_B000773557.pdf.
- . *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*. Edited by Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, Cambridge University Press, 2005, <http://users.clas.ufl.edu/burt/LoserLit/The%20Anti-Christ%20Ecce%20Homo%20Twilight%20of%20the%20Idols%20&%20Other%20Writings%20Friedrich%20Nietzsche.pdf>.
- . *The Gay Science*. Translated by Walter Arnold Kaufmann, 1st ed., Vintage Books, 1974, <https://philoslugs.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/the-gay-science-friedrich-nietzsche.pdf>.
- . "The Greek State." *Untitled*, 1871, <http://www.stephenhicks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Nietzsche-Greek-State-text.pdf>.
- . *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. Edited by Adrian Del Caro and Robert B Pippin, Translated by Adrian Del Caro, Cambridge University Press, 2006. *Zotero*, <http://users.clas.ufl.edu/burt/LoserLit/zarathustra.pdf>.
- . *Twilight of the Idols, or, How to Philosophize with the Hammer*. Translated by Richard Polt, Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 1997.

- Pflanze, Otto. "Bismarck's 'Realpolitik.'" *The Review of Politics*, vol. 20, no. 4, [University of Notre Dame du lac on behalf of Review of Politics, Cambridge University Press], 1958, pp. 492–514. JSTOR.
- Phillips, Luke. "Sublimation and the Übermensch." *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, vol. 46, no. 3, Penn State University Press, 2015, pp. 349–66. JSTOR, doi:10.5325/jnietstud.46.3.0349.
- Retallack, James. "Forging an Empire: Economy, Society, Culture, and Politics, 1866–1890." *Germany's Second Reich*, University of Toronto Press, 2015, pp. 3–43. JSTOR, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/j.ctvg2528n.5>.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The First and Second Discourses*. Edited by Roger D. Masters, Translated by Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters, Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1964.
- Schuringa, Christoph. "Nietzsche's Genealogical Histories and His Project of Revaluation." *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 3, [North American Philosophical Publications, University of Illinois Press], July 2014, pp. 249–69. JSTOR.
- Shaw, Tamsin. "Introduction." *Nietzsche's Political Skepticism*, Princeton University Press, 2007, pp. 1–11. JSTOR, JSTOR, doi:10.2307/j.ctt7skwr.4.
- . "The Predatory State." *Nietzsche's Political Skepticism*, Princeton University Press, 2007, pp. 12–35. JSTOR, JSTOR, doi:10.2307/j.ctt7skwr.5.
- Solga, Raymond S. *Nietzsche on Politics: The Cause of a Culture Driven Polity*. pp. 1–15.
- Steinberg, Jonathan. *Bismarck: A Life*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Strong, Tracy. "'Wars the Like of Which One Has Never Seen': Reading Nietzsche and Politics." *Nietzsche and Politics*, Ashgate, 2009. www.academia.edu, https://www.academia.edu/7507289/INTRODUCTION_WARS_THE_LIKE_OF_WHICH_ONE_HAS_NEVER_SEEN_READING_NIETZSCHE_AND_POLITICS.
- Thiele, Leslie Paul. *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of the Soul*. Edited by Marshall Cohen, Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Toscano, Albert. "Race, Class, Tragedy: Nietzsche and the Fantasies of Europe." *Crisis & Critique: The Future of Europe*, edited by Agon Hamza and Frank Ruda, vol. 7, no. 1, Jan. 2020, pp. 237–58.

Ullrich, Volker. *Bismarck: The Iron Chancellor*. Translated by Timothy Beech, Haus Publishing, 2008.

Ure, Michael. "Nietzsche's Ethics of Self-Cultivation and Eternity." *Ethics and Self-Cultivation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, by Sander Werkhoven and Matthew Dennis, 1st ed., Routledge, 2018, p. 246. www.academia.edu, https://www.academia.edu/34312162/Nietzsches_Ethics_of_Self_Cultivation_and_Eternity.

van Tongeren, Paul. "Nietzsche as 'Uber-Politischer Denker'." *Nietzsche, Power, and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche's Legacy for Political Thought*, edited by Herman W. Siemens and Vasti Roodt, Walter de Gruyter, 2008, <https://www.degruyter.com/doi/10.1515/9783110217339>.

Wilson, Timothy H. "Nietzsche's Early Political Thinking: 'Homer on Competition.'" *Minerva: An Internet Journal of Philosophy*, no. 9, 2005, pp. 177–235.

Yack, Bernard. *The Longing for Total Revolution: Philosophic Sources of Social Discontent from Rousseau to Marx and Nietzsche*. Princeton University Press, 1986.