ABSTRACT

The Nature of Global Contest:
Will-to-Power and Nietzsche's International Politics

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Though known for its sweeping and encompassing character, Nietzsche's thought has had little influence in the field of international politics. This is striking given the frequency with which Nietzsche writes not only of nations, but of the significance of their relationships. To address this deficit, as well as foster new and productive engagement with Nietzsche within the field of international politics, the following study articulates what I understand to be the theory of international politics implied by, and operating within, Nietzsche's philosophy. Beginning with Nietzsche's foundational theory of will-to-power, I detail its relationship to human flourishing as understood by Nietzsche, and the importance of social constructions: Nietzsche considers culture, society, and even the state as natural human creations intended to aid man in establishing life-enhancing relationships with the primal forces of life as articulated in the theory of will-to-power. But of equal importance with respect to human flourishing is the international system within which such domestic energies and associations operate: I argue that Nietzsche conceives of the international system as an essential arena in which those life-enhancing

agonistic struggles between culturally distinct populations deemed necessary for human flourishing are able to occur on a grand and far more consequential scale. Furthermore, I demonstrate the ways in which Nietzsche sees international politics becoming only more central to mankind's future following the Death of God: Western man's two-millennia long physiological transformation, combined with a civilizational post-God cultural exhaustion lead Nietzsche to view the coming age as one defined by global conflicts over the future of the species. Informed by analysis of these and other key concepts, I articulate a naturally emergent model of international politics: aristocratic in character, the center of such politics is cultural vitality rather than material power, with communities struggling against one another in pursuit of creative energy. I conclude by situating this model among the dominant theories within the field of international politics, and discuss at length its implications regarding liberalism and the current standards of international morality.

The Nature of Global Contest: Will-to-Power and
Nietzsche's International Politics

by

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DEDICATION

To all who knew I could, as well as those who didn't.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Outlines

Introduction

"[T]he critique of modern rationalism or of the modern belief in reason by Nietzsche cannot be dismissed or forgotten. This is the deepest reason for the crisis of liberal democracy."[1] These words, taken from Leo Strauss' essay, "The Three waves of Modernity," are effective in conveying the significance of Nietzsche to the development and future of Western political thought. While not a political scientist by profession, the discipline having yet to emerge, Nietzsche was nonetheless deeply involved with matters central to man's political life. Such was unavoidable given the content and character of his project: Nietzsche relentlessly investigated man's nature to better understand not only this singular creature, but also the environments in which he exists, be they natural or of his own invention. One reason Nietzsche judged knowledge on these matters to be of such importance was that he counted man "among the animals plain and simple, without metaphorical intent," whose fitness was therefore inextricably linked to environmental and behavioral factors.[2] Born of a concern for man's physiological wellbeing, Nietzsche sought to discern those conditions, both material and psychological, most influential with respect to his flourishing or deterioration.

1. Leo Strauss, "Three Waves of Modernity," in *An introduction to Political Philosophy: Ten Essays* (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 98.

2. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Marion Faber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 89.

However, though assessing man to be an animal through-and-through, Nietzsche is adamant as to man's uniqueness: man possesses an unprecedented capacity for creativity as well as a psychological inner world of infinite complexity.   Simultaneously a blessing and a curse, this uniqueness expands the factors that go into determining his constitution, and therefore health. Consequently, to the familiar variables of climate, food and water, Nietzsche adds values, culture, and social relations, among others, to the list of factors that affect human development.

In the field of political science, the importance of societal and political forces to the conduct and character of persons is not a new consideration. Aristotle and Rousseau, for example, viewed man as a fundamentally social creature, and therefore to understand him, one must pay attention to the social environments he naturally constructs for himself, and in which he carries out the course of his life. Nietzsche follows suit in this regard, as evidenced by his man-as-animal premise: Nietzsche treats society as a habitat of sorts, with its various components (values, institutions, cultural and political hierarchies, etc.) as, in effect, external factors that determine in key ways the type of human animal that emerges. Furthermore, Nietzsche considers these factors themselves to be the result of circumstantial pressures, both historical and immediate: a system of values, far from being the articulation of an immutable order of otherworldly origin, is in reality a context-dependent human creation meant to both defend, as well as empower.

The formative influence Nietzsche attributes to social and psychological factors with respect to human development helps explain his intense interest in the moral systems and political arrangements of various human communities. As with the generational effects of environmental conditions on the dominant characteristics found

within a particular population, over time, social, political, and normative pressures within

a society advantage certain types of individuals, and disadvantage others. Consequently,

Nietzsche elevates society to a place of prominence with respect to man's physiological

development. According to Nietzsche, as the values of a community change, often as a

response to a threat, so too do the people of that community:

> Certain strong and dangerous instincts such as adventurousness, recklessness,
> vengefulness, slyness, rapacity, lust for power…had to be cultivated and bred,
> because people continually had need for them in their common danger against
> common enemies.[3]

One way in which Nietzsche distinguishes himself from other thinkers who have

taken a similar approach to the relationship between man and his environment is his

understanding of existence itself, and the ways in which its animating forces both shape

and constitute the life of man. While the following ideas are developed much more

completely in subsequent chapters, an introductory sketch of them may be useful here. In

his concept of will-to-power, Nietzsche articulates what he believes to be the

fundamental operational essence of reality, and, consequently, of biological life:

> Assuming, finally, that we could explain our entire instinctual life as the
> development and differentiation of *one* basic form of the will (namely the will to
> power, as *my* tenet would have it); assuming that one could derive all organic
> functions from this will to power and also find in it the solution to the problem of
> procreation and alimentation (it is all one problem), then we would have won the
> right to designate *all* effective energy unequivocally as the *will to power*.[4]

In addition to having identified what he considers the universal animating force of

reality itself, Nietzsche argues that this force manifests in organisms in certain ways

depending on their fitness. A healthy organism, be it a plant, man or community, "will

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3. Ibid., 87.

4. Ibid., 36, emphasis in original.

want to grow, to reach out around itself, pull towards itself, gain the upper hand—not out of some morality or immorality, but because it is *alive*, and because life simply *is* the will to power."[5]

The correlation and causation between the health of an organism and the ways in which it behaves as determined by will-to-power, provide Nietzsche with a means by which he can judge between alternative forms and modes of human life. Having reduced morality and religion to manifestations of human instincts and responses to environmental conditions, Nietzsche's philosophy cannot rely upon familiar methods of valuation, such as divine authority, or the force of tradition, to evaluate man's past, present and future condition. What he looks to instead is what he understands to be the intrinsic character of reality itself, will-to-power. Following careful study of this most foundational of foundations, Nietzsche believes he has acquired knowledge that allows him to render value judgements. As Laurence Lampert puts it, "[u]nderstanding the will to power as the fundamental phenomenon *generates* values of a precise sort, natural values, naturalizing values. Insight into the fundamental fact gives birth to new highest values."[6]

As the constituting and animating force of biological life, the "fundamental fact" of will-to-power provides Nietzsche with values related to health and flourishing. Specifically, Nietzsche associates health with a robust manifestation of will-to-power, and grants it a positive value, whereas he associates illness with a recoiling from will-to-power, and consequently devalues it. While it is the essential character of reality that

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5. Ibid., 153.

6. Laurence Lampert, *Leo Strauss and Nietzsche* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 98.

"[e]very moment devours the preceding one, every birth is the death of innumerable beings; begetting, living, murdering, all is one,"[7] this cycle also manifests itself in and through organisms in ways that correspond to their physiological fitness, the proper understanding of which reveals an order of rank within a species. Derived from the essential nature of reality, and reflective of that reality's dynamic and ever changing particular manifestations, Nietzsche believes these valuations affirm the truth of reality's non-teleological relativism, while also providing man with the normative guidance necessary to thrive. Though the particulars of any set of values necessarily change given inevitable developments in context and conditions, the superiority of vitality to weariness, and the correlation each state has to identifiable behavioral manifestations of will-to-power, are repeated and recurring ideas in Nietzsche's writings.

The relationship between health and expressions of will-to-power returns us to the importance of values and society. Nietzsche's conception of the influence of values and their subsequent complementary societal pressures with respect to the physiological make-up of man means that culture, the nexus of a community's value-creating resources, is a necessary component of human flourishing. By artistically rendering the world through the transfiguring power of values, culture fulfills a "general principle" of life whose commanding dictate is that "each living being can become healthy, strong, and fertile only within a horizon…"[8] As an instructive example, Nietzsche refers to the cultural works of the Ancient Greeks, specifically their pantheon of Olympian gods. To

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7. Nietzsche, "The Greek State," in *The Complete Works of Friederich Nietzsche*. trans. Maximilian A Mügge, ed. Oscar Levy (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911), Vol. #2: 8.

8. Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," in *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, ed. Daniel Breazeale (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 63.

overcome the nausea of existence brought on by insight into the chaotic and indifferent forces underlying reality, Ancient Greek culture deified the strains and struggles of human life in the form of exquisitely composed gods of human dimensions: "Existence under the bright sunshine of such gods is regarded as that which is desirable in itself…"[9] The importance Nietzsche grants to values with respect to man's wellbeing leads to a keen interest in community, for it is society that impresses upon the individual the values that determine much of his physiological condition. As Zarathustra asserts: "Creators were at first peoples and only later individuals; verily the individual is itself just the most recent creation."[10] Nietzsche's concern is the promotion of those attributes most closely correlated to vitality. Man is unique in that the highest expression of his health is intellectual and spiritual creativity: it is "around inventors of new values that the world revolves," for these values connect and manifest the dynamic forces of reality known as will-to-power.[11] But society is neither self-generating nor self-directing, and great communities require great individuals to forge and guide them: Nietzsche's celebrated creators are craftsmen of culture, artists of values whose works determine the introspective depth and expansionistic breadth of collective vitality. Bound in a reciprocity of formation, citizen and city create one another, each taking a turn in the education of its symbiotic counterpart.

Regarding the values that either foster or hinder man's vitality, Nietzsche again points to the Ancient Greeks. Rather than project into the beyond a world in which the

9. Nietzshche, "The Birth of Tragedy," in *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, Inc., 1967), 36.

10.Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Graham Parkes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 52.

11. Ibid., 113.

tumults of earthly life were absent, during the Attic period in particular, Ancient Greek creators crafted one that mirrored the antagonisms, hostilities, and competitions of this one. In accordance with will-to-power, Nietzsche argues that reality necessarily operates in a dynamic and combative way: forces continually battle one another for dominance, and victory is always fleeting, for another power will inevitably arrive and attempt to assert itself. Insofar as the Ancient Greeks had their divinities perpetually engage in competitions over any number of matters, they sanctified the struggle for power in a way that kept citizens actively engaged with will-to-power. By contrast, according to Nietzsche, the sanctification of peace and tranquility in Christianity and carried on in the social programs of modern Western politics, is damaging to man, for it "promis[es] to invent a life form that would refrain from all organic functions."[12]

The struggle embraced by the Ancient Greeks, one reflective of the underlying character of reality, is not limited to individuals. Rather, Nietzsche brings human communities themselves into the processes of will-to-power, making them active participants with a crucial role to play in man's elevation or decline. Regarding the promotion and productive application of man's creative energies, Nietzsche speaks of the need for relationships between culturally differentiated populations: "No people could live without first evaluating; but if it would maintain itself, it may not evaluate as its neighbour evaluates."[13] A vital people, one consciously and actively in possession of creative energy, is one that "makes holy" that which "allows it to rule and conquer and

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12. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 153.

13. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 51.

shine, to the horror and envy of its neighbour."[14] Composed as it is of ceaseless

struggling forces, will-to-power manifests itself in the healthy community through values

that foster competition, rather than repose. By linking the individual's development to

society's values, and those values to the relationship between societies, Nietzsche invites

us to consider those relationships within the context of will-to-power. Consequently,

international politics ought to be understood as one more aspect of Nietzsche's thought,

one firmly grounded in his theory of will-to-power.

      Nietzsche was aware of this interdependence between domestic and international

concerns, and accordingly his works are replete with thoughts, comments, and analysis

regarding the international affairs of Europe, be they past, present, or future. Understood

as an extension of, rather than a distraction from, the pressing cultural concerns of

domestic politics, Nietzsche saw international relations as an arena of competition

essential to vitality-promoting value creation, such values being the means by which

mankind manifests its will-to-power, and consequently its relationship to life itself. Such

an estimation explains Nietzsche's interest in the cultural rivalries between European

states: squabbles over music, fashion, and literature are lower intensity corollaries to the

greater cultural confrontations between world-defining value systems, confrontations

whose energy is the very essence of will-to-power.

      The importance of cultural competition to Nietzsche's understanding of

international politics cannot be overstated, and it is a core component of the theory the

present study aims to articulate. While an advocate for strife, friction, and antagonism in

life, when it comes to human affairs, Nietzsche is careful to maintain a focus on conflicts

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14. Ibid.

of a cultural sort. More specifically, Nietzsche is concerned with the battles over values and the experiential perspectives of reality that those values foster, rather than clashes of armed forces. Unlike other creatures, man manifests will-to-power to the highest degree through creative works reflective of his unique intellect, spiritual depth, and psychological complexity. Being the most impactful instantiation of such works, values constitute man's most important relationship to, and expression of, will-to-power, and therefore are largely responsible for either his flourishing or decline. As Nietzsche believes competition over these values is both natural and beneficial, he embraces struggles between cultures on the basis of values and value creation. As we will see in later chapters, Nietzsche does create a space for state machinery and armed conflict, and at times welcomes the bloody meeting of armies. However, as I argue at length below, Nietzsche only ever sanctions brute violence and destruction in the international arena when it contributes to the robustness of battles between cultures: the state's sole purpose is to support and defend a people's culture, and must never be allowed to substitute its own base interests for culture's. Nietzsche's criticisms of Bismarck involve this very issue: concerned with the creative vitality of the German people, Nietzsche was deeply troubled by Bismarck's state-centric politics of "blood and iron," as it confused military power with cultural health, and thereby made more acute Germany's "aesthetic disease" of creative malaise.[15]

In the chapters that follow I construct a coherent, and consistent theory of international politics derived from, and imbedded within, Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche was not a theorist of international politics, nor of political science, as noted

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15. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 147.

above. However, as with political science, his thought has powerful and productive contributions to make to the study of international politics. Furthermore, I argue that international politics, if not addressed in a systematic way by Nietzsche, something he rarely if ever did on *any* topic, is nonetheless an active component of his philosophy; will-to-power involving not only individuals, but peoples, civilizations, and the relations between them.

The notion that Nietzsche's thought has more than a mere passing connection to matters of international politics is not a new one. Hans J. Morgenthau's *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, for example, shares a striking amount in method and content with Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, both when describing human nature, and when making its case for the deleterious consequences of liberalism's hegemony over international politics.[16] More recently, there is Stefan Elbe's 2003 work, *Europe: A Nietzschean Perspective*, in which the author applies Nietzsche's concept of nihilism to the European Union in order to better understand that community's ongoing difficulties regarding identity and unification. The insights made by these and other authors are valuable contributions to our understanding of Nietzsche and international politics more generally, and as such, I draw upon them at key points in the course of this study.

However, while illuminating and thought provoking, these works share in one shortcoming: absent a clearly articulated theory of international politics, Nietzsche's thought is often encountered in a piecemeal fashion, and therefore too easily appropriated in ways potentially inconsistent with the pre-existing whole. No matter the level of care or faithfulness, this method of analysis necessarily results in a degree of distortion given

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16. In a note penned as a student, Morgenthau referred to Nietzsche as the "god of my youth." (Christoph Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau: A Biography*, (LSU Press: Baton Rouge, 2001), 147).

the absence of clear boundaries distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate interpretation. For such signposts to operate, one must first have access to an originating point of reference, which, in this case, is a coherent and consistent theory of international politics.

Before proceeding to an outline of the present study's organization, it is worth dwelling for a moment on the question of value. Specifically, what is to be gained from assembling out of Nietzsche's philosophy a theory of international politics that is both coherent and consistent with that philosophy? One benefit is that it enables us to appreciate the importance of international politics to Nietzsche's thought, and thereby more fully grasp his philosophy. As briefly noted above and addressed more extensively below, Nietzsche's central concept of will-to-power involves communities and their interactions. Consequently, an understanding of will-to-power and its relationship to man within Nietzsche's philosophy necessitates an examination of international politics, for Nietzsche treats such politics as one more aspect of will-to-power's role in human affairs.

Another benefit is that a work such as this one makes Nietzsche more fully accessible to the field of international politics. Such access enriches the study of international politics by adding another voice to the ongoing conversation, one rich in new perspectives and challenging criticisms. This invites fresh appraisals of well-established theories, which in turn deepens our understanding of those theories, as well as perhaps inspiring the creation of new ones. In Chapter Five I model such engagement by initiating conversations between Nietzsche and several influential theorists of international politics, such as Samuel Huntington, John Mearsheimer, Hans J. Morgenthau, and Alexander Wendt. Not only do these juxtapositions highlight the

uniqueness of Nietzsche's perspective on international politics, but they also demonstrate the ways in which its very presence enhances the constructiveness of such dialogues.

Nietzsche's understanding of international politics is also uniquely relevant to the current moment. In light of the effects of historical, environmental, and situational factors on the ways in which will-to-power manifests in human affairs, Nietzsche's perspective on international politics, formed within modernity and Western civilization, is especially relevant to the current age. Nietzsche's theory of the slave revolt in morality is one such insight: this transvaluation of values was carried out by a circumscribed population responding to historically identifiable social, political, and spiritual conditions. As such, much of the theory's explanatory power is tethered to the relevant civilization, and its associated traditions. The same can be said of Nietzsche's contextually tethered Death of God theory. Drastically simplified, Nietzsche argues that the Death of God announces the collapse of Western civilization's Judeo-Christian foundations: the ingrained tenets of morality, theology, science, and truth have eroded to such an extent that the West's faithless performative fidelity actively threatens its future. Insofar as the international system of nation-states is a product of Western civilization, the Death of God must, of necessity, have an impact on its content and conduct. One such impact, discussed at length in the chapters below, is nationalism. Our understanding of this phenomenon is enriched by reference to the Death of God: in response to God's death the nation-state has assumed the role of guarantor of collective moral, spiritual, and political identity. While Hans. J. Morgenthau's "nationalistic universalism," as well as Stefan Elbe's EU fragmentation speak to this relationship, their conclusions remain limited in the absence of an originating, and overarching theory of international politics:

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an international political theory born from, and composed of, Nietzsche's thought, incorporates these individual issues into that thought's intriguing larger narrative.

Before proceeding to an outline of this study's organization, I would like to address an issue regarding an aspect of its method. It is common among Nietzsche scholars to segment his thought into three distinct "periods", these being early, middle and late. As with most thinkers, Nietzsche's thought evolved over the course of his active life, and consequently earlier writings are not always entirely consistent with those of later periods. A useful example of this change is Nietzsche's understanding of life's dynamic and creative energies as transfigured in the deities Dionysus and Apollo. As Walter Kaufmann notes "The conception of the Dionysian in *The Birth* differs from Nietzsche's later conception" insofar as the later formulation is "the synthesis of the Dionysian, as originally conceived, with the Apollinian."[17] One must appreciate this change if one is to properly understand what Nietzsche means in his later works by the term "Dionysian."

However, while acknowledging in general the periodization of Nietzsche's thought, I maintain that with respect to some of Nietzsche's most fundamental ideas, there is a sufficient level of consistency across periods to justify a reasonably freehand when it comes to drawing from chronologically disparate texts. Again, of course, this must always be done with an appreciation for whatever relevant changes and qualifications are present. The Dionysian example is instructive in this regard. While it is true that the Dionysian of Nietzsche's early period and that of his later period differ, they do so in a way that reinforces, rather than undermines, the notion of cross-period

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17. Nietzsche, "Attempt at a Self-Criticism," in *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, 20: 5f.

consistency. Both represent an attempt by Nietzsche to give formal expression to his idea of life's primal forces, and their intimate relationship to human creativity. As I argue at length in the following chapter, this later Dionysus is properly understood as Nietzsche's own attempt at transfiguring the forces of life into a vitality-promoting image, just as the Ancient Greeks did before him. The changes between iterations from one period to another constitute those historically contingent accommodations required in such transfigurations if they are to have the desired effect on the people for whom they are meant: *The Birth of Tragedy* presents the Dionysus as it was represented to and by the Ancient Greeks; whereas the Dionysus of Nietzsche's later works presents one represented to and by contemporary Western civilization, Nietzsche's primary audience. But beneath the differences that distinguish these two concepts, I argue there is a shared understanding regarding the essential character of life's forces, and that this common understanding constitutes a thread of consistency in Nietzsche's thought durable enough to withstand the periodic winds of differing periods.

Organization

To understand Nietzsche's international political theory, one must understand the components of which it is constructed so that its complexity does not confuse, nor its consistency amid ambiguity be unappreciated. To this end, the present study starts from the foundations, and works up, step by step, through Nietzsche's general philosophy to his theory of international politics. Beginning with will-to-power and its relationship to culture, the study ascends through states and modern civilization to ultimately arrive at Nietzsche's theory of international politics.

Chapter Two, "The Creative Politics of Will-to-Power," introduces and expands upon Nietzsche's most foundational idea, will-to-power. Out of its myriad aspects this chapter seeks to isolate and identify will-to-power's two essential drives: that of survival; and that of vitality. Insofar as will-to-power, according to Nietzsche, animates all living things, the expressions of survival and vitality take many different forms. With respect to man, Nietzsche forcefully associates vitality with creativity, be it self-transformation, art, or value creation, and survival with inactivity and a general complacent contentment. While both drives are necessary for a species' existence, Nietzsche argues that with man in particular they are often set against one another, one's satisfaction coming at the expense of the other: just as the singular pursuit of survival ends in degeneration, a similar approach to creativity results in enervation, exhaustion, and extinction. Consequently, Nietzsche approaches will-to-power with respect to man with an interest in how to best bring about a productive balance between will-to-power's two dominant impulses, and thereby facilitate human flourishing.

With the concept of overcoming Nietzsche believes he has identified a process whereby such a balance is managed: rather than seeking an end to conflict, overcoming seeks the preservation of those oppositions and tensions that animate reality. Nietzsche's evolving artistic creation "Nature" is intended to return Western civilization to will-to-power, and a life of overcoming. While originally defined in *The Birth of Tragedy* as Ancient Greece's life-sustaining rendering of tensions between the two primal deities of Apollo and Dionysus, Nietzsche's Nature develops in tandem with his maturing position over the course of his works, culminating in a construction attuned to prevailing socio-political realities: Nietzsche's Nature, whose mouthpiece and embodiment is Zarathustra,

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transfigures Ancient Greece's depiction of will-to-power's agonisms into those of Judeo-Christian tradition and the Death of God.[18]

With Chapter Two having established will-to-power's basic dynamics, Chapter Three, "The Culture of Politics and State," explores their relationship to Nietzsche's understanding of culture and state. Sensitive to both mankind's needs, and will-to-power's necessities, Nietzsche constructs an appropriate model for society: while other animals satisfy will-to-power's dueling mandates through unreflective instinct, humans require their artistic transfiguration to justify the sacrifices and brutalities they demand. Understood by Nietzsche as the nexus of a community's artistic energies, culture is the heart of society and politics, for it alone is able to transfigure will-to-power in life-affirming ways. Consequently, Nietzsche subordinates the state and its coercive machinery to culture and its paramount interests: guided by a healthy culture, the state applies its power in the service of culture's domestic and international goals. Furthermore, Nietzsche tasks the state with defending culture from international and external dangers: through coercion the state enforces culture's social order, and raises armies both to defend against these threats, as well as to engage in those selective conflicts that invigorate, rather than enervate, a people.

Considering the connection between will-to-power's expression and the cultural context of a community, Chapter Four, "On the Three Civilizational Crises and One," examines the Death of God, an event Nietzsche argues defines Western civilization's current cultural environment. For Nietzsche, Western civilization rests upon Judeo-

18. As a point of clarification, when employing the word "Nature," the present study is referring specifically to Nietzsche's Judeo-Christian-Death-of-God formulation. It ought not be confused with the natural order, or life, both of which precede any "Nature," the latter being an artistic transfiguration aiming at balance between will-to-power's combative drives of survival and vitality.

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Christian values and traditions. With the Death of God, these traditions and values have been brought into question, and consequently have created a new cultural environment for will-to-power. Limited to those aspects most relevant to Nietzsche's international political theory, this chapter discusses the Death of God's four "crises" as I identify them: that of faith; that of fact; that of will; and that of the last man.

Nietzsche traces the epicenter of this seismic convulsion back to the gradual decline, and eventual demise, of Judeo-Christian religious conviction: the once viscerally lived faith of earlier times is today a thing of casual obligation, a set of practices and performances dutifully observed along with one's other daily chores and responsibilities. This crisis of faith leads to one of fact, as the metaphysical foundations established by Judeo-Christian religion, and upon which modern science rests, crumble: "it is still a *metaphysical faith* upon which our faith in science rests…that God is the truth, that truth is divine."[19] Rather than objective or secular, science's truths are derived from a Judeo-Christian theological metaphysics. Therefore, to discredit that order is to discredit science itself. From these two crises is born that of will: without belief in truth, be it divine or empirical, Western civilization is robbed of its "will to truth," which for over two millennia has been the primary source of unity, identity, and motivation.[20] Nietzsche finds beneath local identities, and the divisions and wars of national allegiances, a single, *civilizational* devotion to truth. Consequently, as the Death of God undermines this conception of truth, it necessarily undermines a fundamental uniting bond of Western civilization: robbed of Judeo-Christian tradition's trans-national ties, Western unity

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19. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Random House, Inc., 1974), 283.

20. Ibid.

threatens to splinter amid nationalism's entropic forces. In this way, Nietzsche believes

he has pierced through nationalism's numerous and idiosyncratic instantiations to reveal

the shared instigating trauma: the universal proclamations of the West's nationalisms are

a reaction to God's passing, which took with it a trans-national collective order.

However, while cognizant of the animosities of nationalism, Nietzsche maintains

that Europe "wants to be one."[21] Nietzsche views man as an animal, and therefore

appreciates the formative influence of constant pressures and prevailing conditions on

character and physiology. According to Nietzsche, as the most powerful, enduring, and

widespread pressure upon Western man, the Judeo-Christian tradition is contributing to

an homogenization that dissolves local differentiations: this trans-national conditioning

results in the proliferation of a single European "type," one who so fully resembles his

neighbor that national identifications and loyalties diminish to nostalgic afterthoughts.

Hence, while witnessing first-hand the increasingly rabid ferocities of European

nationalism, Nietzsche maintains that they are but "little attacks of acquired stupidity."[22]

This process brings us to the final crisis, the last man. Nietzsche argues that while

homogenization will eventually bring an end to Europe's recurring national feuds, if left

unchecked, it will also eventually bring an end to Europe's cultural vitality. Insofar as

this homogenization results in a single type of human, it endangers the health of the

species by making impossible the vitality-rich exceptions, the culturally creative geniuses

who Nietzsche sees as responsible for the health of a people: "The time will come when

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21. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 148.

22. Ibid., 141.

the human gives birth to no more stars…I show you *the last human*."[23] The end of this homogenization is the herd man, the "last man," a creature who prides itself on its ability to meet the middling expectations of a complacent, post-God civilization, one whose nights are devoid of starlight.

With the basic elements of Nietzsche's philosophy established, Chapter Five, "Nietzsche's International Politics of Cultures," examines the place and importance of international politics to Nietzsche's thought. Cognizant of will-to-power's requirements, and the necessity of politics for man to meet them, Nietzsche presents a vital aristocratic society as the ideal political association: not only does an aristocratic society value the type of will that is capable of great creative works, but it commits society's collective resources to the cultivation of such wills and works. Furthermore, as Nietzsche understands the highest form of creativity to be that which involves the invention and institution of life-enhancing values, he judges societies according to the quality of the values they generate.

Turning to the international system of societies, I contend that Nietzsche judges and understands it according to this aristocratic model. Furthermore, I argue that Nietzsche sees in international politics an arena in which systems of values may compete with another in ways that contribute to man's overall vitality. This focus on values means that Nietzsche places culture, rather than the state, at the center of international politics: as one's domestic standing in an aristocratic society is determined by one's creative genius, a community's standing within an international aristocratic society is determined by its cultural vitality.

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23. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 15.

To explain the culture-based international conflict embraced by Nietzsche's theory, I contrast it with two alternatives, one excessively open, and the other excessively closed, to war. Regarding the former, Heinrich von Treitschke's international political theory, though centered on culture, misunderstands it, and consequently promotes the very struggles Nietzsche argues are detrimental to culture. Regarding opposition to war, modernity's idolization of peace ignores both the need for, and inevitability of, conflict, and consequently undermines the normative vitality and health of the international system.

From culture and international conflict, I proceed to discuss God's death, specifically, the perils and potentials of homogenization as they relate to Nietzsche's understanding of international politics. To better explain Nietzsche's position I contrast it with that of Hans J. Morgenthau. Morgenthau's linking of modernity's international moral fragmentation to democratic politics and nationalism's proliferation shares much with Nietzsche's predictions regarding the consequences of God's death. However, whereas Morgenthau laments these changes, and hopes for a return to the Judeo-Christian tradition's restraining order, Nietzsche, concerned with will-to-power, welcomes them for the re-naturalization they make possible: unlike Morgenthau, Nietzsche views morality as an artistic rendering of, rather than a check on, will-to-power, and therefore welcomes the liberation in value creation afforded by God's death.

In his "groβe Politik," or "grand politics," or "high politics," Nietzsche envisions a vital, post-God international system. Owing to Judeo-Christian tradition's trans-national homogenization, the politics of national division are both increasingly irrelevant, and increasingly "petty" when compared to the grand politics of global cultural

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competition: "The time for petty politics is over: even by the next century, we will be battling for mastery over the earth—*forced* into politics on a grand scale."[24]

To highlight the uniqueness of Nietzsche's international cultural politics, I set it against the civilizational politics of Samuel Huntington. While both Nietzsche and Huntington agree regarding the influence of trans-national cultural identities in international politics, they clash over the content and value of such identities, and therefore the form of the coming politics: whereas Huntington predicts a return to the past with a re-awakening of pre-Cold War civilizational allegiances, Nietzsche, owing to physiological changes in modern man, envisions a grand politics involving new allegiances forged according to new goals.

With Chapter Five having presented the form and content of Nietzsche's international political theory, Chapter Six, "Nietzsche's Natural Constructivism," situates this theory among those currently dominant in the field of international politics. I argue that, in light of the malleability it attributes to human nature, as well as the formative role it grants to values, identities, and external conditions, Nietzsche's theory is most closely associated with constructivism, as opposed to (neo)liberalism, or (neo)realism. In support of this characterization, I examine Alexander Wendt's constructivism, the fundamentals of which are largely consistent with Nietzsche's theory. Like Nietzsche, Wendt rejects the proposition of an unchanging human nature, and in its place presents one open to radical variation depending on a host of factors. Of these, Wendt, like Nietzsche, singles out ideas and external conditions as those most responsible for the form and content of man's constitution: Wendt's "constitutive ideas," and concept of

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24. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 101, emphasis in original.

"first contact" overlap in important ways with Nietzsche's treatment of values and pacific vs. antagonistic relationships.

However, while generally constructivist in character, Nietzsche's international political theory challenges constructivism by presenting standards for, rather than merely descriptions of, international relations. Derived from will-to-power, a concept rich in normative content, Nietzsche's theory provides metrics by which communities and their relations may be evaluated: whereas Wendt stops with a list of possibilities regarding an international system's basic character, Nietzsche judges alternatives according to their consequences for human creative potential.

Having both articulated and situated Nietzsche's international political theory within the field of international politics, I conclude in Chapter Seven, "The End of International Politics: Post-God Liberalism and Universal Human Rights," with a discussion of the theory's arguably most unsettling implication: the inegalitarianism of Nietzsche's theory leads to a rejection of international norms regarding human rights. To better appreciate Nietzsche's position, I place him in conversation with John Rawls, whose work on democracy and the values associated with it, speak directly to Nietzsche's critique.

According to Rawls, modern liberal democracies are founded on a shared set of "fundamental intuitive ideas" regarding human nature and the rights to which one is entitled.[25] Found in a society's "public political culture,"[26] these ideas have developed over the course of Western civilization's history, and are now sturdy enough to constitute

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25. John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 38, n41.

26. Ibid.

an independent basis of social cohesion and political justice: it is against the fundamental intuitions of freedom and equality that both political action and policy, as well as doctrines of morality, are judged.

By contrast, Nietzsche understands the notion of universal human rights to be the result of man's "herd instinct," and therefore reflective of a general physiological weakness.[27] With Christianity's decline, its heir, democracy, has carried on the pursuit of the interests of this herd man in the form of political reforms, and the universalization of certain values, most notably freedom and equality. In the concept of post-God liberalism, I integrate Nietzsche's analysis of herd instinct with the political liberalism articulated by Rawls, all within the context of what Nietzsche understands to be a post-God historical moment. Post-God liberalism highlights the way in which Rawls's "freestanding" political conception of justice may be understood as consistent with the consequences Nietzsche associates with the Death of God: with the loss of their metaphysical grounding following God's passing, herd values have become the "fundamental intuitive ideas" of Rawlsian political liberalism. For Nietzsche, such intuitions and the rights they give rise to are the means by which the weak attempt to protect themselves from the strong: universal rights defend against the threatening exceptional man by leveling humanity, thereby making impossible any exceptional claims.[28]

Finally, I discuss the international implications of liberalism's universal rights from the perspective of Nietzsche's theory of international politics. Again, I turn to John Rawls, this time drawing upon his work *The Law of Peoples,* in which he adapts his

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27. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 85.

28. Ibid.

analysis of domestic democratic society to the international system. Composed of

"decent" and "well-ordered" communities, Rawls's "Society of Peoples" institutes and

defends, among others, the fundamental intuitions of freedom and equality. Insofar as

Rawls tasks the Society of Peoples with transforming all non-member communities into

well-ordered ones so that they may join, these intuitions reveal their universalistic

character.[29]

From the perspective of Nietzsche's theory of international politics, Rawls's

vision is one hostile to vital life, as it is motivated by a herd instinct whose values stifle

the creative vigor characteristic of will-to-power's robust expression. Furthermore, by

seeking to universalize the intuitions of freedom and equality, Rawls' Society of Peoples

erodes the critical cultural differences and antagonisms that Nietzsche understands as

essential to the process of life-enhancing value creation.

Intriguing, challenging, and at times disturbing, Nietzsche's theory of

international politics actively confronts many important premises, convictions, and

cherished beliefs. As with Nietzsche's thought more generally, it promises nothing less

than "dangerous voyages of discovery…spiritualized North Pole expeditions under

desolate and dangerous skies.[30]

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29. John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 68.

30. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 101.

CHAPTER TWO

The Creative Politics of Will-to-Power

Introduction

According to some popularized interpretations, Nietzsche is the quintessential

philosopher of radical individualism. Given the extensive attention paid by Nietzsche to

his "overman," in whom one finds the paragon of independent will, it is perhaps

understandable that many have come to view Nietzsche's philosophy as hostile to

society, and politics in general: being creative, Nietzsche's exceptional individuals

necessarily challenge the status quo of society, and therefore often bring upon themselves

the wrath of a disturbed population. This interpretation is bolstered by Nietzsche's

celebration of the Death of God as a historical event that might free individuals from

millennia of Judeo-Christian conformist pressures.

However, though championing individual creative wills, Nietzsche remains

committed to the necessity of both society and politics to man's health. Furthermore,

rather than embracing reckless human creativity, Nietzsche places all human creativity

within an identifiable normative structure. The present chapter argues that Nietzsche's

concept of will-to-power, and the natural world from which he believes it emerges,

constitute this structure. As such, both are directly relevant to Nietzsche's theory of

international politics as both explain Nietzsche's discrimination between healthy and

unhealthy international relations.

According to Nietzsche, a life lived in accordance with will-to-power invites vitality, while one opposed to it invites degeneration. Through observation of healthy and unhealthy organisms, Nietzsche believes he has discovered the natural world's governing dynamics. In his theory of will-to-power Nietzsche articulates the wisdom born from these observations: it provides a window, however murky, through which to glimpse the primal essence of the natural world, and even life itself.

The present chapter begins by analyzing what I understand to be will-to-power's two modes of operation: the unreflective accumulation of power, and the creative expression of power. Despite its daunting complexity, and the often times figurative way in which he speaks writes about it, will-to-power is chiefly defined by these two drives. With respect to the former, will-to-power is a biological drive shared by all creatures that motivates them to maintain themselves through the accumulation of power. For Nietzsche, this imperative is responsible for much of life's essential dynamism insofar as in accumulating power for the sake of survival organisms necessarily engage one another: survival often requires mollifying external threats, and therefore struggling against them. However, though both drives constitute in large part the character of life, they are not naturally inclined to exist in harmony. For man, perhaps more so than with any other animal, survival and vitality are often at odds with one another: the most vital person may risk great dangers and harm; while the most survivable may value passivity and comfort above all else. Nietzsche highlights such contradiction in the contrast he presents between the "creative genius" and the "herd," two natural types that could not be further apart, in Nietzsche's estimation, with respect to health and the higher purposes of life.

In addition to power's accumulation, will-to-power drives organisms to express their power in transformative ways. For Nietzsche, power's accumulation is the means by which life satisfies its primary desire for vitality: the power acquired for survival's sake is ultimately justified by the expressions of vitality it makes possible. With respect to man, such vitality is most potently manifested in the creative works of exceptional individuals and peoples in the form of values. As an instructive example I begin a discussion of Ancient Greek culture, for Nietzsche turns to it often as the model of vitality-driven value creation.

From will-to-power's defining aspects, I move to an introductory discussion of overcoming as the process by which human communities productively reconcile will-to-power's competing drives of survival and vitality. As an example of overcoming I discuss the evolution of Nietzsche's conception of life in the form of what I label "Nature": informed by, but departing from, Ancient Greece's model, Nietzsche's Nature is an agonistic composition of Apollo and Dionysus, intended to speak to the new cultural, and political needs of an increasingly post-God Western civilization. To conclude, I discuss Nietzsche's future creator, in whose character and will is displayed the historical specificity of man's relationship to the natural world. Constituted by the agonistic tensions of Judeo-Christian tradition and this Nature, Nietzsche's coming creator is uniquely attuned to the possibilities and limitations of modern Western civilization. Furthermore, to the extent that such a man is moved by these agonisms to create new values, analysis of him helps to clarify the workings of will-to-power, as well as underscore the political intent and importance of Nietzsche's thought.

Part I: Will-to-Power

For Nietzsche, will-to-power is a motive force present in all life, and therefore all of human experience: the varied "instinctual life" of man, demonstrated by history, is "development and differentiation of *one* basic form of the will (namely the will to power, as *my* tenet would have it)."[1] As a creature of will-to-power man cannot escape it, for "man…is nature."[2] But as a creature of conscious agency, man can, and often does, live in ways non-conducive to his thriving with respect to will-to-power. Such potentially detrimental freedom explains Nietzsche's myriad criticisms regarding modern values and culture: Nietzsche's vociferous condemnations are intended to reveal Western civilization's alienation from the totality of will-to-power, and inspire a more holistic embrace of it.

Understood through observation of the drives and behaviors of organisms, will-to-power reveals to Nietzsche its two-fold character: will-to-power moves creatures to amass power for the sake of preservation, but also to expend their power in transformative and creative ways. Regarding the first aspect, will-to-power is responsible for every creature's sense of, and commitment to, self-protection. However, despite its forcefulness, Nietzsche qualifies the drive to survival with that to vitality: will-to-power motivates creatures to move beyond survival, and express their power in ways that alter themselves and others. With respect to man, will-to-power's dualism mandates a certain type of society, and, as will be discussed at length in subsequent chapters, a certain type of international politics.

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1. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 35, emphasis in original.

2. Nietzsche, "Homer's Contest," in *The Complete Works of Friederich Nietzsche*. trans. Maximilian A. Mügge, ed. Oscar Levy (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911), Vol. #2: 51.

Power's Accumulation

According to Nietzsche, will-to-power is responsible for every creature's pursuit of survival. So motivated, an organism is instinctively driven to accumulate power, for the more power one possesses, the more secure one is when confronted by threats. However, as every creature is similarly motivated, the result within the context of the natural world as a whole, is a decrease in individual security. Insofar as power is relative, security is a function of how one's power compares to those of one's competitors. The fluctuation inherent to a system of such relativity locks actors into an endless race of escalation as each seeks to accumulate more power to safeguard against the increases of others.[3] This competition for survival, mandated by will-to-power, provides an initial explanation of Nietzsche's otherwise unsavory celebration of conflict: Nietzsche argues that life is inherently combative, and all species, no matter how dissimilar, cannot but manifest this struggle. Were there a creature driven by instinct to avoid conflict in all its forms, it would paradoxically be animated by a "will to *deny* life," for "life *in its essence* means appropriating, injuring, overpowering."[4]

Power's Expression

While characterizing the amassing of power for survival as a universal activity, Nietzsche is quick to qualify it with a second activity, one as innate as the first: will-to-power also drives organisms to express their power in ways that transform themselves

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3. The parallels between will-to-power's competition and international political theory's security dilemma are striking. As we will learn more fully in Chapters Five and Six, will-to-power has a number of intriguing and consequential implications for Nietzsche's theory of international politics.

4. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 153, emphasis in original.

and others. Nietzsche characterizes this type of transformation as artistic, and in *The Birth of Tragedy*, an early work devoted to "aesthetic values," such artistry is explained.[5]

The unending conflicts of survival are justified by what Nietzsche characterizes as life's insatiable drive for vitality, one that takes many forms depending on the type of organism, and on the *different types* within a single kind of organism, like man. With respect to man, vitality is manifested most forcefully and influentially in art, and creative activity more generally. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche describes the intimacy between artist and life: "Insofar as the subject is the artist, however, he has already been released from his individual will, and has become, as it were, the medium through which the one truly existent subject celebrates his release in appearance."[6] Nietzsche argues that this exceptional relationship reveals one of a more general, and politically consequential, type, that between life and mankind:

> [T]o our humiliation *and* exaltation, one thing above all must be clear to us…we are not one and identical with that being which, as the sole author and spectator of this comedy of art, prepares a perpetual entertainment for itself.[7]

Nietzsche sees the world as a canvas upon which life endlessly paints, the spectrum of human potential constituting its pallet. In this way Nietzsche places every society under the authority of will-to-power, which in essence is the very activity of life. As we will see, the connections made by Nietzsche early in his career between art, creativity, and life, persist across his corpus, with their basic operating dynamics remaining relatively constant.

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5. Nietzsche, "Ecce Homo," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, Inc., 2000), 727.

6. Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy," in *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, Inc., 1967), 52.

7. Ibid.

A brief look at the cultural artistry of Nietzsche's Ancient Greece provides an introduction to creativity's importance with respect to mankind's individual and political health. To Nietzsche, a community's morality in part constitutes its response to the harshness of the natural world: "[V]aluations and orders of rank are always expressions of the needs of the community."[8] As every community's "needs" are unique, so too, then, are its values: a society's morality is its "tablet of…overcomings" from which is heard "the voice of [its] will to power."[9] Morality's contextualism, combined with the universal pressures of will-to-power, move Nietzsche to search human history for guidance. While every community faces a unique set of difficulties, every community also faces those of an ever-present will-to-power: in many ways, human history is the story of mankind's myriad struggles with the dueling drives of survival and vitality.

In Ancient Greece Nietzsche finds an illuminating and instructive approach to these struggles via artistic transfiguration. Specifically, the Olympian pantheon of gods. The gap between human sensibilities and the natural world's indifferent brutality can be bridged only through politically consequential art. Fear of the "overwhelming dismay in the face of the titanic powers of nature" drove Ancient Greek peoples to craft a morality, and corresponding symbolic mythology, capable of holding at bay the all-too-human nausea over existence.[10] Much like mortals, Olympian gods lived lives filled with familiar human passions: greed, envy, pride…etc. So personified and immortalized, life, in all of its pleasant and painful aspects, was celebrated: Ancient Greece's creativity

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8. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Random House, Inc., 1974), 174.

9. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 51.

10. Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy," 42.

transfigured human experience into Olympian splendor.[11] According to Nietzsche, Ancient Greece's example shows the power and necessity of creativity: in order to thrive amid the natural world's brutalities, man must transform his perception of them by crafting life-sustaining values. Whether these values are also life-affirming is the ultimate test of their worth in Nietzsche's eyes.

Finally, creativity is a form of vitality whose unique characteristics intensify the already painful frictions inherent to will-to-power between vitality and survival by moving humans to seek the transformation of others through aggressive engagement. This aspect of will-to-power, more than any other, is characterized by "oppression, harshness, forcing one's own forms on others, incorporation, and…exploitation."[12] With respect to man, will-to-power's creativity manifests itself in the invention of new values, whose influence is responsible for determining human potential. In the context of society this means not simply challenging a community's norms, but actively seeking their demolition: "If a temple is to be erected, *a temple must be destroyed*."[13] Will-to-power's creativity is inherently conflictual insofar as transformation requires the breaking and re-making of what currently is.

Part II: Nietzsche's Nature and Overcoming

While characterizing struggle as intrinsic to life, Nietzsche never embraces it as an end in itself. Rather, he understands will-to-power's ceaseless conflict to be the means by which life fosters vitality by compelling organisms to remake themselves and others.

11. Ibid.

12. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 153.

13. Nietzsche, "On The Genealogy of Morals," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House Inc., 2000), 531.

Nietzsche views the struggle between, and invention of, values as the uniquely human way in which this combative creativity is manifested: "To seize the right to new values…a predation it is to such a spirit and a matter for a predatory beast."[14] However, by definition such dynamism is unstable, and as such extremely difficult to sustain for extended periods of time. To foreshadow a later conversation, Nietzsche's "last man" may be understood within this context as a human type living in a state of radical imbalance regarding will-to-power: to the exclusion of vitality, i.e., creative striving, the last man desires above all else the comfort and ease of secure survival. Therefore, what is needed is a mechanism whereby will-to-power's two drives may be sufficiently satisfied such that an organism's health is promoted.

In his concept of overcoming, Nietzsche describes a process whereby oppositional forces collide in not productive, but potentially sustainable ways. Lawrence Hatab's analysis of overcoming is instructive on this point: overcoming "does not espouse…*eliminative* destruction, but rather a creative, agonistic destruction that advances *over* something without annihilating it."[15] Unlike conventional victory, which relaxes tensions through the effective elimination of an opponent's ability to resist, overcoming's triumph aims at the preservation of those tensions that foster productive activity. Hence Nietzsche's hopefulness regarding the possibilities of his post-God creators:

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14. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 24.

15. Lawrence J. Hatab, *Nietzsche's Life Sentence* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 63, emphasis in original.

[T]he struggle against thousands of years of Christian-ecclesiastical pressure…has created a splendid tension of the spirit in Europe such as the earth has never seen: with this kind of tension in our bow, we can shoot at the most remote targets.[16]

An instructive example of overcoming's creativity is found in Nietzsche's conception of "Nature," one that I argue emerges over the course of his intellectual life, and involves the appropriation, as opposed to rejection, of disparate elements. Rather than born Athena-like, fully formed and unchanging, Nature develops within Nietzsche's thoughts in a way emblematic of overcoming. Furthermore, this Nature stands as an illuminating example of the life-affirming transfiguration of the natural world's brutalities in a way that fosters vitality: as with the Ancient Greeks before him, Nietzsche seeks to present an image of the world that speaks to the immediate needs and realities of a people's situation so as to stave off resignation, and foster vitality.

Nature's genesis begins with Ancient Greece, in which Nietzsche identifies a fundamental tension between Apollo and Dionysus. Apollo, the god of form, and Dionysus, the god of formless union, represented the "artistic energies which burst forth from nature herself."[17] Through these deities society transfigured an otherwise life-denying contradiction between the universal desire for individual immortality, and the inevitability of death, into a life-affirming agonistic art. "Apollo, the god of all plastic energies," expressed individualism, and the longing for its endurance.[18] But insofar as Apollo did not address the powerful experience of individual dissolution, be it in death or union, the deity was but a partial transfiguration of reality. What was needed was a counterpart, a separate but intimately related instantiation of the more primal aspects of

16. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 3, "Preface".

17. Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy," 38.

18. Ibid., 35.

existence. In Dionysus these aspects found their expression: dissolving Apollo's

"*principium individuationis,*" Dionysus's "intoxication" revealed the "higher

community" of life itself.[19] Transformed in this way, death and dissolution were

understood as part of a universal process whereby every individual was returned to the

source of all life. However, while the source of the highest joys, Dionysus was also the

source of the deepest fears: as the expression of life *itself*, Dionysus expressed an

intuition of the Ancient Greeks that man was subsumed within an inescapable larger

whole, the essential character of which was indifferent to human sensitivities.

Characterized in this manner, Apollo and Dionysus constituted an agonistic relationship,

one representative of man's experience of the natural world: a turbulent sea, Dionysus's

"world of suffering" was ridden in the "bark" of Apollinian individuality.[20]

It is important to note, however, that Apollo and Dionysus, while agonistic

partners, were not equals. As Nietzsche presents it, Apollo's forms were made necessary

by Dionysus's pre-existing and underlying reality of flux and formlessness: Dionysian

"music…symbolizes a sphere which is beyond and *prior to* all phenomena."[21] Being

"prior to all phenomena" Dionysus necessarily predates Apollo, the god of all

phenomena: Apollinian art "can express nothing that did not already lie hidden in that

vast universality and absoluteness" of Dionysus.[22]

Nietzsche builds upon this initial formulation of Dionysus when constructing his

later concept of Nature, one that informs and guides much of his thought post-*The Birth*

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., 46.

21. Ibid., 55, emphasis added.

22. Ibid.

of Tragedy. Whereas the Ancient Greeks viewed Apollo and Dionysus as distinct and

agonistically related deities, Nietzsche's later Dionysus is a synthesis of these two ancient

transfigurations. Walter Kaufmann's observation in this regard is extremely helpful:

> The conception of the Dionysian in *The Birth* differs from Nietzsche's later
> conception of the Dionysian. He originally…contrasted the Dionysian with the
> Apollinian; but in his later thought the Dionysian stands for the creative
> employment of the passions and the affirmation of life in spite of suffering—as it
> were, for the synthesis of the Dionysian, as originally conceived, with the
> Apollinian.[23]

In the spirit of overcoming, Nietzsche's Dionysus is a "synthesis" of Ancient

Greece's Apollo and Dionysus into the new transfiguration, Nature. In this Nature,

Nietzsche finds an important command of universal salience: "'Though shalt obey.'"[24]

Obedience, experienced as "long periods of [social] pressure and discipline" forces the

spirit to become "subtle and daring," eventually giving rise to a "power-will," the very

same will driving Nietzsche's creator.[25] Nature's coercion is derived from Ancient

Greece's Apollo, in whose image was expressed the need for "measured restraint" and

"freedom from wilder emotions."[26] As Walter Kaufmann observes, "[t]he Dionysus

whom Nietzsche celebrates in his late works is not the counterpart of Apollo."[27] Viewed

in combination with the artistry of will-to-power's creativity, Nietzsche's Nature is best

understood as a combination of Ancient Greece's Apollo and Dionysus. However, such a

combination resolves those agonistic tensions essential to this type of transfiguration by

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23. Nietzsche, "Attempt at a Self-Criticism," in *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House Inc., 1967), 20: 5f.

24. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 77.

25. Ibid., 41.

26. Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy," 35.

27. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 331, V: 370: 126f.

collapsing the competing forces into a single entity. As such, a new counterpart is needed, one similar to, but distinct from, Ancient Greece's Apollo, so that productive tensions may once again be created and exploited. In Nietzsche's future creator we are provided important insights as to some of the particulars of this new Apollo.

Part III: Modernity's Creator

Composed of Ancient Greece's Apollo and Dionysus, Nietzsche's remade Nature is tailored to address Western civilization's current social, political, and cultural difficulties in an attempt to foster Western civilization's revitalization. While learning much from Ancient Greece, Nietzsche views all values to be contextually determined, and therefore not directly transferable from one community to another. Consequently, every community's relationship to the natural order is affected by its own experiences. Modern Western civilization is no exception, and so its historical experiences determine the character of Nietzsche's creator: the architect of Western civilization's redemption, Nietzsche's envisioned creator is animated by an agonistic struggle between his Judeo-Christian tradition, and the natural order's trans-historical requirements. By understanding the agonism of which this creator is composed, we are provided an introduction to Nature's significance for Nietzsche's domestic and international politics with respect to Western civilization.

To begin, we must familiarize ourselves with the tradition from which the creator, and modern Western civilization writ large, receive their inheritance. Like the artist of Ancient Greece, Nietzsche's creator is composed of, and inspired by, conflict: he "experiences the warlike oppositions within him as one stimulant and incitement to life

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the *more*."[28] These oppositions are born from his Judeo-Christian past, the most

important of which is that between what Nietzsche identifies as "responsibility," and the

brute, amoral fact of nature.

Nietzsche understands modern man's sense of individual responsibility to be the

product of a centuries-long education at the hands of the "ascetic priests" intended to

facilitate their control of man by binding him with the shackles of guilt. According to

Nietzsche, the priest of Judeo-Christian values understood guilt as a tool for control and

power: once accepted, men would turn to him for absolution, and therefore submit to his

authority:

> We must count the ascetic priest as the predestined savior, shepherd, and advocate
> of the sick herd: only thus can we understand his tremendous historical mission.
> *Dominion over the suffering* is his kingdom…[29]

But man had first to be made "sick." According to Nietzsche, guilt was the

ascetic priest's chosen pathogen, and responsibility the mechanism of its delivery:

responsibility is the prerequisite for guilt, for only with it can one potentially be made to

blame oneself for one's actions. To this end, the ascetic priest made man believe in a

world of direct causality and free will: actions and consequences became the direct result

of freely chosen actions of free-willing individual agents. The profundity of this

transformation Nietzsche conveys in the words of the re-educated man's conscience:

"you alone are to blame for it—*you alone are to blame for yourself!*"[30] In this new

reality invented by the ascetic priest every person is responsible for every one of his pains

and miseries. Consequently, atop this ascetic interpretation of the experience of suffering

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28. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 86.

29. Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals," 564.

30. Ibid., emphasis in original.

is placed the weight of guilt, as all see themselves in some way responsible for their fallen state.

But in the Death of God, Nietzsche describes an unfolding process of this causal order's erosion. Such destabilization, while traumatic, also allows for an alternative, perhaps *healthier*, approach to the natural order.[31] According to Nietzsche, as faith in God and his authority wanes, it is increasingly difficult to sustain the metaphysical and moral order that His authority alone made possible. As faith in Judeo-Christian religion declines, Western man is returned to the natural order, and with that order, its associated pains as well as innocence: to his horror man rediscovers that the natural world's order exists "*not* because laws obtain in it, but because they are absolutely *lacking*, and every power draws ultimate consequences at every moment."[32] So organized, order is determined by the temporary power relationships of domination and submission. The natural order is a constellation of colliding wills and pursuits of power, rather than an immutable hierarchy imposed by a single will of omnipotent potency. This radical change loosens the previously firm bond between individual cause and individual effect: God's unchanging order is replaced by one that *never stops changing*. In this way, the Death of God reveals life's maelstrom of ceaselessly battling forces, thereby rendering the ascetic priest's manufactured responsibility incredible. The Death of God makes possible a return to the "innocence of becoming."[33]

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31. In light of the present chapter's subject matter, The Death of God is only briefly touched upon here. For a fuller discussion, I direct the reader to Chapter Four where several of the concept's key aspects are examined as they relate to Nietzsche's theory of international politics.

32. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 23.

33. Nietzsche, "Twilight of the Idols," in *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin Books USA Inc., 1990), 64.

Consistent with overcoming and will-to-power's creativity, Nietzsche's creator, rather than abandoning Judeo-Christian responsibility, reappropriates it in a way that increases human vitality. Like all animals, man is a product of his history insofar as each generation carries with it the effects of the experiences of those that came before: modern man has inherited instincts and capacities unique to him and historical experience. As discussed earlier, Nietzsche views social, political, and cultural factors as akin to environmental forces when it comes to human development: man is unique in this respect, for he is the only animal for whom such variables hold sway.

In his idea of "redemption," Nietzsche embraces this exceptional quality by turning it to man's future advantage. Zarathustra, Nietzsche's model and guide to this future, proposes redemption as an approach to the past whereby one accepts its reality and influence without simultaneously becoming imprisoned by it. Observing the state of modern man as a result of the ascetic priest's millennia-long influence, Zarathustra laments "I walk among human beings as among fragments and severed limbs of human beings!"[34] Weighed down by the ascetic priest's false teachings of permanence and absolute order, man has become deformed and crippled, judging "that existence itself must eternally be deed and guilt again!"[35] However, rather than simply reject these developments, and call for a return to a time when man never believed such things, Zarathustra reappropriates the capacity for responsibility: "'To redeem that which has passed away and to re-create all 'It was' into a 'Thus I willed it!'—that alone should I

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34. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 120.

35. Ibid.

call redemption.'"[36] As "a fragment, a riddle, a cruel coincidence," Zarathustra takes

possession of the past, but more significantly, he takes *responsibility* for it: "Thus I willed

it!" In order to prevent the West from becoming a civilization of "last men" Zarathustra

must remake man, but he can only successfully do so if he acknowledges the reality of

what man currently is, for that reality determines what he might become.

The creator's reappropriated responsibility reflects Western civilization's Judeo-

Christian inheritance in a way that facilitates the West's return to the natural order and

life's processes. Insofar as life is characterized by flux and impermanence, it is a reality

incompatible with the ascetic priest's guilt-laden rendition of responsibility. Nietzsche's

creator celebrates the freedom provided by life's ceaseless play of forces: possessing the

"highest and noblest capacities" of mankind, the creator realizes he "*is* Nature," and finds

joy in this communion.[37] In addition to these capacities, this redeemer possesses those

born of his Judeo-Christian education, along with others:

> [he] needs to have been a critic and a sceptic and a dogmatist and an historian,
> and in addition a poet and collector and traveler and puzzle-solver and moralist
> and seer and 'free spirit' and nearly all things, so that he can traverse the range of
> human values and value-feelings and *be able* to look with many eyes and
> consciences from the heights into every distance, from the depths into every
> height, from the corners into every wide expanse.[38]

The creator, in whose hands Nietzsche places Western civilization's future, draws

from instincts, capacities, and experiences unique to this civilization's historical

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36. Ibid.

37. Nietzsche, "Homer's Contest," 51.

38. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 104, emphasis in original.

existence: his "greatness" is found in his "ability to be both multifarious and whole, both wide and full."[39]

The creator's "multifariousness" is both the product of, and cause for, an additional insight critical to both the creator's character as well as the Nature Nietzsche proposes Western civilization be rebuilt upon: truths and values are historically and contextually contingent, rather than universal and eternal. In one way, the Death of God may be understood as the dawning awareness, however hazy and incomplete, of this natural fact, as the old universal Judeo-Christian order crumbles, resulting in a chaotic flood of various moralities. With respect to the creator, Nietzsche describes the arrival of this insight as a result of observation and study: after visiting many communities in his journeys Zarathustra observes simply that what "this people deemed good was for another a source of scorn and shame."[40] This comment is more than merely a statement of the obvious with respect to diversity in mankind's moral systems. Rather, it points to a profound reorientation to values as such by tracing their origins to human invention, and grounding them in the natural world. A people's values reflect the circumstances in which they live, so much so that "once you have recognized a people's need and land and sky and neighbor, you can surely guess the law of its overcomings…"[41] Furthermore, this organic, earth-bound value formation is essential to the natural life of a community for its "tablet of overcomings," its system of values, "is the voice of its will to power."[42] With this insight the creator seeks to return morality to its natural condition as a piece of

39. Ibid., 107.

40. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 51.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

human creation, a piece of art to be crafted in accordance with man's necessities and potentials. Through reappropriation, Nietzsche's future creator weaves the threads of modern man's Judeo-Christian past into the fabric of his future society.

Conclusion

Nietzsche's thought, while championing freedom and self-determination, is deeply embedded within a substantive conception of life, and a natural order. Nietzsche believes that all life is guided by basic and inescapable forces, the rejection of which leads to a decline in health, strength, and vitality. As Nietzsche counts man "among the animals plain and simple, without metaphorical intent," these forces are directly relevant to the form, content and quality of human life.[43] As a result, understanding of Nietzsche's international political theory requires an understanding of those aspects of the natural world Nietzsche views as most formative for individuals and communities alike.

The above discussion has introduced these aspects, the first of which is will-to-power. Nietzsche views will-to-power as the basic animating force of every organism, and therefore of man. Upon investigation, will-to-power is primarily comprised of two drives: survival and vitality. The former provides creatures with a desire to sustain and maintain themselves, while the latter drives them to change themselves and others. As both impulses involve the acquisition of power, will-to-power necessitates conflict and struggle.

But unlike other animals, human behavior is largely underdetermined: man does not inevitably satisfy both of will-to-power's drives. Such then, according to Nietzsche,

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43. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 89.

is one of the most important functions performed by values: moral systems orient a people to the natural order, and will-to-power. As the model for a successful instance of such values, Ancient Greece in the time of Homer occupies a place of importance in Nietzsche's thought. In contrast to those of Judeo-Christian origin, the cultural, social, and political values fostered by Ancient Greece engendered an affection for, and intoxication with, life's strife-ridden nature. Instantiated by the dueling divinities Apollo and Dionysus, will-to-power was transfigured in such a way as to evoke both reverence and reverie, awe and inspiration. Guided by this precedent, but also departing from, Nietzsche's Nature is a new artistic rendering of the natural world meant to facilitate Western civilization's revitalization. In part Apollo, in part Dionysus, it weds the former's stability and apparent permanence with the latter's unrestrained flux. Mindful of Judeo-Christian tradition's two-millennia long civilizational education, Nietzsche recognizes both the impossibility, as well as undesirability, of a literal replication of Ancient Greece's ways, for such ways do not speak sufficiently directly to the prevailing conditions of the current age. Nietzsche's new Nature, the form and force of which are displayed by Zarathustrian creators, is the result of, and a response to, what Western civilization has become.

Modernity's characteristics and potentials find expression in Nietzsche's ideal creator, Zarathustra. A child of modernity who is both attuned to the natural world's fundamental dynamics, and tasked with Western civilization's redemption, Zarathustra embodies the type of vitality Nietzsche envisions for the West by overcoming its Judeo-Christian inheritance: responsibility, once a life-denying burden, in Zarathustra's hands becomes the will to, and means of, Western man's elevation. Much like in Ancient

Greece, Nietzsche's model creator is inspired by agonistic tensions, the oppositions of which he experiences as an "artistic jubilee."[44] As a poet, his verses of values are meant to become the "flesh and actuality" of society.[45]

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44. Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy," 40.

45. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 242.

CHAPTER THREE

The Culture of Politics and State

Introduction

The previous chapter articulated Nietzsche's theory of life, whose animating force is will-to-power, as well as the necessity of artistic transfiguration to render such forces conducive to health with respect to the animal known as man. Pulled this way and that by the dueling drives of survival and vitality which constitute the essence of will-to-power, man, being a creature of not only instinct but reason, is uniquely susceptible to adopting a life at odds with his own well-being: the natural world's brutalities shock his conscience, for he is aware of not only his pain, but the conviction that such pain is unjustified, that it ought not be. Though natural, this disposition threatens man's health by potentially moving him to alleviate his pain and indignation in ways contrary to the fundamental dynamics of life itself, and consequently his own flourishing: whereas other organisms, owing to an absence of self-consciousness and therefore any notion of, or feeling for, outrage, make the painful compromises mandated by will-to-power's duel demands of survival and vitality seemingly effortlessly, man, possessed of both sentience and reason, must actively will his own well-being.

According to Nietzsche's understanding of the processes of life which underlie and animate all organisms, vitality is the mark of health, whereas mere subsistence that of weakness and/or impending decline. Though strictly speaking, life's processes lack a purpose, a single overarching end to which all means must be bent, Nietzsche nonetheless maintains that a hierarchy exists among life's drives, with vitality resting atop survival:

"The wish to preserve oneself is the symptom of a condition of distress, of a limitation of the real fundamental instinct of life which aims at *the expansion of power*…"[1] Nietzsche's point here is not to categorically dismiss the principle of survival: existence, being a necessary condition for health insofar as that which does not exist cannot possess health, renders survival a critical aspect of life and living. Instead, Nietzsche is proposing that vitality, "the expansion of power," is the primary impulse of life, and consequently, the most important activity an organism can engage in. As such, Nietzsche places those creatures who bear the mark of vitality, as he conceives it, over and above those who display in their comportment its absence.

With respect to man, Nietzsche most closely associates vitality with creativity, and champions those individuals and communities possessed by an insatiable need to affect change in themselves and others; in ceaselessly reaching, confronting, and incorporating, they manifest most purely the essential dynamic force of all life, will-to-power. "Overcoming" may understood as Nietzsche's attempt to develop more fully what vitality-as-creativity involves for man, so that it may not only be understood, but also performed with a rigor and extended duration as yet seen in human history. The productive conflict it describes has the potential to reveal previously hidden personal reserves, as well as the exploitable assets of one's adversary.

The present chapter applies Nietzsche's theory of will-to-power, and the natural order in which it is embedded, to the two key social arrangements Nietzsche deems most determinative with respect to man's health: a society's culture, which is responsible for

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1. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 291.

the content and character of man's engagement with life's fundamental dynamics; and the state, whose institutions and organizations can either facilitate or hinder this engagement. I begin with an examination of what Nietzsche means by culture. A "unity" of artistic, political, and moral resources, culture constitutes a people's singular uniqueness and identity.[2] Furthermore, it is through culture that a people establishes its relationship with the underlying processes of life: a vital culture is one that successfully harnesses the creative energies of a community's individual members in a way that results in the production of socially and politically consequential works that foster a general will to actively act in ways resonant with will-to-power.

Next, the state and its relevant functions are discussed. Nietzsche understands the state to be a natural, albeit dangerous, natural component of man's natural existence. Being a social animal, man instinctively crafts institutions of organization. Culture is one such organization. However, Nietzsche goes further, and includes the mechanisms and machinery of the state in those artifices of human life he understands to be both natural and necessary to human flourishing. To this end, I identify two primary functions performed by the state as understood by Nietzsche that he sees as essential: the state makes possible the efficient organization of a population's creative energies so that they may be more directly applied to vitality-promoting, culture-inspired, endeavors; the state also provides the means by which a community may defend its culture against the threats of foreign aggression as well as domestic decline. With respect to the former, Nietzsche understands state mechanisms of coercion to be abundantly helpful in instituting advantageous divisions of labor: viewing inequality as a natural and immutable fact of

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2. Nietzsche, "David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer," in *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, ed. Daniel Breazeale, (New York: Cambridge: University Press, 2005), 5.

life, Nietzsche embraces the state as a tool for establishing and enforcing the exploitation of the mediocre masses for the sake of an exceptionally vital few, for it is by the creative works of these few that a community's health is determined.

The second important function performed by the state is the potential it bestows upon a community to both preserve and express its cultural power. Nietzsche observes that communities, most notably during times of external threat, manifest a peculiar, almost instinctual, organizing behavior whereby weaker individual wills submit themselves with zealous passion to a dominant center of power.[3] The state, as the most superficially identifiable manifestation of power within a community, quite naturally becomes the object before which such submission is offered. This being what Nietzsche understands as the natural condition of man, he sees in the state a natural mechanism for the coalescing and directing of individual energies into a collective will for action. When guided by the values and interests of a vital culture, the state for Nietzsche is a tremendously powerful tool in the cultivation and expression of vitality: by means of the state a healthy culture may deter or even defend against the attacks of aggressors whose deficit in vitality is erroneously compensated by a surplus in arms; by means of the state a healthy culture may become the aggressor, attacking, in the spirit of "overcoming," a neighbor, thereby manifesting its will-to-power; or, by means of the state, a flagging culture, on the precipice of decline, may reinvigorate itself with a more narrowly-tailored conflict meant to return to a population a sense of visceral necessity regarding its values and identity.

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3. Nietzsche, "The Greek State," 10.

It must be noted, however, that while Nietzsche articulates the beneficial functions of the state, he is also abundantly aware of the dangers posed by that very same state. The key presupposition undergirding the arguments for the state's beneficial role is that within a community the state resides in a place of subordination with respect to culture. However, history has shown that once granted the powers of organization and devotion, the state too often usurps culture, and takes unto itself the solemn duties of value-creation. Such a state is the one Nietzsche rails against in so many of his works, for such a state becomes a force for the leveling of human potential, and the squandering of creative genius. While I acknowledge this incontrovertible concern, being so often borne out by experience, I nonetheless focus most of my attention on the thought offered by Nietzsche as to the state's *proper* place within a well constituted and vital community, for it constitutes an essential component of his international political theory, the applicability of which may only be considered once it, in itself, has been presented.

Part I: A Natural Culture

In keeping with his deference to what he understands as the fundamental dynamics of biological life, distilled in his theory of will-to-power, human flourishing depends on the type of relationship established with these dynamics. It is for this reason that Nietzsche devotes so much of his energy to the topic of culture, for it is through culture's artifices, be they ideational or institutional, that human communities express their will-to-power, which, as the fundamental force of life, is the chief determinant of health. In the broadest of strokes, culture as understood by Nietzsche "is, above all, unity of artistic style in all the expressions of the life of a people,"[4] For Nietzsche, culture is

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4. Nietzsche, "David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer," 5.

first of all a product of a specific community: the "unity" of which he speaks is only possible within the context of a population sufficiently certain of a shared set of characteristics that distinguish it from others. Zarathustra makes clear that such differentiation is essential to the formation of collective-wide value systems: "No people could live without first evaluating, but if it would maintain itself, it may not evaluate as its neighbour evaluates."[5] Values, like so much in Nietzsche's thought, are the result of context and relationships, for man, being but an animal, "evaluates" with reference to his surroundings and experiences, rather than revelations or divine insights. Culture, then, may be understood as the articulation of the effect these contexts and relationships have had on a community. Culture constitutes and expresses a community's unique character by making of its varied creative resources a single whole. The "unity" of which Nietzsche writes is composed of social, political, and religious energies that, without such coalescence, would likely exhaust themselves in fruitless ways.

Furthermore, one important way that culture facilitates a successful response to a community's needs in light of pressing circumstances and conditions is its power of transfiguration. One of Nietzsche's most provocative propositions is that the value of truth is not a fixed, universal quality inherent to truth as such, but rather, like so much else, dependent on the circumstances in which it is encountered: "The question is rather to what extent the judgement furthers life, preserves life, preserves the species, perhaps even cultivates the species."[6] Having placed truth into question, Nietzsche pushes further, declaring a lie's equal, if not higher, value with respect to human flourishing: "[T]o give

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5. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 51.

6. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 7.

up false judgements would be to give up life, to deny life."[7] Truth's value is a function of its contribution to the preservation and potential elevation of a species, as is falsehood's.

While such determinations must necessarily be taken on a case-by-case basis, being the result of a people's unique qualities and the conditions in which it exists, Nietzsche does identify one need that presses upon *all* communities: "This is a general principle: each living being can become healthy, strong, and fertile only within a horizon...*[T]hat for the health of a single individual, a people, and a culture the unhistorical and the historical are equally essential.*"[8] By "historical sense" Nietzsche means the knowledge, gained through science and study, that the present is but the result of previous events, a universalizing process from which none are exempt. In its most extreme form, the "superhistorical sense," this truth results in a withdrawal from vital life, a sentiment Nietzsche captures with the words of Giacomo Leopardi: "Our being is pain and boredom and the world is dirt—nothing more."[9] What is needed, according to Nietzsche, is that the knowledge of, and capacity for, history be placed in the service of man, for history "pertains to him as a being who acts and strives, as a being who preserves and reveres, as a being who suffers and seeks deliverance."[10]

To satisfy each of these aspects of human nature, history must be related to in specific ways, each of which requires the active distortion of facts and truths. To the extent that culture is the center of a community's creative energies, it is essential in the transfiguration of dead historical reality into vital narrative. Nietzsche celebrates the

7. Ibid.

8. Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," 63.

9. Ibid., 66.

10. Ibid., 67.

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Ancient Greeks on this account, for, unlike modern Western culture, theirs "kept a tenacious hold on their unhistorical sense."[11] Having forgotten that truth's value is conditional, the West, according to Nietzsche, has let go of its unhistorical sense, the result being the disintegration of culture into a "chaotic jumble of styles."[12] A culture's ability to discriminate correlates with its health, for the better able it is to craft life-enhancing values and narratives, the more nourishing will be the "atmosphere" in which it lives and breathes.[13]

While domestically centered, the character and process of cultural production has important international implications. Nietzsche's heroes of culture were "seekers" who "made their way through the wilderness and thorns of wretched and meager ages" in pursuit of the grounds for culture.[14] In denying the perfection of their particular societies these cultural architects looked outwards to other communities, past and present, for those resources that might elevate their own. This approach embraces international conflict as a mechanism whereby new cultural resources might be found, *assuming* such conflicts are inspired by *healthy* cultures: as will-to-power involves the productive incorporation of defeated opponents, i.e. "overcoming," a vital international system must be populated by cultures able and willing to discern between the beneficial and detrimental spoils of war.

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11. Ibid., 79.

12. Ibid., 85.

13. Ibid., 95.

14. Ibid., 9.

Part II: Culture's Confrontation with Life

As the determinant of a community's creative potential, culture is bound to the fundamental processes of life. Yet, while the source of vitality, these processes are themselves potentially detrimental to human well-being: un-transfigured, life is endlessly brutal, and actively dismissive of man's egotism. Such was the insight of the Ancient Greeks: "[e]very moment devours the preceding one, every birth is the death of innumerable beings; begetting, living, murdering, all is one."[15] Man is unique in that the very basis of his existence and thriving is simultaneously the greatest reason for his demise and decline.

The potential of this tension to become a fatal contradiction underscores the importance of culture and creativity in Nietzsche's thought. Whereas other organisms are driven by instinct to unflaggingly wage the wars and struggles of life, man, being "the most unsuccessful animal," requires active intervention in order to acquire the equivalent of such unreflective, but beneficial, behavior.[16] Consciousness forces upon man the unique need for justifications when it comes to living a life in accordance with life's processes. Creativity is the most important human capacity in this regard, for it makes possible transfiguration. Consequently, culture is the most important social organization, for it expands the scope and influence of such transfigurations. For Nietzsche, culture bestows upon man the means by which he may succeed.

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15. Nietzsche, "The Greek State," Vol. #2: 8.

16. Nietzsche, "The Anti-Christ," in *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin Books USA Inc., 1990), 136.

Despite being universally needed, culture's artistic potential varies from one community to another. Like all animals, man is affected by the conditions in which he exists: every organism's character is, in part, determined by the obstacles it combats in pursuit of its own wellbeing. With respect to society, these external factors shape the type of culture a community forms insofar as a specific existential danger requires a similarly specific cultural response: the dangers faced by Ancient Greece's city-state were different than those faced by a modern European nation-state. Furthermore, no two communities are identical, as they have unique resources from which to draw when responding to threats. In treating both individuals and communities as natural, Nietzsche recognizes the role played by experience and history in the lives and potential of each.

Nietzsche's situational approach to society and culture is critical in understanding the particular universality of his theory of the natural order as manifested by will-to-power: while the demands of life's processes are omnipresent, the form of their satisfaction differs according to time and context. Rather than offering an inflexible and overly specific set of values to which all human societies should subscribe, Nietzsche's theory of will-to-power seeks to establish the boundaries within which culture, and the society it guides, may exist in a life-elevating way. To bridge the divide between life's universality, and society's idiosyncrasy, Nietzsche isolates the single most consequential concern that he believes every community has or will face: the why of its existence. The universality of this question, and the threat it poses, means that throughout human history every community has in one way or another wrestled with it. Relevant across time and situation, it provides a bridge between the generality of Nietzsche's theory, and the

locality of man. For this reason, Nietzsche sees its usefulness in evaluating societies with respect to their success or failure at affirming life.

Despite his appreciation for the importance of immediate circumstances, Nietzsche feels justified in looking to the past for solutions to current problems. The historical example from which Nietzsche perhaps learns the most is that of Ancient Greece, for not only did this civilization face openly and honestly the naked forces of life, but after doing so it managed to foster a culture capable of affirming, rather than rejecting, these forces. To pre-Homeric eyes, existence was essentially "strife, amorous desires, deception, age and death."[17] Yet, rather than adopt a life-denying resignation, Ancient Greek culture transfigured this inhospitableness into a vitality-promoting experience. In Homer's works, Nietzsche believes he finds the mechanism by which this profoundly consequential transformation was made possible. Specifically, Greek mythology illuminated the natural order with a divine light, and in so doing lent a new glow to human life: "the gods justify the life of man: they themselves live it—the only satisfactory theodicy!"[18] Here, man sees reflected in the petty intrigues of the gods his own daily trials. Homer's artistic re-imagining lent dignity and majesty to even the most repellant aspects of human life. By means of creativity in the form of artistic transfiguration, Ancient Greek culture instilled within its participants an appreciation for, and love of, life.

Most importantly, the transfiguration displayed by Ancient Greek mythology changed society's experience of, and relationship to, life's processes without denying the

17. Nietzsche, "Homer's Contest," Vol. #2: 53.

18. Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy," 43.

brutality of those processes. The combative existence forced upon all creatures by the natural world, the combativeness of will-to-power, was simultaneously valued and feared. To the Ancient Greek, war and envy were "Eris-goddesses," divine and eternal, and therefore *"justified."*[19] As essential an aspect of life as fluidity is of water, struggle had to be embraced and worked with, not rejected and denied. To do this, the Ancient Greeks split the rock of conflict in two, and out of each half carved a divinity with whom a relationship could be established. With respect to envy, the association was a decidedly positive one: if motivated by envy, as opposed to hatred or hubris, conflict, even extremely violent conflict, fosters "contests," a special species of battle in which combatants push one another to ascending deeds of excellence.[20] This relationship to conflict, most notably when involving military confrontation, stands in stark contrast to that of the modern West, whose prevailing sensibilities seek an end to all organized violence, lamenting even its justified application as a necessary evil. To the Ancient Greek, individual as well as collective conflict was not only a natural, but an essential aspect of man's personal and political existence.

The necessity of human creativity to transfigure the inhuman forces of life as manifested in will-to-power, what Nietzsche considers the highest form of art, begins to explain the hierarchical character of his political thought, a feature most clearly displayed by his rejection of egalitarian social systems in favor of aristocratic ones.[21] Nietzsche draws our attention to how the Ancient Greeks, in recognizing the fundamental dynamics

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19. Nietzsche, "Homer's Contest," Vol #2: 54, emphasis in original.

20. Ibid.

21. Nietzsche's understanding of, and advocacy for, aristocratic society are addressed at length in Chapters Five and Six.

of life, took it upon themselves to determine the means by which such dynamics would be accorded to: while the natural order established the conditions and aims of health, man was free to determine how he would satisfy those conditions, and achieve those aims. One basic fact that the Ancient Greek could not ignore was that the natural order had no patience for human notions of justice, or the universal dignity of individual organisms: vitality necessitates exploitation, for only with the energy and liberty provided by an exploited majority may the creative few craft their life-elevating artistic works. What is remarkable is that the Ancient Greeks, as Nietzsche presents them, embraced this truth in its cold nakedness: common labor was a "disgrace," for it was untouched by the transfigurative powers of art, which alone are able to render an existence of "no value" one worthy of the hardest hardships.[22] Such bravery in discernment imbues a culture with great freedom, for it facilitates the pursuit of transfigurative art by not requiring the contradictory and counterproductive ennobling of the uncreative and base. As a result, Ancient Greek society embraced inegalitarianism with a clean conscience, for life itself demands such hierarchy.

The chief lesson Nietzsche learns from Ancient Greek culture is that in order to establish a productive relationship with the natural order, a community must first face it in an honest way. Ancient Greece's culture is so remarkable because, among other things, it did so, and then responded by exercising the unique human capacity for art in order to live within that terrifying reality. Only in the art of culture do deadly truths become invigorating ones. Atlas-like, Greek culture was burdened with the weight of justifying man and his earthly experiences. Despite the difficulty of such a task, that

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22. Nietzsche, "The Greek State," 4.

culture found in art the means and the power needed to not simply endure life, but declare that "existence and the world [are] eternally justified."[23]

The same lesson explains Nietzsche's otherwise baffling endorsement of early Jewish society. According to Nietzsche, at its start, Jewish society "stood in a *correct*, that is to say natural relationship to all things" insofar as it created, and lived according to, values that affirmed power and its pursuit.[24] Confronted by a hostile environment, this community applied its creative resources to produce a body of values that allowed it to both survive and thrive. In times of success, this morality allowed the community to revel in its strength, as demonstrated by the command to convey gratitude in victory: "Yaweh" was a celebration of a people's strength, and the "good conscience" it felt "about it."[25] In this historical moment, Judaism was a religion responsive to the needs of a community in a way consistent with will-to-power, specifically, the pursuit of vitality-enhancing struggle. The cultural artistry of early Jewish society enabled its people to engage in, and draw strength from, the perilous struggles of the natural world.

The connection Nietzsche makes between a community and a responsive religion is important to keep in mind, for it is critical in understanding his scathing critiques of later Judaism, and Christianity in general, what I collectively refer to as Judeo-Christian tradition. Whereas early Judaism worshipped a national God, a being who gave form to all those qualities a people felt responsible for power and glory, the God of later Judeo-Christian tradition is alienated from the vitality of a community, and therefore will-to-

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23. Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy," 52.

24. Nietzsche, "The Anti-Christ," 147, emphasis in original.

25. Ibid.

power: "[T]he development of the conception of God from the 'God of Israel,' the god of a people, to the Christian God, the quintessence of everything good" was a regress for it reduced the pride of a community into "something ever thinner and paler; he became an 'ideal,' he became 'pure spirit,'…The deterioration of a god: God became the 'thing-in-itself.'"[26]

As the examples of Ancient Greece and early Jewish society illustrate, in religion a people organizes and institutes those myths necessary to justify existence in light of the natural world's essential inhumanity. It is the *religion* of Ancient Greek civilization that allowed its individual societies to thrive in the face of life's harshness: its divinities embodied human life, recasting in Olympian splendor the heights and depths of human experience. Similarly, early Jewish society created values and a supreme divinity that allowed a people to endure hardships, win victories, and celebrate strength: Yaweh embodied the healthy joy in strength, and the natural hope that such power continue into the future. In both cases religion expressed and made possible triumph over a fatalism born of knowledge into the painful truths of the natural world, and the harshness of its constituting processes. For Nietzsche, religion is an artistic creation of culture meant to aid human communities in the establishment of life-elevating relationships with the natural world.

Part III: The Cultural Interests of State

As with culture, Nietzsche explains the state by reference to its naturalness, and organic place within the life of man. Nietzsche understands the state to be a natural phenomenon meant to aid in the maximally robust expression of vitality-promoting

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26. Ibid., 140.

creativity, be it in the form of art, or transformative struggle. Though tasked with enhancing and developing a community's creative energies, culture cannot effectively function without the support of another natural organization: culture requires the shield and sword of the state to provide the essential pre-requisites of order and security. With these duties in mind, Nietzsche identifies the two most important services performed by the state: domestic organization; and defense against threats to culture. With respect to the first, state mechanisms of coercion facilitate a community's organization according to the guidelines of its culture. Such coercion is necessary to enforce the inequality and exploitation Nietzsche argues is the foundation of every vital society.

Second, the state provides for a common defense against enemies and hostile conditions that threaten the life and health of culture. Consistent with the inherently strife-ridden processes of life, human communities are necessarily in a position of struggle, and therefore have need for defenses. The state and its powers of defense as well as attack, emerge naturally from what Nietzsche identifies in man as an "instinctive pleasure in the State": citizens reflexively subordinate their individual wills and interests to those of the state, drawn, largely without thought, to its power.[27] Combined with the state's mechanisms of coercion, this instinct facilitates the organization of groups devoted to a community's defense. Furthermore, through this machinery a community may defend against creative stagnation by engaging in international conflicts, so long as such conflicts are inspired by, and waged for, vital-enhancing interests: war's bloodletting may purge a community of the enervating toxins of stasis, but it may just as likely squander the last drops of vitality on a meaningless battlefield. For Nietzsche, a healthy society

27. Nietzsche, "The Greek State," 11.

recognizes both the essentialness of strife, as well as the necessity of culturally mindful discernment.

The "State" of Nature

In one of his earliest essay, "The Greek State," Nietzsche writes that "Nature, in order to arrive at Society, forges for herself the cruel tool of the State…"[28] Decades later, in *The Anti*-Christ, he includes the state among those "natural institutions" formed by "the instinct for life."[29] One reason for this persistent understanding of Nietzsche's regarding the natural origins and character of the state is his similarly longstanding view as to the fundamental combativeness of life: while differing with Hobbes as to the value and desirability of life's intrinsic combativeness, Nietzsche, like his predecessor, considers pre-political life to be a "natural *bellum omnium contra omnes*."[30] This *bellum* is hostile to creative genius, for without the protective artifices of culture and state, vital energies are expended on survival and subsistence, rather than art and elevation. To rectify this situation, life gifts man with the "cruel tool of the State" so that he might be freed from such wastefulness, and begin the work of human enhancement.

In contrast to his pre-political existence, where survival dominates all other interests, man's life within the state allows for both survival *and* vitality through creativity. Unlike other animals, for whom will-to-power's two drives are instinctively set in balance, man is torn between them: pursuit of survival tends to favor the average and mediocre, while pursuit of vitality attracts the exceptional, but places their lives in

28. Ibid., 10.

29. Nietzsche, "The Anti-Christ," 150.

30. Nietzsche, "The Greek State," 12.

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jeopardy, for the vital life is a dangerous life. Lacking the unifying instinct of other animals, man is too often enticed by the desire for comfort, resulting in a species that, for Nietzsche, is burdened by a "surplus of deformed, sick, degenerating, frail, necessarily suffering individuals."[31] Culture, therefore, is needed to augment this natural condition by creating values which transfigure the pains and struggles of existence. With respect to the average human, this transfiguration can alter one's understanding of life's hardships, as the example of Ancient Greece demonstrates. One important consequence of this alteration is that it facilitates the sustained exploitation of the toiling masses by providing them with the salutary justifications of mythology and religion.[32]

With respect to the rare exceptional persons, culture can provide them with a context in which they can productively manifest their vitality. Again, Ancient Greece demonstrates this in the form of contest: the values produced by culture reframed combat and struggle in such a way that combatants pushed one another to excellence, and made of defeat an opportunity for growth. This is the essence of the concept of overcoming. Furthermore, culture provides the few of exceptional creativity a mechanism for creation itself: possessed of sufficient vitality, creative individuals can craft new values to change culture, and then use that very same culture to transform society.

The roles Nietzsche accords to culture with respect to the fundamental processes of life allow us to more accurately understand his conditional support of the state. Given that creative potential is not uniformly distributed across a population, the state is needed

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31. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 56.

32. This effect, however, can be bent to unhealthy ends, as in the case of Christianity and its modern democratic offshoots, both of which Nietzsche have "preserved too much of what *ought to perish*." (Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil,* 56, emphasis in original). The specifics of Nietzsche's critique are discussed at length in subsequent chapters.

to institute that division of labor conducive to the production and cultivation of creative genius, for "*slavery is of the essence of culture*."[33] Within this state-imposed order, "[t]he misery of toiling men must still increase in order to make the production of the world of art possible to a small number of Olympian men."[34] The primal drive of vitality is most fully satisfied for man through the cooperation of culture and state, as the latter liberates those few capable of creative genius to manifest their will.[35]

The need for this cooperation points to the difficulties man experiences with respect to life's fundamental processes and dynamics. Despite being a creature of nature, man does not as a matter of course accord himself to its realities, an accommodation necessary for health and flourishing. For this reason, man is unique in having to bear a singular burden: man must consciously craft for himself certain types of social arrangements that foster those forms of health specific to the human types, strong and weak. Dispelling the "false glamour" of modernity's social contract, Nietzsche's state is an "iron clamp," whereby the oppressive social order necessary for a people's flourishing is brought into being and maintained.[36] The state was created to enforce that "strongly and soundly consolidated mediocrity" upon which culture rests.[37]

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33. Nietzsche, "The Greek State," 7, emphasis in original.

34. Ibid., 6.

35. The challenges to modernity in general, and liberalism specifically, are striking. Consequently, Chapter Seven, "The Unhealthy Rights of Liberalism's Universal Man, "confronts directly some of the challenges posed by Nietzsche's approach to domestic politics as it relates to his theory of international politics.

36. Nietzsche, "The Greek State," 9.

37. Nietzsche, "The Anti-Christ," 191.

Man's State Instinct

The state's capacity for coercion is critical for the fulfillment of its duties regarding culture. Only when masses of mediocre persons are made to endure disproportionate burdens may that type of culture called for by will-to-power's dueling drives of survival and vitality take form and operate. This subordination of the state to culture leads Nietzsche to reject those explanations of state formation that rely upon man's superficial self-interests and base desire for security. As a mechanism intended to facilitate the flourishing of a creatively vital few, "the State…[is] for the majority of men a continually flowing source of hardship, at frequently recurring periods the consuming torch of mankind."[38] Born from "devastated lands" and the "devouring hatred of nations," superficially, the state possesses for man little merit in itself.[39]

And yet, the state exists. Even more confounding, it does so with man's enthusiastic support. Indeed, in the name of their own state individuals are willing to make the hardest and most painful sacrifices. To explain this phenomenon, Nietzsche examines in an early essay, "The Greek State," man's "instinctive pleasure in the state": en masse, men frequently exhibit an impulse that compels them to submit before a center of power, in this case the state.[40] It is worth noting the similarities between this state-centric instinct, and the "herd instinct" of Nietzsche's later works, described in *Beyond Good and Evil* as "[an] inborn need to obey, as a kind of *formal conscience*…"[41] Both draw our attention to Nietzsche's persistent belief in man's natural submissiveness, as well as

38. Nietzsche, "The Greek State," 11.

39. Nietzsche, "The Greek State," 11.

40. Ibid., 11.

41. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 85.

his tendency to identify with a group or symbol rather than his own individual, oppositionally distinct, will. However, whereas the state instinct is associated with hardship, sacrifice, and feats of collective will, the herd instinct by contrast involves complacency, and a general softness that obeys only that which asks of one virtually nothing: "One no longer becomes poor or rich: both are too burdensome. Who wants to rule any more? Who wants to obey? Both are too burdensome. No herdsman and one herd!"[42]

Despite these differences, I believe a significant connection exists between the two instincts that has a direct relevance to Nietzsche's international political theory. Though highly critical of the herd instinct, Nietzsche, in keeping with the concepts of overcoming and reappropriation discussed earlier, sees in it a potential asset for Europe in the coming great politics. Addressing the consequences of democratization on human development, Nietzsche writes in *Beyond Good and Evil* that just as Europeans will "*need* a master, a commander, like their daily bread…the *strong* man":

> …will have to turn out even stronger and richer…That is to say, the democratization of Europe is at the same time an involuntary contrivance for the breeding of *tyrants*—understanding the word in every sense, even the most spiritual.[43]

What Nietzsche establishes here is a relationship between Western civilization's emerging and expanding herd instinct, and the potential influence of individuals of exceptional strength. Specifically, Nietzsche describes the incredible potential for command and control on the part of a vital few over an entire civilization as the result of an instinct for acquiescence. In this way, the West's herd instinct, according to

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42. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 16.

43. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 134.

Nietzsche's analysis, is facilitating a process of collectivization and submission among Western civilization's populations akin to that described in "The Greek State." Furthermore, as is discussed in Chapter Five, "Nietzsche's International Politics of Cultures," Nietzsche envisions a Europe that has moved beyond the "petty politics" of small states, and on to the great politics of a unified Europe, one in possession of a single "terrible" will.[44] Such is the refinement and expansion of man's "instinctive pleasure in the state."

But before we appreciate the expanded form of this instinct, we must first understand the essentials of its earlier form. According to Nietzsche, the state's "indefinable greatness and power" draws to itself "weaker forces" to form "an affinity hitherto not existing."[45] As a focal point of strength, the state draws individuals to it, and directs them in the fulfillment of collective goals. The state represents the end product of a process through which numerous individual wills are united and finally bent to new purposes: what was once a disordered association of competing interests is now a single entity possessed of a consolidated will. Ideally, this new collective will allows for the efficient accumulation and application of a population's resources in ways that foster vitality and creative works with transfigurative potential.

The State and Threats to Culture

For Nietzsche, the sublimation of individual interests facilitated by the state instinct points towards purposes which exist over and above those of individuals. Nietzsche sees in the consequences of the state's operation its true purpose, the

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44. Ibid., 101.

45. Nietzsche, "The Greek State," 10.

facilitation of vital culture: its coercive powers can bring about a domestic organization productively responsive to the natural order, thereby making up for man's natural deficiencies with respect to instinctive behavior. Consequently, the state's primary justification for existence is not simply the preservation of man, but more importantly, the species' elevation to ever higher levels of creative vitality.

The importance of vitality as opposed to simple survival is most clearly demonstrated by the danger to which the state exposes individuals. The state makes possible a new type of human conflict, international war, whose existence challenges those who see the state as a work of conscious construction for the sake of life, liberty, and happiness. Across all three "periods" of Nietzsche's thought, the miseries and dangers associated with the state have been explicitly identified: in "The Greek State" Nietzsche says the state is "for the majority of men a continually flowing source of hardship, at frequently recurring periods the consuming torch of mankind"; in *Human, All too Human*, it makes possible "the squandering of men of the highest genius" on an enormous scale through conscription; and Zarathustra himself describes this organizational mechanism as "a dying for many" that "glorifies" itself in such slaughter.[46] From the very beginning, Nietzsche has been highly critical of the state, and the dangers it presents to human flourishing.

But as the present study has endeavored to demonstrate, the supreme importance Nietzsche places on vitality owing to his insights into the fundamental processes and dynamics of life, means that an idea, political arrangement, or institutional machine cannot be dismissed solely because it brings with it pain, suffering, and danger. Indeed,

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46. Ibid., 11; *Human, All too Human*, trans. Marion Faber, and Stephan Lehmann (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 212; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 44.

insofar as will-to-power is "oppression, harshness, forcing one's own forms on others, incorporation, and…exploitation" in certain contexts such negatives may be better understood as essential, rather than lamentable.[47] I argue that international conflict is such a context, and by understanding Nietzsche's approach to, and understanding of it, the nuance and complexity of his thought regarding the state is revealed.

Despite both the inevitable and possible dangers posed by the state, Nietzsche never abandons it as a tool to be used by man in the course of his natural existence, and nowhere is this more the case than in international politics. In accordance with will-to-power, "a living being wants above all else to *release* its strength," and the highest form of such release is the transformation born of overcoming.[48] The combativeness of international politics bemoaned by many is celebrated by Nietzsche, for in it he sees an opportunity for the productive collision of wills: an international system of ceaselessly competing states has the potential to become will-to-power's greatest arena. If so animated, the system's *bellum contra omnes* becomes an asset, an inexhaustible source of cultural energy.

Of critical importance, however, is the centrality of culture in the waging of international conflicts. Nietzsche was rabidly critical of Bismarck's "groβe Politik," and the violence it entailed, for the simple reason that material, not cultural, interests motivated it. In contrast, Nietzsche's "politics on a grand scale," while no doubt involving violence and traditional forms of interstate warfare, is inspired by an interest in cultural vitality, rather than merely physical dominance or geographical acquisition. As

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47. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 152.

48. Ibid., 15, emphasis in original.

is discussed at great length in Chapter Five, this requires an international system composed of states whose powers are subordinated to those of their respective, and healthfully constituted, cultures. In such a system, states are essential tools in the waging of vitality-enhancing warfare:

> [I]n consequence of the effect of that *bellum*,—an effect which is turned inwards and compressed,—Society is given time during the intervals to germinate and burst into leaf, in order, as warmer days come, to let the shining blossoms of genius sprout forth.[49]

The cultural significance of war is underscored by Nietzsche's use of the term "interval": armed conflict is a short-term event justified by the "blossoms" of culture it makes possible in "warmer days." Such days are made "warm" by the pressures of war, which reveal to a community the powers of collective action at its disposal. Insofar as culture requires this type of cooperation and sacrifice, in war a community may discover its creative potential, and subsequently produce the "shining blossoms of genius" that distinguish the vital from the enervated.

The potential creative benefits of international conflict can be seen in Nietzsche's rendering of Ancient Greece's frequent wars. While superficially petty, these bloody confrontations reveal to Nietzsche a "mysterious connection…between State and art, political greed and artistic creation, battlefield and work of art."[50] By waging war, Ancient Greece's city-states profited from the energies they unleashed, and applied them to the elevation of their particular cultures. War's horrors reminded these people of not only the brutal forces of life, but the necessity of culture's art to transfigure those forces.

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49. Nietzsche, "The Greek State," 12.

50. Ibid., 12.

Understood as competitions, such wars were seen as natural activities in which all healthy communities ought to be engaged.

War as a means to culture explains much of Nietzsche's strident opposition to his own nation's triumphalism following its military victory in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. For Nietzsche, the celebrations of German "public opinion" revealed a fundamental "error" within society itself: ignorant of war's cultural basis, Germany concluded that its "culture too was victorious in that struggle and must therefore now be loaded with garlands."[51] According to Nietzsche, Germany's victory only proved its superiority over France in matters of war, not in culture, for "stricter discipline and readier obedience have nothing to do with culture."[52] While surpassing France in the development and application of state machinery, Germany turned this advantage into a deficit by misunderstanding state-culture dynamics: the state is a means to culture, and therefore its actions must be judged according to the quality of culture they foster. Nietzsche decried his countrymen's post-war celebrations because, though proving itself militarily superior to France, Germany remained culturally "dependent on Paris in all matters of form."[53]

51. Nietzsche, "David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer," 3.

52. Ibid., 5.

53. Ibid., 6. Despite Richard Wagner's continental popularity, Nietzsche ultimately associates the composer's music with European cultural decay, rather than German cultural vitality. Nietzsche explains Wagner's popularity with reference to the curiosity of its "essential contradiction," one emblematic of German culture: Europe cannot help but be "attracted and transfixed at the riddles posed" by Wagner's "juxtaposition" of the "noblest and commonest things"(Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 136). Consequently, far from proving the superiority of German culture, Wagner's international success reveals Germany, and increasingly Europe's, cultural decline, insofar as this music is characterized by inconsistent instincts and tastes, rather than a "unity of artistic style"(Nietzsche, "David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer," 5).

Nietzsche's criticism of Germany's reaction to the Franco-Prussian war applies to all communities and wars: to equate physical domination with cultural vitality is to turn a military "victory into a defeat" by subordinating culture to the state.[54] Nietzsche embraces war, and the suffering it inevitably entails, *only* if it is waged for, and contributory to, a people's cultural health.

Conclusion

Nietzsche's characterization of the vital life as one continually seeking and engaging in the various forms of conflict means that his theory of international politics must be one that accords a special place for battles between communities. To live is to struggle, and the natural order reveals through will-to-power the essential connection between vitality and conflict. Man is inextricably enmeshed within this natural order and its processes, and therefore must seek his health with reference to them. This natural fact leads Nietzsche to see both culture and the state as naturally occurring human associations intended for the species' well-being. It is through culture that man fosters and hones his creative resources, those most necessary in the life-enhancing expression of his will-to-power. Consistent with culture's prioritization, Nietzsche characterizes the state as an institution ultimately subordinate to it: by forcing otherwise divergent wills to collectively seek the achievement of a single goal, the state increases a people's ability to generate, and productively apply, its transfigurative artistic powers

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54. Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

On The Three Civilizational Crises and One

Introduction

Thus far we have discussed Nietzsche's understanding of what he views as the fundamental processes and dynamics of life with regard to their consequences for political life. With will-to-power, his formulation of these processes, as a touchstone, Nietzsche offers an outline for the parameters of healthy human social life, that is, life which accords to the boundaries and contours established by the natural order. Nietzsche's theory of will-to-power represents these processes insofar as the more complete an organism manifests will-to-power, the more in tune with life's processes it is, and subsequently the healthier it will be. Such is accomplished by striking the proper balance between the drive for survival, and that of vitality, the tension between these impulses constituting the active dynamism of will-to-power itself.

But as the previous chapter has established, unlike all other organisms, man does not necessarily establish a productive balance between life's dueling drives, and consequently often finds himself existing in ways non-conducive to his flourishing. In contrast to the Ancient Greeks, whose culture engaged with the fundamental forces of life in vitality-enhancing ways, Judeo-Christian culture has alienated Western civilization, and therefore Western man, from nature, and the primal forces responsible for his well-being.

Nietzsche's "slave revolt in morality" is the moment in human history when this break occurred, for it is here that Western man set himself in opposition to the natural world, and those values reflective of it: the "prophets" of this new mode of existence "fused 'rich', 'godless', 'evil', "violent', 'sensuous' into one entity, and were the first to mint the word 'world' as a curse word."[1] Unable to topple their masters by strength of arms, the oppressed, beaten, and exploited liberated themselves by undermining, and ultimately reversing, the normative foundations of the society that subjugated them: "one should ask rather precisely *who* is 'evil' in the sense of the morality of *ressentiment*. The answer, in all strictness, is: *precisely* the 'good man' of the other morality, precisely the noble, powerful man, the ruler…"[2] While this reorientation provided an otherwise hopelessly oppressed population the inspiration necessary to survive, and indeed was a manifestation of will-to-power, albeit of the "weakest," in Nietzsche's judgement it has condemned the West to an unhealthy process of development.[3] Formalized in Christian metaphysics, the slave revolt in morality has led to a calamitous valuation of the mediocre and sick at the expense of the exceptional and vital.

Insofar as the fundamental processes of life are the inescapable foundations of every organism, the dissonance that forms between those processes, which push toward higher states of vitality, and a human mode of existence that favors passivity, necessarily results in a crisis of health: though natural, to the extent it is the result of natural forces, behaviors, and instincts, this vitality-impoverished human is a feeble creature subsisting

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1. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 83.

2. Nietzsche, "On The Genealogy of Morals," 476.

3. Ibid., 558.

at a level far below the potential of his species. Such a crisis is precisely what Nietzsche's madman prophecies when he declares in the *The Gay Science* that "God is dead."[4] For Nietzsche, due to the formative influence of Judeo-Christian valuations, Western man has been living in such an unhealthy way for such a prolonged period of time that he is in danger of becoming permanently disfigured: as this weak type of man comes to dominate, the exceptional type is pushed further and further in the direction of extinction.

As the epicenter of Western civilization's current and future troubles, the Death of God is an essential component of Nietzsche's theory of international politics. Consequently, the present chapter examines the Death of God and its significance for the West's international politics. For the sake of clarity, I divide the Death of God into four components, each of which relate to Nietzsche's international political thought: the West's crisis of faith; The West's crisis of fact; the West's crisis of will; and the West's embrace of the last man. The first two crises involve the difficulties experienced by Western man as both his religious and scientific traditions are brought into doubt. The unique characteristics of each make the final crisis, that of Western political will, so dangerous: the loss of faith and science leaves the West without a source of meaning to create the collective will necessary for life-enhancing competitive contest in the arena of international politics.

To conclude, I discuss the last man and his significance for the international politics of Western civilization. Of those threats to the West created by God's death, the last man is that which worries Nietzsche most. Rather than troubled by the consequences

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4. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 181.

of the Death of God, Nietzsche's last man welcomes them: supremely satisfied in himself, he re-christens his contentedness the pinnacle of human achievement. But for Nietzsche, whose judgments are informed by insights into the fundamental processes of life, the last man's complacency is far from a triumph to be celebrated, for it denies the prime necessity of struggle with respect to health and flourishing. As that civilization most deeply influenced by the Judeo-Christian perspective, the West is most vulnerable to the last man. Furthermore, as Nietzsche links responsiveness to, and productive engagement with, life's processes to a community's vitality and subsequent strength, should this last man monopolize the span of human potential in the West, competing civilizations and powers may be prompted to take advantage of this weakened cultural position.

Part I: Crisis of Faith

According to Nietzsche, the Death of God, arguably his most (in)famous theory, has consequences and implications for all of Western civilization. As he understands it, the West has been so deeply informed by Judeo-Christian influences, both religious and secular, that its fundamental character cannot be understood without reference to them. Therefore, the questions entailed by the Death of God thesis, insofar as they involve an examination of Western civilization's spiritual, intellectual, and cultural heritage, invite a civilizational emergency: for the West, to question Judeo-Christian tradition is to question the very foundations of civilization itself.

With respect to Nietzsche's international political theory, the first point of significance regarding the Death of God is the West's general loss of belief in Christianity: the Death of God threatens with instability every nation built upon Judeo-

Christian foundations. For over two millennia the West has been guided by, and ordered according to, the moral tenets of Judeo-Christian tradition. This normative system began with a transvaluation of values, what Nietzsche calls the "slave revolt in morality": "the Jews brought about that tour de force of a reversal of values that enabled life on earth to acquire a new and dangerous fascination."[5] Reversing the valuations of those in power, the oppressed reinterpreted strength as the mark of sin, and weakness as the mark of blessedness.

This origin in pain and servitude leads Nietzsche to conclude that slave morality, of which Judaism and Christianity are exemplars, is the result of a need to alleviate suffering. Slave morality is a "morality of utility": by sanctifying the subjugated life it provides the sufferer "the only means of enduring an oppressive existence."[6] It is for this reason that, despite his vociferous criticisms and condemnations of this transvaluation given its detrimental consequences, Nietzsche nonetheless accords to it great respect, and even admiration as "among the greatest *conserving* and yes-creating forces of life."[7] These origins reveal the standard according to which Nietzsche judges *all* moral systems: a healthy morality is one that preserves and elevates man amid hostile conditions. For a time, the Judeo-Christian mode of valuation was to a great degree such a morality, insofar as "life wrestles in it and through it with death and *against* death."[8] However, Judeo-Christian morality outlived those hostile conditions, and with them, its own beneficial effects. When in opposition to a threatening majority, Judeo-Christian values provided

5. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 83.

6. Ibid., 156.

7. Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals," 557, emphasis in original.

8. Ibid., 556, emphasis in original.

security, strength, and vitality. But having emerged from the revolt in morality

victorious, these very same values have proceeded to hinder rather than facilitate human

elevation.

The Judeo-Christian order's inability to respond in a beneficial way to those new

conditions and their associated dangers that Western man now confronts is a contributing

factor to the Death of God, for it undermines that order's relevance and credibility.

Distinct from man's "religious instinct", which remains a drive of great force, Nietzsche

observes among Europeans a "profound mistrust" of theism, for "God 'the father'…does

not hear—and if he did hear, he still would not be able to help."[9] Similarly, the average

Westerner has become "deadened to all the terms of Christian language" because such

terms have little or no resonance with his present experiences.[10] The result is a

devaluation of Judeo-Christian religious practice to the point where "business affairs,"

"recreational activities," and "newspapers" take priority over it in daily life.[11] Inspired

by historically-contingent needs, Christian morality is ill-suited to fulfill the similarly

historically-contingent needs of the modern Western man. While those to whom Judaism

and Christianity originally addressed themselves suffered under exploitative systems

beyond their control, today's adherents are in power, and largely free from the dangerous

conditions that alone justified such religions.

According to Nietzsche, the modern Western world is animated by a "self-

congratulatory, stupidly proud work ethic" that finds little value in religion.[12]

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9. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 49.

10. Ibid., 44.

11. Ibid., 51.

12. Ibid.

Distraction, be it in the form of work, politics or art, has come to constitute the content of life. The average person of this world, whose day is filled with shallow contentedness, feels no need to seek out a legitimizing 'why' for existence. Being so content, modern man irresponsibly marginalizes religion and its importance: assuming he "has time left over for religion", it is pursued "with a modest seriousness and without much curiosity or discomfort."[13] Nietzsche's modern man experiences religion as a vacuous ritual, rather than as the source of his life's significance.

Contributing to modern man's insensitivity regarding religion is human reason. For Nietzsche, rather than driven by its own internal forces, reason is a tool whose application depends on the dominant interests that guide it. For centuries, Western civilization was led by Judeo-Christian interests, and it was these that guided reason: wielded by a "spiritual will," reason "interpret[ed] every event according to a Christian scheme" and "justif[ied] the Christian God in every chance incident."[14] So applied, reason relaxed the dangerous tensions between the experiential world of suffering and God's omnipotent beneficence in a way that ultimately strengthened belief in the authority, and moral order, of God.

According to Nietzsche, beginning with the Enlightenment, reason's guiding interests underwent a fundamental change whereby reason, instead of affirming God, became an instrument of His demise. Informed by newly discovered scientific methods, reason gradually eroded the Judeo-Christian moral order by revealing the natural world to be a realm governed by physical, not divine laws. In *The Anti-Christ*, Nietzsche states

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13. Ibid., 52.

14. Ibid., 77.

that in providing man with reason God committed his "greatest blunder," for reason's power is such that, if wielded by the appropriate type of will, can make man "*equal to God*."[15] Science makes a god of man by placing the totality of creation within his grasp: a world governed by rational laws is one fully accessible to the human mind, and consequently susceptible to human intervention. Regarding this scientific reason, Leo Strauss echoes Nietzsche when he writes in his essay, "The Three Waves of Modernity," that modern man "calls nature before the tribunal of his reason," for man, not God, is the highest authority.[16] Whereas before reason was a tool wielded in service to God, with the Enlightenment it became a weapon brandished against Him.

In displacing God, along with his metaphysical order, science makes possible man's return to the world and its natural order. This in turn invites a reassessment of morality insofar as science's focus on the observable and measurable provides the insight that every system of values contains a generative "pre-history in…instincts, likes, dislikes, experiences, and lack of experiences."[17] Far from transcendent, and bestowed fully formed from a realm other than the natural, morality is rooted in, and shaped by, the terrestrial: discussed earlier in the context of culture, though life's fundamental processes are universal in that their demands are made of every living thing, values, the means by which man responds to these demands, vary drastically according to context, conditions, and capabilities. This is one of the primary reasons why creative vitality is of such importance to Nietzsche, for, having been placed "back among the animals," man is

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15. Nietzsche, "The Anti-Christ," 176, emphasis in original.

16. Strauss, "The Three Waves of Modernity," 87.

17. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 263.

confronted by the reality that he is "the most unsuccessful animal, the sickliest, the one most dangerously strayed from its instincts," and therefore the one most in need of every shred of cunning and creativity he can muster.[18] Such a re-assessment leads to a questioning of morality's purposes as the powers of value creation are returned to the hands of men, and the interests that guide them.

Science's displacement of God and its discoveries into the naturalness of human existence culminate in the revelation that man is an animal. According to Nietzsche, science has dispelled tradition's myths about man, and now counts him "among the animals plain and simple, without metaphorical intent."[19] Science, for Nietzsche, has ruined "faith in the dignity and uniqueness of man," for under its gaze he "has become an *animal*."[20]

As I argue throughout this study, Nietzsche's philosophy cannot be properly understood absent an adequate appreciation for the man-as-animal premise at its core. Only with an awareness of Nietzsche's view of man, one that places him among all other animals, may one understand not only his general philosophy, but, and more importantly given the present study, his theory of international politics. To Nietzsche's mind, modernity's scientific discoveries have returned man to the natural world, and consequently altered his perception of, and relationship with, morality. Of mortal rather than divine origins, morality is a product of biological, environmental, and political forces. In this way, by killing God science begins to free man so that he might return to

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18. Nietzsche, "The Anti-Christ," 136.

19. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 89.

20. Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals," 591, emphasis in original.

the natural world, and cultivate a life-enhancing engagement with its fundamental dynamics. As the previous chapters have explained, Nietzsche believes that only in fidelity to the primal forces of the natural order, most clearly articulated in will-to-power, may a community enjoy the benefits of cultural vitality, and the political significance such health brings. Therefore, Nietzsche understands the crisis of faith involved in God's death to be a painful, but necessary step in Western civilization's revitalization.

Part II: Crisis of Fact

The Death of God does not end with the discrediting of religious valuations and perspectives. Despite being the instigator of God's demise, science ultimately owes its investigative spirit and potency to the value with which God imbued truth. As such, by undermining God, science inadvertently undermines itself. Two thousand years of Judeo-Christian instruction have established within Western minds an essential connection between the good and the true: reason's investigation into the world reveals truths which by definition are contributory to human flourishing. For Nietzsche, science's secular celebration of truth is but a reformulation of Christianity's religious reverence: "I am the way, the truth, and the life."[21] Stefan Elbe, in his masterful study of the European Union, *Europe: A Nietzschean Perspective*, speaks to this connection in the following way:

> While modern science parts with Christianity's religious doctrines and its belief in a divine world, its underlying moral hierarchy, and its teleological perspective oriented towards determining the truth of existence, remains very much continuous with that of its Christian predecessor.[22]

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21. John, 14:6.

22. Stefan Elbe, *Europe: A Nietzschean Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 29.

Not only does science not yet see that in discrediting Judeo-Christian tradition's metaphysical order it undermines its own authority, but it refuses to recognize the truth of truth's value: as with the lie as much as with the truth, the determinant of value must always be "to what extent the judgement furthers life, preserves life, preserves the species, perhaps even cultivates the species."[23] Given this shared commitment to the absolute value of truth, Nietzsche rejects modernity's seemingly blind faith in science as the cure for the ills following God's death.

And yet, science continues to cling to ideas that contradict the conclusions of its own discoveries. An example of this is the similarity between Christianity's "soul," and science's "subject." As Nietzsche characterizes them, the architects of Judeo-Christian tradition, in order to control men, cultivated the belief in an undetermined agent to whom responsibility could be attributed. Residing in every person, this "soul" is underdetermined and therefore able to choose between good and evil. Consequently, the individual may justifiably be punished or rewarded for his actions: "'*you alone are to blame for yourself!*'"[24] In science's cause-and-effect, Nietzsche sees the fingerprints of this metaphysical construction: science's "subject" is a secularized soul. Cause-and-effect, the operational premise of much of science, assumes the existence of an independent causal "subject" from which effects emanate.[25] But Nietzsche argues that by returning man to the natural world, science can no longer credibly maintain a belief in such autonomous subjects, for "there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming;

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23. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 7.

24. Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals," 564.

25. Ibid., 482.

'the doer' is merely fiction added to the deed—the deed is everything."[26] The

subjectivity into which this plunges the individual renders incredible the objectivity

touted by science's practitioners, and deferred to by its adherents.

Insofar as the Death of God brings to light the subjectivity of human

understanding it invites a questioning of the truths upon whose previous absolute

authority Western civilization has rested: "From the moment faith in God of the ascetic

ideal is denied, a *new problem arises*: that of the *value* of truth."[27] As with Judeo-

Christian tradition, science is guided by a faith in truth's supreme value, and therefore

continues in secular form the former's conviction "that God is truth, that truth is

divine."[28] To seek the truth is therefore to seek that which will necessarily benefit man.

But as we have seen, Nietzsche denies this formulation, understanding truth to be neither

God, divine, nor coterminous with human flourishing. God's death signifies the loss of

metaphysics, objectivity, and consequently truth's unquestioned value. Truth and man

are of *this* world, and as such the value of any given insight ought to only be determined

after assessing its consequences for man's health in light of the circumstances.

Continued belief in truth's unconditional beneficence endangers Western civilization by

lowering its guard against those truths that, though accurate, are nonetheless detrimental

to vitality.

An instructive example of the need for discrimination with respect to truth is that

involving history, and man's place within its unfolding. Nietzsche was deeply concerned

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26. Ibid., 481.

27. Ibid., 589, emphasis in original.

28. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 283.

with questions of history and historical narrative for it is through these that communities come to acquire a sense of self and purpose, and consequently what role they will have in the world. Owing to post-Enlightenment man's irresponsible behavior when it comes to applying reason in the name of truth, Nietzsche fears that Western civilization might lose its sense of purpose amid the reality of history's seemingly indifferent deterministic mechanics. Specifically, by applying reason ever-more rigorously to the study of himself and his past, man is confronted with the realization that history possesses no final purpose: it is an arbitrary sequence of ages, the procession of which is ultimately devoid of normative substance, for, if "every age is different, it does not matter what you are like."[29] Finally, as this insight into history proves reason's subjectivity, insofar as every age constitutes reason according to its particular context and corresponding interests, objectivity is potentially reduced to a mere species of rationalization.[30] With the Death of God, man at last discovers that there is "no eternal reason-spider" spinning webs of order and meaning for him.[31]

Part III: Crisis of Will

From the discussion thus far, it is clear that Nietzsche's Death of God involves a number of consequences with respect to Western civilization. Whether in the form of religion or science, the West has lost its most important foundations by moving past God, upon whose metaphysical order and authority the West has grounded its most important

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29. Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," 98.

30. Indeed, so damaging is this truth to human vitality that Nietzsche devoted much of his life to crafting a new mythical historical narrative, eternal return of the same, so that the West, as the Ancient Greeks before it, might derive a sense of invigorating purpose from an otherwise dangerously indifferent universe.

31. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 143.

convictions regarding truth. While these two crises are sufficient in and of themselves to

warrant serious concern, Nietzsche argues that they have combined to produce a third,

and ultimately more perilous, danger: in problematizing Western civilization's

foundations, both religious and secular, God's death brings into question the very *will* of

the West as an international actor of presence, substance, and influence: absent the Judeo-

Christian tradition or science's assurances of truth's absolute value, Western civilization

is potentially paralyzed, no longer sure of where to derive an inspirational sense of

purpose.

The crisis of will involves two related components, identity and unity. With

respect to the former, shaped by two thousand years of instruction by the Judeo-Christian

tradition, self-perception in the West has been formatively determined, and its course set

by, this extended tutelage. In discrediting this transnational education, the crises of fact

and faith have brought Western civilization's very identity into question by re-exposing

the mending wounds of national division to the toxic atmosphere of "fatherland-ism."[32]

Second, the loss of identity produces a loss of unity as transnational bonds disintegrate,

thereby inviting individual communities to determine their own particular, and

necessarily alienating, identities. Together, these two emergencies give rise to a

civilization-wide crisis of will. Without an identity capable of projecting a sense of

transnational unity, Western civilization cannot raise the will needed to effectively

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32. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 147. Nietzsche coined this term to distinguish between the robust and the sickly society, the latter, by virtue of its weakness, being inclined to rely upon the superficial affinities of geographic proximity to hold itself together when confronted by a foe of superior vitality. Nietzsche viewed the increasingly bombastic nationalistic rhetoric of his day as a symptom of a *civilizational* weakness resulting from the trauma of God's death.

engage in Nietzsche's predicted politics, the stakes of which are no less than "mastery

over the earth."[33]

Questioning Identity

Nietzsche views the West as a Christian civilization, so much so that modern

science cannot be understood without reference to it. Surveying European history with

an "Epicurean" eye, Nietzsche discerns "one will alone," that of Christianity, which has

shaped and determined both individuals and communities.[34] To Nietzsche, Western man

has become a "*sublime deformity*" due to such influence insofar as he now possesses

instincts hostile to life.[35] These instincts continue to guide science, despite its rejection of

divine authority, as evidence by its continued commitment to traditional conceptions of

truth. This continuity explains how the West survived the Enlightenment's attack on

Christianity. To the religious mind, existence is justified by faith in the authority of God

and His immutable order. To the scientific mind, existence is justified by faith in the

value of truth, and reason's ability to comprehend it. Both perspectives possess a faith in

truth's unchanging character, and a faith in its supreme value. In Nietzsche's estimation,

modern thought, though unique in substantive ways, shares in the essence of that far older

mode of thought: science's faith in truth is Christianity's faith in God, for both believe in

the "*metaphysical* value, the absolute value of *truth*."[36]

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33. Ibid., 101.

34. Ibid., 57.

35. Ibid., emphasis in original.

36. Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals," 587.

However, as the Death of God continues to unfold within the Western mind, truth as a basis of Western identity is brought into question. Stefan Elbe poses the question this way: "if there is no God, why should European existence continue to revolve around this tortuous pursuit of truth rather than any other possible value?"[37] The Death of God means that the West can no longer assume truth to be both absolutely valuable, and universally beneficial. With the constancy and benefits of truth no longer certain, the Western mind is opened to the troubling possibility that some truths are harmful, and perhaps even more troubling, myth and lie might be essential to human life. In problematizing truth, the Death of God presents Western civilization with the opportunity to rediscover the power and importance of both culture and art.

Questioning Unity

In questioning truth and its pursuit as a source of identity, Western civilization is forced to re-examine its traditional transnational bonds. According to Nietzsche, in destabilizing Christianity's universal order, the Death of God undermines the traditions that until now sustained the unity of Western civilization. While insufficient to suppress every point of division, the shared Judeo-Christian education has nonetheless provided a body of values that reaches across the many ethnic and political divisions that riddle the European international system. According to Nietzsche, the rise of nationalism across the West is best understood as a consequence of, and reaction to, the weakening of Christian tradition: states step in to provide the meaning previously bestowed by a universal Judeo-Christian order, and in so going undermine Western civilization's unity.

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37. Elbe, *Europe: A Nietzschean Perspective*, 30.

Before engaging directly with Nietzsche's argument regarding Western fragmentation, it is useful to first examine the unity that existed in the West prior to the Death of God. A student of both Nietzsche and international politics, as well as someone acutely concerned with the deleterious consequences of nationalism, Hans J. Morgenthau provides the present study with an illuminating introductory perspective. To understand nationalism, and its current dominance of international politics, Morgenthau examines the aristocratic politics that preceded it. Insofar as this aristocratic politics overlaps with the Judeo-Christian unity described by Nietzsche, the international political consequences of the death of God are clarified.

According to Morgenthau, what historically bound the various elites of Europe's great powers was a shared, albeit loose, set of moral standards that both forbade certain actions, and preserved a space to pursue the great game of international politics. Bismarck exemplified this arrangement, for, though often responsible for "ruthless and immoral" policies, he nonetheless stopped short of violating the fundamental values which defined the "society of Christian princes."[38] Comprised of political and diplomatic individuals, this "society" was shaped by the shared belief in standards loosely defined as Christian. These elites related to one another through "a common language (which was French), common cultural values, a common style of life, and common moral convictions."[39] Such standards owed their binding power, in part, to concern over personal reputations between individual actors.[40] For Morgenthau, this transnational

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38. Hans J. Morgenthau, "Twilight of International Morality," *Ethics* 58, no. 2, (1948): 81.

39. Ibid., 88.

40. Ibid., 91.

moral order fostered a sense of unity that moderated foreign policies in the pre-WWI international system.

Taking Morgenthau's aristocratic solidarity one step further, I argue that underlying such unity is one of Western civilization generally. Governing elites were citizens of the larger community of "Christendom," and consequently followed the "rules of natural law."[41] These laws applied to man *as such*, regardless of social position or lineage. This universality imbued even the lowliest subjects with a baseline of dignity, which in turn elevated the standards of behavior observed by elites: an official's reputation was affected by the way he treated his lessers, who, as fellow Christians, possessed God-given worth. This Christian identity, constitutive of the West as such, and not simply its leaders, created a "common framework for the different national societies."[42] Though the elite class applied a morality unique to itself, this morality emerged from, and rested upon, Christianity, a class-less religion that rendered the value of all men equal before God.

Such unity began to fracture as the consequences of the Death of God gradually set in. Morgenthau, in a way consistent with Nietzsche's own theory, places much of the responsibility for international political fragmentation on the shoulders of science, specifically its insights into the nature of man. While Christian tradition granted to man a divine essence, and therefore placed his essential self outside the natural world, science presented man as a creature wholly of the earth: man "was no longer considered exempt

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41. Ibid., 90-93.

42. Ibid., 94.

from subjection to the rational laws which determine the physical world."[43] For both

Morgenthau and Nietzsche, science is crucial to man's return to the earth, insofar as its

insights prove him to be a creature of, rather than one set against, the natural world.

However, despite science's dispelling of transcendent meaning, man continues to

long for a sense of significance whereby he is elevated above the world of brutes and

beasts. Nietzsche attributes this longing to an "instinctual fear" of the "incurable

pessimism" that results from man's discovery that the true source of equality is the

natural order, under whose authority every organism is bound in service.[44] Morgenthau's

"nationalistic universalism" may be understood as a manifestation of this "instinctual

fear" brought on by the Death of God: desperate for a cure to the "incurable," Western

populations look to their governments to provide them with the importance that was lost

with God's death. This apparent solution to the crisis changes the nature of the state, and

consequently the character of international relations:

> Nations no longer oppose each other…within a frame-work of shared beliefs and
> common values…They oppose each other now as the standard-bearers of ethical
> systems, each of them of national origin and each of them claiming and aspiring
> to provide a supranational framework of moral standards…[45]

States are now "standard-bearers" of "supranational" values because only in this

way may they provide the universal and absolute meaning lost upon God's death.

Consequently, international conflicts increase in intensity and broaden in scope as

national/local interests acquire a universal character, thereby demanding the application

of commensurate resources and resolve.

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43. Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 12.

44. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good Evil*, 53.

45. Morgenthau, "The Twilight of International Morality," 96.

From Nietzsche's perspective, the change in nationalism observed by Morgenthau is best understood as a desperate attempt by Western man to regain that which was lost with God. However, given the depth of the crises caused by this loss, nationalistic universalism is not only insufficient as a solution, but one that fosters an unhealthy relationship between man and life's governing forces. While superficially this novel breed of nationalism generates an international system teeming with the value-laden conflicts one might associate with a robust will-to-power, the continued reliance by such states on Judeo-Christian morality renders it unable to meet the challenges of an emergent post-God age. Nietzsche takes nationalistic sentiments to be "attacks of acquired stupidity" because they express a lack of understanding as to the nature of the problem. While the nationalism discussed by both Morgenthau and Nietzsche promises more international conflicts, the goals for which these battles are fought are misguided, and, especially for Nietzsche, will only contribute to Western civilization's cultural decline. Once again, Nietzsche's analysis of the Ancient Greeks is instructive.

Nietzsche's treatment of modern nationalism with respect to Western civilization's international political future is informed, in part, by his study of Ancient Greece's city-state system. Nietzsche observes that driving Ancient Greece's inter-sate conflicts was a "wish" on the part of every individual "to be in the contest of their towns an instrument for the welfare of his town."[46] Much like modern nationalism, a citizen's identity and worth were entwined with the status of his community. This method of valuation reflected a belief that one's community possessed unique qualities which set it apart from all others. But unlike modern nationalism, which explodes localized pride

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46. Nietzsche, "Homer's Contest," 58.

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into global superiority, Ancient Greek communities qualified their exceptionalism with a belief in the natural benefits of continuous and robust competition: the city-states of Nietzsche's Ancient Greece restrained themselves, seeking limited and temporary, not hegemonic and permanent, positions of dominance. To the Ancient Greek, pursuit of the latter would be harmful in the long-term as it would place the community in an unhealthy relationship with the natural order and its dynamic forces. As Nietzsche presents it, such "deeds of the Hybris" invited Olympian wrath, for he who stands beside the gods "has them against him."[47] Consequently, it was out of a regard for self-care that these Greek communities labored to restrain their ambitions: "[W]ithout envy, jealousy, and contesting ambition the Hellenic State like the Hellenic man degenerates."[48] If we recall that Ancient Greek culture transfigured the forces and realities of the natural world into the gods, then the punishment Nietzsche describes is, in a deeper sense, an example of Ancient Greece's deference to the natural order. The necessity of competition meant the necessity of rivals, and therefore a respect for one's challenger: if vitality requires competition, then one's competitor must be valued, along with those values and beliefs that make him a foe with which struggle is worthwhile. In this way, despite believing in its own superiority, a community respected and celebrated its opponents for such sources of opposition constituted an essential source of vitality.

In contrast, modern nationalism is driven by the desire for universal domination, and the final defeat of every opponent. Science has allowed man to move rivers and mountains, and traverse oceans and skies, so why should the state, as the hand operating

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47. Ibid., 61.

48. Ibid., 62.

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such machinery, not dominate all the minds of men? "[Science]," says Morgenthau, "becomes the beneficial force which will solve the problems with which politics is unable to cope."[49] Man's perfection is attainable now, and all that is needed is the power necessary to reveal to the world's unenlightened masses the one and single Truth. Viewed from this perspective, international conflict is something to be done away with, for it reveals disagreement about the universal truths over which each state believes it has a monopoly. Reversing the view of Ancient Greek city-states, today's nationalistic states see in continued international competition a mark of weakness, rather than the means to strength.

On a deeper level, modernity's turn to nationalistic universalism reflects its incomplete digestion of the Death of God. The universal character of Christianity established limitations on human action by virtue of the all-encompassing structure within which it embedded man. This structure allowed individuals to discriminate between acceptable and unacceptable modes of life, and therefore find meaning in existence. But in a post-God world where traditional bearings have been discredited, man is "everywhere hampered by [an] infinity" of alternative values and moralities.[50] Faced with too many options, and too few reliable standards of judgment, communities turn to their individual political institutions for the comforting order and authority previously supplied by God. To the extent that multiple states react in a similar manner, Western unity fractures into an anarchy of unproductive rivalries.

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49. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, 28.

50. Nietzsche, "Homer's Contest," 59.

Nietzsche's Death of God theory provides a unique explanation of Western political fragmentation, and also points the way to a possible reunification. For Nietzsche, Morgenthau's nationalistic universalism is a reaction to the decay of the transnational morality that had traditionally bound European states together: to replace the lost order of Judeo-Christian tradition, states provide individual solutions, and in so doing splinter the West's traditional unity. But unlike Morgenthau, who finds little to celebrate in this international crisis of moral order, Nietzsche views the Death of God as an opportunity for Western civilization's rejuvenation by allowing it to return to nature. However, before Nietzsche's case for the future can be made we must complete our examination of those consequences of the death of God most relevant to his international political theory.

Crisis of Will

The questioning of identity and unity brought about by the Death of God culminates in what I identify as the crisis of will. For Nietzsche, a sense of self-importance and purpose are needed to inspire the individual as much as the community to justify those sacrifices that sustain a vital will of action. It is for this reason that Nietzsche attributes great importance to a people's values: as "tablets…of overcomings" systems of value are crucial in determining a community's relationship with the natural order, and therefore its will-to-power.[51] With respect to Western civilization, the Death of God's undermining of traditional values has eroded the foundations of the West's will to actively engage in the potentially life-enhancing struggles of international politics.

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51. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 51.

As evidence of this emerging crisis of will, Nietzsche discusses the growing popularity of skepticism as a lifestyle. To Nietzsche's mind, skepticism is a defensive, rather than an actively creative, philosophy whose primary function is to hold at bay the nihilism brought about by God's death. The fracturing of traditional morality has flooded the West with competing value systems, some brave in their "deviance," others weak in their "degeneration and monstrosity."[52] Shocked and threatened by this avalanche of valuations, those sensitive to the deeper consequences of the Death of God turn to skepticism for shelter: by rejecting all consequential commitments, skepticism secures one against a relapse into Judeo-Christian metaphysics, as well as an embrace of the new nihilism which negates "life truly, actively."[53] No longer able to subscribe to tradition with a clear conscience, while simultaneously disturbed by the open hostility to existence shouted by nihilistic revolutionists, many protect themselves, and what remains of their vitality, by adopting a skeptical approach to life itself. Nietzsche views modern skepticism as a life-conserving, rather than life-enhancing, philosophy, for while it guards against the slow death of asceticism and the fast one of active nihilism, it is itself incapable of creating new values.

Nietzsche considers science to be the most influential form of skepticism within Western civilization. Despite confidence in its ability to replace God as the basis of meaning and purpose, science is merely a "decked-out skepticism" which seeks passive understanding of, not active engagement with, reality.[54] Science prides itself on the

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52. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 159.

53. Ibid., 99.

54. Ibid., 100.

distance it places between scientist and studied object. Called "objectivity," this distance is supposed to allow one to analyze, cut, and dissect without bias or reservation. Objectivity spares the scientist from having to engage in debates over value, for, so distanced, she examines without judgment. While applauded by Nietzsche for the discoveries it provides, this objectivity prevents science from productively replacing God, and consequently a source of vital will for the West: objectivity forbids the scientist from discriminating between beneficial and harmful truths, which, as we have discussed, is an activity essential to the wellbeing of man. Whereas the devout Christian, empowered by his faith in God's authority, actively engages existence by judging it, the scientist, lacking a similarly motivating ground of certainty, can do little more than observe and catalog. Insofar as this position is the result of a lack of will and desire to engage with life, science's objectivity is but another form of skepticism's defensive rejection of commitment, a "decked-out skepticism."

According to Nietzsche, what is lacking in skepticism is an understanding of the necessity of active engagement for life and empowerment. To live is "'to place one's self 'in relation to something,' to feel one's self conditioned by something and one's self conditioning it."[55] Existence is a series of relationships, and therefore inherently interactive: "seeing becomes seeing *something*" through "active and interpreting forces."[56] Skepticism denies this essential aspect of life, believing instead that one can stand apart from this formative interpenetration of observer and observed. For Nietzsche,

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55. Nietzsche, *The Will To Power*, trans. Anthony M. Ludovici (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 2006), 267.

56. Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals," 555, emphasis in original.

"*nothing exists apart from the whole*," and therefore in living, man must interpret, create, and impose values; there is no objective point of view, nor vital life without engagement.

Such dynamic subjectivity means that skepticism, even when "decked-out" in the trappings of science, can never be an adequate substitute for God with respect to the provision of will and purpose. A people must have certainty regarding itself in order to push against competitors, and, consistent with will-to-power, overcome them. For Nietzsche, this means a community must be able and willing to *construct* purpose, and *create* truths. The dynamic subjectivity Nietzsche describes as inherent to existence makes living an endless process of creation: "seeing becomes seeing *something*" insofar as that which is observed is in part a creation of the observer, an interpretation of reality imposed upon reality. Consequently, a community's health and future depend on its will to engage and transform. Such is the import, as discussed above, of culture's transfigurative powers when it comes to human flourishing. Skepticism, and therefore science, cannot provide Western civilization with the "atmosphere" and "horizon" it needs to embark upon a vital post-God future. "Forgetting is essential to action of any kind," and a healthy community is one able to discern when best to forget, and when best to remember.[57] Science, with its will-to-truth and alienating neutrality, cannot make such judgments for it can appreciate neither their inevitability nor their necessity.

Yet the West, according to Nietzsche, continues to seek its salvation in science and skepticism, and as such, "has lost those instincts out of which institutions grow, out of which the *future* grows."[58] The price paid by Western civilization for its defensive

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57. Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," 62.

58. Nietzsche, "Twilight of the Idols," 105, emphasis in original.

action against a fatal post-God pessimism is its "*solidarity* between succeeding

generations backward and forwards *in infinitum*."[59] To survive today, the West has

jeopardized its tomorrow.

<center>*Part IV: The Last Man*</center>

Related to, but also extending beyond, the West's crisis of will is a final danger,

one feared by Nietzsche above all others: the hegemonic domination over Western

civilization of the last man. Nietzsche's last man represents humanity's nadir with

respect to vitality: his active embrace of decadence, mediocrity, and comfort, all of which

keep him from participating in life's processes in life-enhancing ways, have become so

commonplace that Nietzsche fears there may soon come a day when the last man is the

only man the West is capable of producing. If allowed to flourish, the last man

necessarily ends Western civilization's historical role as a key source of human creativity

and enhancement.

Nietzsche's clearest presentation of the last man is found in the prologue to *Thus

Spoke Zarathustra* in which the protagonist, upon returning to society after a self-

imposed exile, learns of man's decay. After two failed attempts to win the troubled

attention of his audience, Zarathustra speaks of the last man, a threat sure to incite the

people to action:

> Alas! The time will come when the human will give birth to no more
> stars…Behold! I show to you *the last human*…For the earth has now become
> small, and upon it hops the last human, who makes everything small. Its race is
> as inexterminable as the ground-flea; the last human lives the longest.[60]

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59. Ibid.

60. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 15.

Simultaneously meek and arrogant, as well as constitutionally and morally averse to struggle and suffering, the last man threatens the death of Western culture. For the last man, the goal of civilization is the maximization of comfort, and the minimization of pain for the largest number. He finds satisfaction in the present, and, owing to his weakness, re-defines his particular happiness as the highest of all mankind. The last man "will give birth to no more stars" because he will have lost the will to create. As we will see in the next chapter, this cultural death portends dire consequences for the West with respect to its global position, for, absent a vital and vibrant culture, a community cannot engage in the type of life-enhancing competition called for by Nietzsche's theory of international politics.

The last man is so content because he sees himself and his society as superior to all past and future iterations. Underlying this assessment is a belief in the perfection of his "morality of pity": deeming it evil, the last man's conscience harbors a "mortal hatred of any suffering," and consequently seeks its unqualified removal from every corner of existence.[61] With suffering understood as absolutely evil, the last man's morality, in being history's most compassionate, is "[m]orality itself, the summit, the *conquered* summit of humankind, the only hope for the future, comfort in the present, the great redemption from all past guilt."[62]

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61. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 90.

62. Ibid., emphasis in original.

Nietzsche damns the morality of pity as the culmination of Western man's two-millennia long descent into unhealthy decadence. In denying suffering, pain, and struggle, this morality rejects much of what Nietzsche argues is essential for vital life: healthy life is characterized by "appropriating," "injuring," "oppression," and "harshness."[63] As Nietzsche understands the natural order's dynamic forces, to be vital, organisms must be able to both suffer and inflict suffering. In contrast, the last man works toward a mode of existence cleansed of its "exploitative character," which, Nietzsche observes, is tantamount to "invent[ing] a life form that would refrain from all organic functions."[64]

It is necessary to note that Nietzsche does not see a contradiction in the idea of a deeply unhealthy type of man being at the same time able to dominate a civilization and render extinct the vital and robust man. Consistent with his naturalist approach to man, specifically, the man-as-animal premise, Nietzsche recognizes that certain conditions favor certain types of organisms to reproduce and populate an environment. With social creatures this leads to the proliferation of that type best able to conserve resources, for they are often scarce, and communicate with others, for this better ensures security. When it comes to man, Nietzsche argues that language is both evidence of, and the mechanism for, this natural trend:

> If we now assume that necessity has always brought together only those people who could indicate by similar signs their similar needs, similar experiences: then this is as much as to say that the easy *communicability* of necessity (which ultimately means having experienced only average and *common* experiences)

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63. Ibid., 152.

64. Ibid., 153.

must, of all the forces that have heretofore controlled humans, have been the most forceful.[65]

The need for quick and easily understood communication within human communities results in the selection for "common" experiences, thoughts, and values. Such commonality is the initial germ of community, for over time "something *comes into being* as a result, something that 'goes without saying', a people."[66] According to Nietzsche's analysis, human society naturally favors the average and mediocre, for it is these types that facilitate easy communication, and consequently increased security.

However, while natural, the mediocre man is not necessarily a healthy man, a type characterized by vitality, will, and a hunger for danger. Given the natural foundations and tendencies of society as presented by Nietzsche, this places the exceptional man at a disadvantage, for "those who are more select, subtle, rare, harder to understand are readily left alone, come to harm in their isolation, and rarely procreate."[67] The last man, being the paragon of mediocrity, commonness, and ubiquity, is so threatening because, in addition to the overwhelming success of the slave revolt in morality with regards to sanctifying the mass of humanity which is average and meek, there are natural forces within society pushing man to conformity. This all comes at the expense of the vital man, who, as an exception, is tremendously vulnerable. It is for this reason that Nietzsche "call[s] upon enormous counterforces in order to thwart this natural, all-too-natural *progressus in simile*."[68] Nietzsche's focus on culture, and the

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65. Ibid., 164.

66. Ibid., 163.

67. Ibid., 164.

68. Ibid.

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importance of life-enhancing values for human flourishing, is best understood as a first step in harnessing such "counterforces," for without them, man, alienated from life's processes and the requirements pressed upon him by will-to-power, is liable to decline too far to rise once more.

Conclusion

As with his general philosophy, Nietzsche's theory of international politics cannot be properly understood without an appreciation for what he calls the Death of God. To this end, the present chapter has identified those aspects most relevant to Nietzsche's international political thought: the crisis of faith; the crisis of fact; the crisis of will; and the last man. As Nietzsche understands much of Western thought to be built upon a Judeo-Christian foundation, the first crisis, that of faith, inevitably produces those that follow: the questioning of God leads to the questioning of science, which in turn invites a reassessment of truth, and, finally, uncertainty regarding human aims and the life worth living.

These crises have a direct impact on Nietzsche's international political theory, for all affect the health of Western civilization's culture, and therefore its will to engage in the life-enhancing competitions and struggles of international politics. The Death of God has robbed the West of its familiar justifications for action, and created conditions conducive to the proliferation of the last man, who, if allowed to dominate Western civilization, will render peoples of the West vulnerable in the coming politics where the stakes are no less than "mastery over the earth."[69] It is to these politics and Nietzsche's international political theory that we turn next.

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69. Ibid., 101.

CHAPTER FIVE

Nietzsche's International Politics of Cultures

Introduction

The previous chapters have explained what I view as the foundations of

Nietzsche's international political theory: nature and life's fundamental processes;

culture; and the Death of God. Building upon these, the current chapter presents

Nietzsche's theory of international politics itself. This theory has four primary

components, each of which is examined in turn. In Part I, I discuss Nietzsche's

aristocratic model of domestic society, and translate it into one for the international

system. As the type of human society most attuned to will-to-power, a healthy

aristocracy aids in the development of man by bending society's resources to the

production of individuals possessed of vitality and creative will. Nietzsche identifies

both within, and between, aristocratic societies key regulatory mechanisms: fear;

revenge; and law. I argue that Nietzsche's theory of international politics applies these

same mechanisms to international relations.

In Part II, I examine Nietzsche's theory of war. While Nietzsche recognizes

conflict as a natural and essential aspect of life, in light of man's complex relationship to

nature, war must be understood within the context of culture: war has far-reaching

consequences for the cultures of affected communities, and therefore involves more than

the simple collision of opposing militaries. To highlight the role of culture in Nietzsche's

understanding of war I discuss two alternative approaches that, in Nietzsche's estimation,

are equally detrimental to culture: the permissiveness of war-as-vanity; and the constraint of war-as-hypocrisy. Despite differences in content, each approach is founded on a fundamental misunderstanding of the relationship between war and culture. Furthermore, by means of this examination I establish the boundaries of legitimate war according to Nietzsche. To explain war-as-vanity, I introduce the thought of his contemporary, Heinrich von Treitschke. While Nietzsche and Treitschke both embrace international conflict, Nietzsche, owing to his conception of culture, is far more discriminating when it comes to identifying those conflicts worthy of commitment. With respect to war-as-hypocrisy, I examine Nietzsche's discussion in *The Wanderer and His Shadow* addressed to the international system's "armed peace." In contrast to some interpretations, I argue that rather than championing global passivity, Nietzsche is instead bringing to light the moral inconsistency of today's international system: the security dilemma's persistence makes hypocrites of the world's peace-loving nations, for while proclaiming war a scourge, they nonetheless persist in the amassing of evermore numerous, and evermore destructive, armaments. Furthermore, this morality is an extension of slave morality, and as such, is not conducive to human flourishing.

In Part III I address the Death of God as it relates to Nietzsche's international politics of the future. This involves three key topics, each of which has been deeply affected by the Death of God, and in turn have resulted in transformative consequences for international relations as a whole: nationalism; democracy; and western homogenization. To better highlight their role within Nietzsche's theory of international politics, I examine Hans J. Morgenthau's thoughts regarding nationalistic universalism and democracy. While much is shared between both theorists, they diverge in ways that

illuminate important aspects of Nietzsche's thought. First, Nietzsche's theory of will-to-power results in a far different understanding of morality than that offered by Morgenthau, and consequently morality's role in structuring the behavior of international actors. Second, in treating man as an animal, Nietzsche recognizes not only the new dangers, but also the new potentials to be found in modern Western civilization: with the "homogenization" of Western man, Nietzsche sees an opportunity for the creation of a new international politics that stands in stark contrast to Morgenthau's pessimistic forecast.

To conclude, in Part IV I discuss Nietzsche's "grand politics" with reference to both the Cold War, and Samuel Huntington's civilizational politics.[1] Despite their superficial similarities to the international politics Nietzsche predicts, both fall short in key aspects: whereas the Cold War was animated, on both sides, by liberal appetites, and Huntington's civilizational politics by longings for tradition, Nietzsche's grand politics is driven by the need for *new* values, *new* meanings, and *new* horizons.

Part I: Aristocratic Relations

Nietzsche's belief in the intrinsic combativeness of organic life informs his analysis of human social life. In surveying political systems of the past and present in order to find those most productively responsive to life's fundamental processes, Nietzsche concludes that aristocracy, owing to its belief in, and commitment to, exceptional persons, is most conducive to human flourishing. I argue that aristocracy, as

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1. I deliberately use the term "grand politics" in order to distinguish it from the original "große politik," whose associations with Bismarck may lead to confusion. Nietzsche was highly critical of Bismarck's große politik due to its base nationalism, and detrimental expenditure of human resources for the sake cross material gains. In contrast, Nietzsche's "grand politics" is animated by the empowering cultural rivalries of civilizations. Of such greater importance are these cultural interests to those of land and treasure that Nietzsche marginalizes Bismarck's project to the status of kleine Politik.

the model for domestic relations, constitutes Nietzsche's model for international relations as well.

Aristocratic Model

Before continuing, it is important to emphasize once more the critical influence played by context and conditions in the operation and manifestation of creative vitality. By placing man within history, Nietzsche recognizes that will-to-power's expression is not, nor will ever be, identical across dissimilar times and environments, as it is these variables that determine much of human potential. Nietzsche treats Judeo-Christian tradition as one such set of these deeply influential conditions.   Specifically, more than two thousand years of religious, cultural, and political pressures have "spiritualized" man's will-to-power by forcing his creative energies inward: while among the weak this spiritualization has taken the form of *ressentiment*, revenge against the world,[2] among the strong it has produced a new found love of, and "incitement to life."[3] The vital creators in Nietzsche's coming grand politics are animated by this spiritualized will-to-power, and as such their works will necessarily be different from those produced by similarly vital actors of earlier ages. This is why Nietzsche, though deeply admiring of Ancient Greece, never calls for a literal return to their values, myths, and socio-political arrangements, as such a return is both impossible *and* undesirable: modern man is so drastically different in constitution and instincts from the Ancient Greek that the other's way of life may actually be inimical to his flourishing. But Nietzsche does believe that the Ancient Greeks had invaluable insights into the fundamental dynamics of life, and insofar as these

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2. Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals," 563.

3. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 86.

dynamics apply to life as such, the practices and beliefs of this long-passed people may prove helpful in understanding and overcoming the difficulties facing modern man. In analyzing Nietzsche's assessment of aristocracy, and adapting it to the international system, I am engaging in a similar activity: by identifying those insights whose roots pierce beneath an immediate context I am able to extract general lessons, and then, with care and discretion, apply them to a different environment.

Returning to Nietzsche's aristocratic model, we must familiarize ourselves with its relevant aspects. As has been argued throughout the present study, Nietzsche places great stock on the creative powers of an organism, be it individual or collective. Understood as the ability and willingness to expend strength in transformative ways, creativity constitutes the most vital form life: this vitality keeps life engaged, dynamic, and diverse. When it comes to man, such vitality in the form of creativity contributes to his physiological well-being by preventing his degeneration into mediocrity. While quite critical of the Judeo-Christian transvaluation of values, Nietzsche nevertheless respects it for its contribution to man's development. With this creative act "man first became *an interesting animal*" whose soul "acquire[d] *depth* and bec[a]me *evil*—and these are the two basic respects in which man has hitherto been superior to other beasts!"[4]

Nietzsche's support for aristocracy stems from three characteristics he argues exist in all such societies: social hierarchy; will to command; and communal purpose. A healthy aristocracy unabashedly embraces man's inequality, and therefore the natural good of human exceptionalism. In contrast to the egalitarian politics of our democratic age, aristocratic politics constructs a "great ladder of hierarchy" upon whose rungs the

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4. Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals," 469, emphasis in original.

extraordinary elevate themselves above the mass of lessers.[5] This instinct of superiority

is the result of a particular self-referential mode of valuation. Unlike the weak or slavish,

"the noble type of person feels *himself* as determining value," and owing to the pleasure

he experiences in his power, "everything that he knows of himself he reveres…"[6]

Reflecting their deficit of vital energy, the weak of society approach existence in a

manner far different from that of the noble type. Whereas persons of power look inward

for insights as to values, the "raped, the oppressed, the suffering, the shackled, the weary"

look outward to their oppressor, the noble type.[7] As the model of what he does not want

to be, the slave defines himself through this negative ideal. This mode of value formation

is from its inception negative in character: a trait's worth is derived from its opposition to

something outside of itself. The weak person "is *keenly* distrustful of everything that the

powerful revere as 'good.'"[8] Under the heel of the strong, the weak slander strength by

reinterpreting it as a mark of sinfulness. All that the dominant esteem becomes all that

the subjugated despise. Whereas the noble type creates values through affirmation, the

weak does so through rejection.

Out of this difference in disposition emerges the hierarchy of aristocratic society.

When it comes to those for whom life is a burden rather than a joy, "the noble person

keeps away" for "he despises them."[9] According to Nietzsche, a healthy aristocratic

society is one ordered according to the values that flow from the sense of power felt by

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5. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 150.

6. Ibid., 154.

7. Ibid., 155.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 154.

its ruling class. Atop this society stands the noble type, who instinctively recognizes his

superiority out of a life-affirming experience of power. Below resides the slave type,

who, not sharing the noble's sense of power, sustains himself by crafting an alternative

set of values that provides a sense of moral superiority through opposition rather than

self-affirmation.

Out of this hierarchy emerges the will of command:

> Without the *grand feeling of distance* that grows from inveterate class differences,
> from the ruling caste's constant view downwards…from its equally constant
> practice in obeying and commanding…that other, more mysterious attitude could
> never exist, the development of ever higher, rarer, more far-flung, extensive,
> spacious inner states, in short, the elevation of the type 'human being'…[10]

The culturally endorsed, and politically enforced, distances between classes found

in aristocratic society aid in the development of exceptional persons by training them in

the use of a will capable of commanding, which in turn is essential to the creative will.

Nietzsche describes an intimate connection between commanding society and

commanding one's self, as pleasure in ordering and determining society gives rise to

pleasure in ordering and determining one's passions. Such a person gains a "will to

dangerous voyages of discovery, to spiritualized North Pole expeditions under desolate

and dangerous skies."[11] Strong and sure of itself, a will of this type is capable of the

difficult and dangerous task of value creation.

Aristocratic social hierarchy also aids in preserving a society's overall health.

Owing to their sense of importance and life-affirming disposition, aristocratic elites see it

as their unique responsibility to maintain society. They feel compelled to discipline

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10. Ibid., 151.

11. Ibid., 102.

society so that it not stray from the values and practices that have contributed to the community's successes. In part, this is accomplished through the strict imposition of a normative system across society by means of institutional constraints such as those provided by state machinery.[12] This enforced structure is critical for human flourishing, for without it a people may descend into a state of "corruption," which is signaled by "anarchy among the instincts and of the collapse of emotional foundations."[13]

In another way, due to the noble type's affirmational experience of power, the aristocratic social order he imposes is conducive to the vitality of a particular people, and potentially the species. From the perspective of the ruling class, "society can *not* exist for its own sake, but rather only as a foundation and scaffolding to enable a select kind of creature to ascend to its higher task."[14] As that task involves "spiritualized North Pole expeditions," society performs its proper function when it fosters creative genius, for it is this type that is responsible for the elevation of the species as a whole.

Fear, Revenge, and Law

In addition to these internal characteristics which set aristocratic societies apart, Nietzsche identifies several mechanisms that operate between members of such societies. These mechanisms are fear, revenge and law. By extension, I argue that these domestic regulatory operations are applicable to relations between similarly constituted communities, and therefore provide a rough structure for the type of vital and active international system prescribed by Nietzsche's theory of international politics.

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12. I direct the reader to Chapter Three of the present study for a more complete discussion of the state's role in such matters.

13. Ibid., 152.

14. Ibid.

According to Nietzsche's aristocratic model, noble individuals define themselves by their internal sense of power and their ability to express that power. The noble type's abundance of power causes it to revere itself and remake its surroundings, for "a living being above all else wants to *release* its strength…"[15] In contrast, the slave type suffers from its lack of power, and consequently is reduced to reacting to the power of others. Life, after all, is "appropriating, injuring, overpowering those who are foreign and weaker; oppression, harshness, forcing one's own forms on others, incorporation, and at the very least, at the very mildest, exploitation…"[16] In a world where life operates in this way, fear becomes an essential component of human relations insofar as its presence denotes weakness, and therefore susceptibility to the transformative will of a superior. As the "mother of morality," fear is the inspiration behind much of human creativity.[17]

Nietzsche pays close attention to the ways in which fear and power are regulated within society. One mechanism whereby shifts in power are regulated is revenge. Increases and decreases in power are not only inevitable, but welcomed by Nietzsche, for in responding to them a community can maintain its dynamism. Nietzsche sees revenge as an institution of human relations that allows for adjustments in power without jeopardizing society's basic stability. In *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, Nietzsche discusses the social efficacy of the "revenge of readjustment": "By revenge we prove that we are not afraid of him either, and herein lies the settlement, the readjustment."[18]

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15. Ibid., 15.

16. Ibid., 152.

17. Ibid., 88.

18. Nietzsche, "The Wanderer and His Shadow," in *The Complete Works of Friederich Nietzsche*, trans. Paul V. Cohn, B.A., ed. Oscar Levy (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913), Vol. #7: 213.

Nietzsche's use of the word "readjustment" is significant, as it draws our attention to its regulative function whereby the balance of fear that existed prior to the offense is potentially reestablished. The significance of the initial injury is that by it one proved the relative weakness of the injured, for the aggressor was not held in check by fear. Left unaddressed, this aggression threatens the prior balance of fear that had determined the rank and order of society. "Revenge of readjustment" provides a means for society to regain the equilibrium of power upon which its stability and social order depend.

Assumed in Nietzsche's "revenge of readjustment" is the relative parity of combatants. Ever the inegalitarian, Nietzsche denies modernity's doctrine of universal rights by which obligations are granted as a function of membership in the species. One of the most laudable aspects of the noble type's morality for Nietzsche is its "fundamental principle…that we have duties only towards our peers…"[19] This principle is critical in establishing those social hierarchies which provide for the "grand feeling of distance" without which the truly creative cannot develop. When granting rights to those of comparable power, the noble type "reveres *itself* [and] has no doubt that mutual reverence and rights are the essence of all society and also part of the natural state of things."[20]

If rights are possible only between peers, then so too are offenses. Should a superior be wounded by an inferior, he "will not think of revenge…because as objects of his contempt [inferiors] cannot give him honour, and accordingly cannot rob him of

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19. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 155.

20. Ibid., 162.

honour."[21] Those of lesser vitality, those who are "cowardly or anxious or petty or concerned with narrow utility," are to be "despised."[22] From this perspective, the masses cannot offer offense for they lack the social standing that makes offense possible.[23] Therefore, should one of the elite be harmed by an "inferior," his response will necessarily be limited: lest one betray weakness, and consequently invite a demotion in social standing, retaliation must reflect the hierarchical distance between parties. In this way the inegalitarian social order of Nietzsche's aristocratic model limits both the number and intensity of conflicts.

In law, Nietzsche brings together fear, power, and life's dynamic forces. As with revenge, Nietzsche grounds law on fear and the ability to sustain that fear. An effective, life-enhancing law is one that successfully operates to "end all feuds and useless expenditures among men on an equal footing."[24] Rather than being universal or timeless, law is a function of, and its specifics determined by, prevailing power relations. A law's value is not determined by the passivity it secures, but rather by how effectively it structures the ever-fluid power relations of a dynamic society. Hence Nietzsche's assertion that "[e]quilibrium is, in fact, the basis of justice," for when centers of power are in a relative balance with respect to one another, wasteful conflicts are minimized,

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21. Nietzsche, "The Wanderer and His Shadow," 214.

22. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 154.

23. Despite the immunity implied by this subjective judgment on the part of the noble type, an aristocratic class, like any other, may be destroyed as a result of a normative revolution. The slave revolt in morality is a prime example of this: at the hands of inferiors, the ruling class was removed from power, and its value system eviscerated, thereby demonstrating the dangerous power of values with respect to social order and human development.

24. Nietzsche, "The Wanderer and His Shadow," 206.

and society's basic order is maintained.[25] Much like revenge, law is a regulatory

mechanism intended to facilitate the productive interactions of actors, while maintaining

a sufficient level of stability.

Part II: Nietzsche on War

The aristocratic model describes the types of relations, as well as their associated

social and institutional mechanisms which Nietzsche understands to be essential for

sustainable life-enhancing competition within domestic social order: hierarchy, fear,

revenge, and law regulate conflict in ways conducive to individual as well as collective

vitality, while preserving the social system that provides the necessary environment for

such competitions to occur.

But as we have seen, in addition to domestic competition, Nietzsche considers

international competition to be both natural and essential to human flourishing. To

explain Nietzsche's understanding of international conflict, and how it fits into his

broader theory of international politics, I compare Nietzsche's approach with that of one

of his contemporaries, Heinrich von Treitschke. Like Nietzsche, Treitschke recognizes

the invigorating benefits of a contentious international system. However, unlike

Nietzsche, Treitschke lacks a theory comparable to will-to-power to structure and

regulate the quarrelsome environment he champions. To illustrate this difference I

examine three components of Treitschke's thought: Christian culture; state power; and

national "honour."

Before proceeding, it is useful to first explain the benefits of introducing

Treitschke's thought into the present study. First, and most obvious, is the fact that the

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25. Ibid., 202.

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two thinkers share an historical period: as contemporaries, they experienced and responded to the same 19th-century international environment. Less obvious are the points of similarity and the reasons for divergence revealed by placing the two theories in such close proximity to one another. At the center of both Treitschke and Nietzsche's international political theories is culture, and the significance it has for international relations in general. Yet, while agreed as to culture's importance, they are in violent disagreement as to what constitutes culture, cultural strength, and therefore the very purpose of international conflict. This divide amid commonality makes their points of departure and disagreement quite illuminating with respect to defining the nature and shape of Nietzsche's theory.

War as Vanity

Treitschke both recognizes the international system's pluralism, and embraces this variety as a good. World government "is odious" for "in a single State the whole range of culture could never be fully spanned."[26] However, this "range" is far less expansive than one might think, for the cultural variety of which he speaks does not extend beyond Christendom: taken together Western civilization's numerous communities complete the spectrum of the "Divine light," with "each one exhibiting another picture and another idea of the whole."[27] Christendom as manifested by different communities, each contributing a unique perspective, constitutes the fundamental value and purpose of the international system itself. Hence, it was "reasonable and logical" to deny to the

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26. Heinrich von Treitschke, *Politics*, trans. Blanche Dugdale and Torben de Bille (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), Vol. #2: 19.

27. Ibid., 19.

Ottoman Empire the rights and obligations of international law until Christianity had sufficiently pushed "Mohammedanism somewhat into the background."[28]

Responsibility for the defense of Christian culture falls, according to Treitschke, on the shoulders of the state. As Treitschke presents it, state power is primarily a function of a community's capacity to "appeal to arms": the opinions of Belgium and Holland notwithstanding, a state unable or unwilling to defend its borders by force "no longer takes rank as a State."[29] But such physical power is neither legitimate nor to be accepted by others unless it is applied "in order to protect and to further the highest welfare of the human race."[30] Treitschke believes this qualification on the use of force distinguishes his thought from the immoderate statism of Machiavelli and his ilk for whom the state is "absolute power," and as such "may do anything which serves its ends."[31] Unlike Machiavelli, the argument goes, while state power is measured by the metrics of material resources, its *legitimacy* ultimately depends on the level of commitment it displays to the health and wellbeing of Christian culture: when guided by Christian morality, the state is an "institution designed to co-operate in the education of the human race."[32]

The justification of state power presented by Treitschke is supplemented by his concept of state "honour": "The state is no violet, to bloom unseen," therefore "we mistake the moral laws of politics if we reproach any state with having an over-sensitive

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28. Ibid., 592.

29. Ibid., 30.

30. Ibid., 588.

31. Ibid., 587.

32. Ibid., 591.

sense of honour."[33] States, like men, seek recognition from their peers, and, like men, care a great deal about the opinions of others. This elevates reputation to the level of national security, and potentially survival, for a slight to honor "casts doubt upon the nature of the State."[34] With reputation understood in this way, should restitution not be offered to a slight of state "honour," "war must follow, however small the occasion may seem," lest this sign of weakness invite future aggression.[35] In Treitschke's international community, offense of any sort amounts to a *causus belli*, "for the State has never any choice but to maintain the respect in which it is held among its fellows."[36]

With respect to the first component of Treitschke's theory, the supreme value of Christian culture, Nietzsche's criticisms are predictable. Nietzsche does not see in modern Christianity a model for culture that ought to be defended and preserved. The time of slave morality's productive contribution to Western civilization has passed. By remaining chained to its standards and valuations, Treitschke fails to appreciate the basic value and purpose of culture: if appropriately responsive to will-to-power, culture's unification of artistic styles, values, and habits, enables the cooperative activity of people in a way that enhances vitality, and increases creative potential. Furthermore, it is inappropriate to make of Christianity, and one's fidelity to it, the standard of legitimacy for culture as such. Instead, Nietzsche argues that it is the promotion of genius and creative will which are the proper standards against which a culture ought to be judged.

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33. Ibid., 595.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

To limit culture to Judeo-Christian tradition, as Treitschke does, is to misunderstand, if not completely disregard, creativity, and its importance to human flourishing.

Additionally, Nietzsche's theory of international politics takes issue with Treitschke's over-emphasis on material characteristics when it comes to defining and validating state power. Treitschke's state is effectively co-terminus with its military capability, and its legitimacy a function of how well it upholds and defends the values of Christian culture. Treitschke's focus on strength of arms, and the casualness with which he advocates for their deployment in the name of culture, all-but make inevitable the anti-culture militarism Nietzsche abhors. For Nietzsche, involved in the state's obligation to culture is a mandate of deference to it. Most importantly, this subordination requires that the state never act in ways inimical to the carrying out of culture's natural purposes, namely, the cultivation of vitality and creative genius. Observing the international system of his day, one where states myopically pursued the accumulation of ever-more lethal weapons and ever-larger armies, Nietzsche identified what for him was the most worrying consequence: "[I]ts greatest loss is that, year in and year out, the ablest, strongest, most industrious men are taken in extraordinary numbers from their own occupations and professions in order to be soldiers."[37] While an advocate for international struggle, even in the form of armed conflict, Nietzsche is careful to qualify such support with the caveat of culture: militarism, in the name of state interests, results in the sacrifice of culture's vital energies, and therefore threatens the health of the community. Witnessing his own state's political ascendance following its military victory over France in the Franco-Prussian war, Nietzsche concluded that when it comes

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37. Nietzsche, *Human, All too Human*, 232.

to "the main thing—and that is still culture," Germany's erroneous identification of culture with military might means "France gains a new importance as a *cultural power*."[38]

Indeed, Nietzsche looks to this rising cultural power for an understanding of his own country's enthusiastic embrace of Bismarkian politics: in contrast to the vital dynamism of French culture, whose "tolerably successful synthesis" of different types "bubbl[es] over with Provençal and Ligurian blood," Germany's "aesthetic disease" of cultural stagnation has led to the use of "blood and iron" as a stimulant of sorts.[39] However, Nietzsche believes such politics only exacerbate the disease by deepening Germany's misunderstanding of culture, and draining further its already nearly depleted creative resources.

Finally, from Nietzsche's perspective, Treitschke's argument for state "honour" is flawed due to its dependence on the slave mode of valuation. In contrast to noble or aristocratic morality, slave morality depends on the other for value creation. Oppressed and suffering under the burdens of a superior, the slave, in order to imbue his miserable toil with life-sustaining significance, makes of his masters all that he himself wishes *not* to be. He thinks to himself: "[T]hese birds of prey are evil; and whoever is least like a

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38. Nietzsche, "Twilight of the Idols," 74, emphasis in original. As discussed in Chapter Three, Nietzsche challenges those theories that equate military dominance and crass mass appeal with cultural vitality. In later works, Nietzsche attacks the idol of his youth, Richard Wagner, upon realizing the dangers of the composer's nationalism and Christian disposition: "anticipating an aesthetic taste that has meanwhile turned into politics [Wagner] began, with his characteristic religious vehemence, to preach, if not walk, *the road to Rome*" (Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 150, emphasis in original). In contrast to France's relative cultural vitality, as evidenced by its ability to "accommodate those rarer and rarely satisfied people who are too expansive to find their satisfactions in any kind of fatherland-ism," German culture has been consumed by militarism, and its creativity reduced to the repackaging of Judeo-Christian values (Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 147).

39. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 147.

bird of prey; but rather its opposite, a lamb good—would he not be good?"[40] This mode

of valuation is essentially negative, for it does not create values out of itself, but out of

hostility towards some other.

With respect to Nietzsche's international political theory, Treitschke's state looks

far too much to others for its own validation. As a power "not to bloom unseen," it

determines its values by first referring to actors other than itself: its "honour" is

ultimately a function of the number of eyes it can captivate, and the amount of

recognition it can coerce. To derive one's own value from the opinions of others is a

hallmark of slave morality, which "from time immemorial" dictated that "a common

person *was* only what he was *thought to be*."[41] Lacking the strength and instinctual

disposition of the noble type, the slave defers to his superiors in the determination of

values. This is "vanity" and alien to the noble type, who:

> has trouble imagining beings who would try to elicit a good opinion about
> themselves that they themselves do not hold (and thus do not 'deserve', either)
> and who then themselves nevertheless *believe* this good opinion.[42]

In Nietzsche's estimation, Treitschke's national "honour" is fatally undermined

by its "vanity."

Intensifying this "vanity" is Treitschke's misidentification of international

"fellows." As previously stated, Nietzsche's aristocratic model asserts that "we have

duties only to our peers." Insofar as it is these duties that determine the content and

character of a system of relations, great attention must be paid to determining the criteria

of parity, and who, if anyone, meets them. When it comes to these matters, Treitschke's

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40. Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals," 480.

41. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 157, emphasis in original.

42. Ibid., 156, emphasis in original.

criteria are far too lax, and consequently his international system of "fellows" is dangerously undiscriminating. While it is true that Treitschke makes culture the ultimate justification of the state (assuming it is Christian, of course), that culture seems to have little to do in the determination of a state's international standing. Should a people's "appeal to arms" be deemed deficient by current members of the community, it "no longer takes rank as a State."[43] In this international community, one where "honour" among peers is a matter of survival, membership is ultimately reducible to strength of arms, rather than vitality of culture.

Nietzsche's aristocratic model sets far more strict and culture-oriented requirements for recognition. When granting to one another rights and accommodations, aristocratic peers do so out of "reverence" for themselves, specifically their powers of self-command and creation: the noble type "moves among these equally entitled equals as assured in its modesty or tender reverence as when dealing with itself."[44] Expanded to the relations of political communities, whose cultures are animated by values that foster such commanding and creativity, duties are granted not out of material intimidation, but of out self-centered celebration. In Nietzsche's international political theory, the ultimate source of a state's power is its culture, not its army, and as such the power it projects is a function of the healthy confidence that its culture is able to sustain. As with the noble individual, a community so constituted "admits to itself that there are others with entitlements equal to its own," and once "this question of rank has been clarified" can

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43. Heinrich von Treitschke, *Politics*, trans. Blanche Dugdale and Torben de Bille (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), Vol. #1: 30.

44. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 162.

begin relating to its peers on terms appropriate to their rank.[45] Given that this rank is

determined by characteristics closely associated with, and determined by, culture, a weak

or weakened army need not necessarily jeopardize a people's place in the international

system. To the extent that Nietzsche's theory delinks international standing from military

capability, it potentially decreases the chances for armed conflict by reducing the

importance and effectiveness of military means in addressing concerns over international

political power. Treitschke, by effectively elevating state "honour" above culture as a

community's primary interest, and by defining such "honour" almost entirely in terms of

military capability, all-but guarantees an international system of incessant armed conflicts

few, if any of which, will redound to the benefit of involved cultures. Politics of this sort,

Nietzsche observes, leave many, Treitschke first among them, with "heavily bandaged

heads."[46]

Finally, from Nietzsche's perspective Treitschke fails to recognize that the pursuit

of state interests more often than not comes at the expense of culture's. Nietzsche

worries about the consequences for culture of a people's deliberate pursuit of political

power: in seeking "to engage in great politics and secure a decisive voice among the

mightiest states," a society risks sacrificing its creative energy by deforming its

exceptional few into creatures of base ambition, "greedy for political glory...and ruled by

this greed."[47] "Greed" for such "glory" is damaging because it misidentifies the greatest

form and source of power, creative vitality, as that of military and economic might. This

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid., 141.

47. Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 233.

mistaken view results in a similarly mistaken creative potential: rather than pursue

"dangerous voyages of discovery" in the vast seas of value-creation, genius wallows in

the stagnant shallows of material power.[48] This leads to a further estrangement from, and

misunderstanding of, life's fundamental dynamics as expressed in will-to-power, the

ultimate consequence of which is a people's enervation and steady decline.

Reflecting on the already over-militarized international system of his day, Nietzsche

wonders:

> Whether all this blooming and splendor of the whole…expressed as other states'
> fear of the new colossus…is *worth* it, if all the nobler, more tender and spiritual
> plants once produced in such abundance on its soils have to be sacrificed to this
> gross and gaudy national flower.[49]

Informed by his insights into the dynamics of life's fundamental processes, and

the requirements for health they entail, Nietzsche elevates above all of power's many

forms those that give rise to new modes of valuation, for it is these valuations that foster

new forms of life, and ever-higher states of vitality. To dominate by fear rather than awe

is a sign of decline, for it is those too weak to win a neighbor's spirit who resort to

breaking his body.

War-as-Hypocrisy

Though critical of Treitschke's indiscriminate embrace of war, Nietzsche is

equally critical of modernity's increasingly moralistic aversion to it. In the moral

sentiments that dominate modern international relations Nietzsche sees an unhealthy

distaste for conflict and suffering more generally. According to such sentiments, war is

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48. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 102.

49. Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 233.

immoral, and no statesman mindful of his public reputation would willingly admit to his nation's aggression in foreign policy. War, to be morally justified, may be waged only for the purposes of self-defense.

Before proceeding further, it should be noted that many of Nietzsche's thoughts on this matter emerged during what is commonly referred to as his "middle period" (1878-1882), one widely thought to be inconsistent in critical ways with the mature thought of his "late period." Replete with remarks about reason's merits, as well as its role in rescuing Western civilization, the middle period is generally discredited as irredeemably incongruous with later works. Given that I rely heavily in this section on works from this period, it is important that I clarify my position with respect to the middle period. As stated in the first chapter, I am of the opinion that, regarding the core elements of Nietzsche's thought, in particular those with direct relevance to his theory of international politics, the three periods into which Nietzsche's thought has been divided are sufficiently consistent to be treated as a relatively coherent whole.

An example of the opinion I challenge is found in Bruce Detwiler's work, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism*. In it, Detwiler argues that with respect to war, Nietzsche's middle period is irreconcilable with both his early and late periods. Of section 284 in *The Wanderer and Hid Shadow* in which Nietzsche contemplates the means for international peace, Detwiler argues that Nietzsche:

> Appears to extol not only peace but, more importantly, the pacific state of mind upon which it depends in stark contrast to the other period's repeated celebration of war.[50]

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50. Bruce Detwiler, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism* (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 179.

Understood as demonstrative of "the tenor of the whole," this passage leads Detwiler to conclude that *The Wanderer and His Shadow* "is anomalous."[51]

While it is true that Nietzsche's middle period attributes to reason a degree of redemptive power not found in his early and late periods, Detwiler's analysis of this passage, and therefore the conclusion he draws, is incorrect. First, Detwiler misunderstands Nietzsche's argument insofar as he insufficiently appreciates its intent: rather than champion international peace, Nietzsche is analyzing current standards of international morality in order to reveal their fatal contradictions. Section 284 begins its discussion of international peace by first placing it within the context of *current* moral sensibilities, specifically those that prohibit a government from "admit[ing] that it maintains an army in order to satisfy occasionally its passion for conquest."[52] "This morality" is deployed "as the government's advocate" when concerns are raised about the size of its armed forces.[53] It is because of this morality, one that cannot accept as legitimate non-defensive aggression, that statesmen are compelled to falsely claim self-preservation when instigating war.

But in categorically rejecting aggression, Nietzsche argues, this morality makes hypocrites of every nation, for, despite the declared peaceableness of all, each nation nonetheless maintains a standing army. This situation breeds "hypocrites" by forcing states to say one thing, and proceed to behave in contradictory ways. According to prevailing international norms, wars of aggression are immoral, and therefore ought to be

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51. Detwiler, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism*, 178.

52. Nietzsche, "The Wanderer and His Shadow," 336.

53. Ibid.

rejected by all civilized nations as a legitimate tool of foreign policy. And yet, states continue to amass ever-greater quantities of ever-more lethal tools of war. For Nietzsche, this fact demonstrates the abiding lack of trust between international actors, and consequently exposes the poisonous hypocrisy of international morality: the justification of self-defense is only convincing if the peace-minded declarations of one's neighbor cannot be believed, and therefore to build and maintain defensive armies is effectively to label every state "a hypocrite and cunning criminal, who would fain seize by surprise, without any fighting, a harmless and unwary victim."[54]

The international system's hypocrisy points to the slave morality underlying it. Whereas the noble mode of valuation fosters an environment of "trust and openness,"[55] owing to the confidence actors of sufficient vitality have in themselves and subsequently recognize in certain others, the current international system's presumption of dishonesty betrays a lack of vitality indicative of slave morality: in contrast to the noble man, the man of "*ressentiment* is neither upright nor naïve nor honest and straightforward with himself…he understands how to keep silent, how not to forget, how to wait, how to be provisionally self-deprecating and humble."[56] Nietzsche's interest in raising this issue is not, as Detwiler argues, to push for peace, but rather to make explicit the fundamental and fatal contradictions in the international community's moral order, and, more importantly, its unhealthy perpetuation of the slave mode of valuation.

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54. Ibid.

55. Nietzsche, "On the Genealogy of Morals," 474.

56. Ibid.

Today this contradiction between moral sentiment and active policy is perhaps

nowhere more openly on display than in the arena of nuclear proliferation and deterrence.

Mutually Assured Destruction, or MAD, is a theory that operates by exploiting the type

of hypocrisy with which Nietzsche takes issue: while nuclear states disavow a first-strike

as a matter of policy, MAD's lynchpin is a secured *second* strike capability. Possession

of this capability impugns the word of every other state, for it assumes others are willing

to deploy a first-strike, despite their statements to the contrary. In a perverse twist, owing

in large part to the destructive nature of nuclear weapons, the combination of this mistrust

and moral hypocrisy have the net effect of disincentivizing nuclear-armed actors from

engaging in open warfare.

However, the moral ambivalence in international politics troubles Nietzsche for

reasons other than the security or insecurity it fosters: "[States] presuppose evil intentions

on their neighbour's part and good intentions on their own. This hypothesis, however, is

an *inhuman* notion, as bad as and worse than war…"[57] According to the dominant

morality of the international system, both that of Nietzsche's as well as our own, acts of

aggression are viewed as beneath the dignity of civilized life.[58] And yet, the relations of

this same system are ordered by a "so-called armed peace," which, in being so armed,

challenges the commitment of its members to that morality.[59] The moral logic of this

international system requires that for peace to prevail every state must simultaneously

disarm: only by doing so may nations live up to their declarations that international

57. Nietzsche, "The Wanderer and His Shadow," 337.

58. Chapter Seven of the present study, "The End of International Politics: Post-God Liberalism and Universal Human Rights," goes into greater detail about this morality, with special attention given to human rights.

59. Nietzsche, "The Wanderer and His Shadow," 337.

violence is immoral. But to ensure the safety of all, such a policy must be simultaneously implemented by all. Given the absence of such collaboration, owing in part to the deep lack of trust discussed above, only a foolishly idealistic nation would take upon itself the dangers of unilateral disarmament. It is with this dilemma of security in mind that Nietzsche concludes that for modernity's ideal of "genuine peace" to be achieved, it "must always rest upon a pacific disposition" on the part of nations.[60] However, insofar as will-to-power makes clear that for the sake of health an organism must actively engage in "oppression, harshness, forcing one's own forms on others, incorporation, and…exploitation," the passivity required by this morality is unhealthy.[61] Indeed, what this unhealthy morality needs in order to realize its aspirations is an appropriate unhealthy type of man, namely, the last man.

Furthermore, against Detwiler's characterization of Nietzsche's middle period as one of peace is its repeated references to the connection between culture and war. In a section of *Human, All Too Human* titled "War essential," Nietzsche recognizes the potential for war's positive contributions to the health of a culture. In direct opposition to the "pacific disposition," Nietzsche calls for "present-day Europe" to awaken to the fact that it "needs not only wars but the greatest and most terrible wars…in order not to forfeit to the means of culture its culture and very existence."[62] In another section of the same work Nietzsche describes war as "the sleep or wintertime of culture: man emerges from it with more strength, both for the good and for the bad."[63] And finally, because "culture

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60. Ibid.

61. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 153.

62. Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 230.

63. Ibid., 213.

absolutely cannot do without passions, vices, and acts of malice," war must not be banished from the realm of legitimate human activity.[64] When inspired by, and waged for the sake of, a vital culture characterized by life-enhancing values, military struggle can be a natural and healthy expression of will-to-power. Similarly, military struggle may re-invigorate a flagging culture by re-introducing a people to its capacity for great deeds of collective effort, and the transformative potential of a shared sense of purpose.

Nietzsche consistently looks to what he understands as the fundamental dynamics of organic life, namely, will-to-power, when analyzing and judging international relations. Time and again it is for the sake of culture, the socio-political mechanism whereby man determines his relationship to those fundamental dynamics, that Nietzsche embraces with important qualifications war's legitimacy. As we will see shortly, the age of international politics Nietzsche believes are dawning will involve wars of unprecedented scale, and will be fought for stakes of unequalled importance. What must never be lost in this discussion is the central significance of culture, for, properly understood, the coming "wars for mastery over the earth," wars Nietzsche welcomes, will be wars not strictly for land or wealth, but for values and cultural meaning.[65]

Part III: Post-God International Politics

Modifying the standards set by Nietzsche's aristocratic model are the developments of modernity. Most important of these are democracy's political ascendance, Western homogenization, and the Death of God. To aid in this discussion I have enlisted the help of Hans J. Morgenthau, whose theory of international politics,

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64. Ibid., 230.

65. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 101.

while influenced by Nietzsche, radically diverges from his on these key issues. This divergence is useful, for it will help to clarify the specific uniqueness of Nietzsche's international political theory. Within the context of international politics, Morgenthau views democracy as a dangerous and possibly calamitous development: democracy fuels national passions of universal ambition, and undermines Europe's sense of a transnational identity. Furthermore, Morgenthau's analysis is informed by a theory of morality that understands one of its primary purposes to be the implementation of limits of man's pursuit of power.

Regarding democracy, Nietzsche views it as yet one more force drawing Europe together: as "Christianity's heir," democracy is but the continuation of Western man's homogenization. Consequently, nationalism, while traumatic and divisive, is a temporary condition, one that will eventually give way to the larger, more powerful trends of homogenization. As for morality, Nietzsche views it to be a natural outgrowth of a people's capacities and the needs with which they are confronted. This organic origin means that rather than an external restraint on power seeking, morality is a critical tool in its acquisition and expression. Taken together, Western homogenization and the effect this context has with respect to the organizational and motivational potential of a post-God system of values, culminate in the "grand politics" of Nietzsche's dawning age.

Fragmentation vs. Unification: Morgenthau

In 1948 Hans J. Morgenthau published an essay titled, "The Twilight of International Morality." What makes this article so striking, as well as relevant to the present discussion, is the clarifying summation of contemporary international politics it provides, one in which the character of international relations are grounded in the values

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held by politically active communities. With this essay, Morgenthau articulated the very international system Nietzsche predicted following the death of God: an international moral fragmentation followed by localized outbursts of destabilizing extremism. While the two thinkers diverge as to the long-term significance of reactionary nationalism, they agree that such "fatherlandism," as Nietzsche calls it, is a consequence of an international crisis in moral order. Therefore, to better understand Nietzsche's international political theory, as well as its relevance to today's international politics, the insights provided by Morgenthau regarding today's international moral environment are worth examining.

Of Morgenthau's many insights into international politics, that which is of most relevance to the present study is the special connection he makes between morality and international relations. Of particular note is the causal link he argues exists between modernity's moral fragmentation, and the extremes of modernity's international struggles. According to Morgenthau, whereas there once existed a single Christian aristocratic moral order that informed the conduct of every great power's leaders, now there are a multiplicity of nationally rooted moral codes, each convinced of its superiority, and each demanding of its political representatives undivided allegiance. The international moral order's collapse, an event consistent with the Death of God, involves an escalation of the stakes of international conflict as "[t]he moral code of one nation flings the challenge of its universal claim into the face of another which reciprocates in kind."[66]

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66. Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Twilight of International Morality," *Ethics* 58, no. 2, (1948): 96.

One of the explanations provided by Morgenthau for this fragmentation and escalation is the rise of democracy and popular representation. In Morgenthau's estimation, the international embrace of democracy following World War I has resulted in a change in processes of selection regarding foreign policy elites: whereas previously foreign policy was conducted by a small number of aristocratic elites who shared more in common with one another than they did with the populations they represented, by the early 20th-century policy makers were either elected or appointed by elected officials, and therefore chiefly concerned with the interests of their constituents.

Prior to the first World War, international relations were conducted primarily by a select class of individuals who shared an exclusive set of values and standards:

> The prince and the aristocratic rulers of a particular nation were in constant intimate contact with the princes and aristocratic rulers of other nations through family ties, a common language…common cultural values, a common style of life, and common moral convictions as to what a gentleman was and was not allowed to do in his relations with another gentleman, whether of his own or of a foreign nation.[67]

"Of necessity of a supranational character," these shared standards and norms performed a regulatory function in the conduct of foreign policy by establishing the bounds of respectable behavior.[68]

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67. Ibid., 88.

68. Ibid., 90.

With the French Revolution, and later World War I, the aristocratic model of governance was discredited, and with it the ruling class's "supranational ethics." In its place has arisen the democratic model, and subsequently a multiplicity of national ethics. According to Morgenthau, the replacement of aristocratic with democratic government resulted in a change in the domestic processes by which foreign policy representatives were selected. Democratic governance requires that those in office represent and pursue the interests of the population they serve. Furthermore, the elites themselves ought to be selected from this population, rather than from a class of nationless elites. This institutional change caused a change in international morality as those now responsible for crafting and conducting foreign policy became increasingly connected to, and therefore motivated by, national as opposed to supranational norms:

> The place of the one international society to which all members of the different governing groups belonged and which provided a common framework for the different national societies had been taken by the national societies themselves giving to their representatives on the international scene the standards of conduct which the international society had formerly supplied.[69]

Consistent with democratic representation, national leaders have become burdened with the responsibility for upholding the values of the population that placed them in office.

While important in explaining much of what has changed in international politics, these domestic institutional transformations, according to Morgenthau, are symptomatic of a more significant, and underlying situation. Beneath democracy's ascendance is what he sees as a shift in Western man's self-understanding, and it is this shift that is ultimately responsible for the radical changes in politics witnessed over the past two

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69. Ibid., 94.

centuries. In an earlier work titled, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, Morgenthau traces the origins of international morality's current fragmentation to the rise of political liberalism, and its dangerously erroneous conception of human reason. Inspired by a faith in science, whose powers of transformation seem to know no bounds, political liberalism presents itself as mankind's long-awaited salvation: "[Science] becomes the beneficial force which will solve the problems with which politics is unable to cope. It becomes the substitute for politics."[70] For political liberalism, reason is the key to mankind's liberation from the barbarity and miseries of power by forcing all that was once irrational into a rational order under the conscious and enlightened control of similarly rational men. This liberalism sets itself in opposition to aristocracy specifically, and tradition more generally: guided by reason and reason alone, political liberalism is free from the irrational play of power that has thus far dominated human affairs.

To Morgenthau, liberalism's exaggerated focus on reason leads it to falsely equate evil with ignorance, and therefore be a problem within reason's power to definitively correct: "It was through lack of reason that evil came into the world," and man commits injustice only "because he does not know better."[71] To the extent that democracy constitutes the most rational form of political organization yet devised, its spread across the international system will necessarily result in a reduction of injustice, and the eventual eradication of evil from the world of man.[72]

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70. Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 28.

71. Ibid., 13.

72. Ibid., 63.

But liberalism and democracy have yet to remove war from international relations.[73] Even worse, Morgenthau argues that the false dichotomy presented by liberalism between politics and reason ultimately makes international politics more, rather than less, dangerous. Most clearly demonstrated by the League of Nations' spectacular failure, and the second World War's carnage, experience has proven the insufficiency of reason alone to peacefully regulate human relations. Politics, be it domestic or international, involves assertions of power, for man is not ultimately a creature of reason: "[the] *animus dominandi*, the desire for power…is present whenever man intends to act with regard to other men."[74] Here, Morgenthau echoes Nietzsche's argument regarding the play of irrational forces in man's political relations. For both thinkers, liberalism is a philosophy blinded by reason's fool's-gold-glitter, and as such is ill-equipped to govern international relations.

According to Morgenthau, modern nationalism, notable for its unbounded aspirations and claims, is best explained as a consequence of a growing disenchantment with liberalism combined with a continued commitment to democracy as the best form of political organization. Prior to WWI, standards of national behavior were applied universally insofar as they spoke with equal force to the leaders of all Western nations; the spirit of this order is captured by the "aristocratic cosmopolitanism" previously discussed. But during the 19th and 20th-centuries, with the ever-increasing valuation of

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73. For certain, since the conclusion of World War II Western Europe has enjoyed a remarkably long stretch of relative internal peace, with no two powers going to war with one another. While there is much debate about democratic peace theory, one possible factor explaining this relative calm within Western Europe is the pacifying pressures of the Cold War: the sheer magnitude of the Soviet threat marginalized intra-European disputes that would have, absent that threat, bloomed into armed conflict. This point and others are discussed later in the chapter when examining Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*.

74. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, 192.

science and reason, traditional balance of power politics fell ever-lower in esteem among those responsible for conducting foreign policy: rather than recognizing power and its pursuit as intrinsic aspects of man, and therefore forces that must be continually struggled against, political liberalism took ignorance to be the source of man's ills, and therefore the rational organization of his relations the perfect solution. As the institutional expression of rational order, and the mechanism whereby this miraculous reorganization would occur, democracy was imbued with great moral worth.

However, by increasing the salience and importance of domestic values and interests among both the ruling and ruled, democracy forces the citizen into a dilemma of trying to reconcile "universal ethics" with his often immoral obligations to the state: he is confronted by the "magnitude of the infractions of universal ethics committed on behalf of the nation," yet is "too strongly attached to the concept of universal ethics to give it up."[75] To soothe his "uneasy conscience," this citizen "identifies the morality of his own nation with the commands of supranational ethics; he pours, as it were, the contents of his national ethics into the now almost empty bottle of universal ethics."[76] This solution drastically alters the character of nationalism by universalizing its previously localized moral duties, and undermines the concept of universal ethics by tethering it to national interests. While those interests are born of particular situations, conditions, and needs, as is fitting the nature of political communities, their new universalism threatens to destabilize the already tumultuous environment of international relations, for now, as

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75. Morgenthau, "The Twilight of International Morality," 96.

76. Ibid.

Morgenthau says, "[t]here are as many ethical codes claiming universality as there are politically active nations."[77]

Fragmentation vs. Unification: Nietzsche

For Nietzsche, democracy's spread poses a different set of dangers as well as opportunities with respect to the international system. Owing to its commitment to the principle of egalitarianism, democracy, as Nietzsche understands it, "tries to create and guarantee independence for as many as possible in their opinions, ways of life, and occupation."[78] Within the context of a post-God Western world, this form of political organization free individuals to seek out answers to the questions that are no longer answered by the discredited Judeo-Christian tradition. Modern democratic man seeks out new "What fors?" in an environment of "wild egoisms that challenge one another with seeming explosiveness."[79] Without the guiding hand of tradition, an individual is in danger of falling prey to partisan extremism, nationalistic fever, or immobilizing skepticism.

However, despite the very real threats of partisan extremism and nationalistic fever, Nietzsche argues that modern democracy ultimately works to quiet these voices of division. As society is flooded with new interpretations of existence, those of the past increasingly lose their grip on the passions of most people. Over time, the spirit of democracy penetrates deeper into the centuries-old layers of national sentiment, and

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77. Ibid.

78. Nietzsche, "The Wanderer and His Shadow," 344.

79. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 159.

replaces "pious affection" for tradition with a "craze for novelty and experiment."[80] Freed from tradition's restraints, but burdened by a need for new ones, society "starts a new project in every generation, almost in every decade."[81]

Beneath this turbulent surface of competing beliefs, Nietzsche identifies a current of growing size and force drawing together, rather than splitting apart Western civilization: owing to the constant pressure of similar conditions over vast stretches of time, Western man is gradually becoming homogenized, an animal of a single type, a "herd" animal. To best understand this process of homogenization we would do well to recall that Nietzsche "counts man among the animals plain and simple, without metaphorical intent."[82] Perhaps more so than any other animal, man is physically and mentally shaped by his environment, with those conditions of particular strength and duration being more determinative than others. Furthermore, man's singular need for values, as well as his capacity for their creation, are not exempt from the formative influence of these conditions. With respect to Western man's physiological constitution, Judeo-Christian tradition stands as the single most important factor responsible for its current composition. Both Christianity and its heir, "the democratic movement," have bred Europeans to be "of one mind in all their key moral judgements."[83] This uniformity has affected man's behavior, habits, and instincts as well, insofar as the development of each has been guided by the dominant moral perspective. For these reasons Nietzsche concludes that democracy, rather than contributing to Europe's disintegration, is bringing

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80. Nietzsche, "The Wanderer and His Shadow," 344.

81. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 134.

82. Ibid., 89.

83. Ibid.

forth a single population, one of "handy herd-animal men" who, as "supernational and nomadic," are decreasingly moved by, or interested in, the entropic forces of nationalism.[84]

For all of their many faults, these "herd-animal men" have little interest in the seemingly outmoded and irrelevant nationalistic divisions of the past. Nietzsche's species-perspective, justified by his understanding of man-as-animal, marginalizes all of the immediately troubling eruptions of European nationalism to "little attacks of acquired stupidity."[85] Sapping the energy of nationalistic leaders, all so animated by the tired politics of division, is a new, verging on instinctual, drive that with each passing day only grows in influence: "*Europe wants to be one*."[86] Two thousand years of political and religious education have resulted in a physiological transformation throughout Western civilization that is drawing together, rather than splitting apart, the population as a whole. As Westerners come to resemble one another in values, government, and culture, whatever points of division still persist will inevitably lose their force.

Furthermore, against Morgenthau's association of democracy with international moral fragmentation, Nietzsche's theory of homogenization sees the former as but a continuation of the same moral order that has been guiding Western civilization for two millennia. Christianity's sustained influence has so penetrated the very nature of Western man, that, even following God's death and the delegitimization of Christian theology, it continues to result in behavior and secular beliefs largely consistent with tradition. To

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84. Ibid., 134.

85. Ibid., 141.

86. Ibid., 148.

Nietzsche's mind, the egalitarianism of democracy, demonstrated by an ever-expanding body of rights granted to an ever-expanding number of people, is but a reformulation of the Christian equality before God. The Western spirit is ultimately dependent on Christianity, for, as Bruce Detwiler writes, "after two thousand years, it constitutes the only horizon in sight."[87] As Christianity's "heir," democracy rests comfortably within that horizon.

The secular continuation of Christian values in the form of democratic government means that there is little to fear with respect to the possibility of moral fragmentation. Quite to the contrary, democracy's ascendance is both symptomatic of, and contributory to, Western civilization's moral uniformity: "*Morality in Europe today is herd morality*," or, as Nietzsche also calls it, the "morality of pity."[88] Consistent with the valuations introduced by the slave revolt in morality more than two thousand years earlier, Western sentiment continues to elevate the many above the few, calm above struggle, and comfort above pain. With its indiscriminate granting of rights, and zealous commitment to the satisfaction of the mass of humanity's base desires, Western civilization displays a striking singlemindedness with respect to moral sentiments.

Power and Morality: Morgenthau

The final illuminating point of contrast between Morgenthau and Nietzsche concerns the role of morality in determining a community's behavior. I argue Morgenthau's largely negative predictions regarding the future of international politics are informed by a particular understanding of the relationship between morality and man:

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87. Detwiler, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism*, 130.

88. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 89, emphasis in original.

Morgenthau characterizes morality's proper role as one of a necessary check on man's lust for power, his *animus dominandi*. In contrast, Nietzsche views a vital morality as not only a manifestation of man's desire for power, being an instantiation of will-to-power, but also as an instrument for the fuller expression and application of man's lust for power.

In *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, Morgenthau echoes certain aspects of Nietzsche's theory of will-to-power when he identifies in man an insatiable lust for power: the eternal source of conflict and pain in man's life is the *animus dominandi*, an ineradicable drive within his nature that defies all reason and rational calculation.[89] If left unrestrained, the *animus dominandi* would drive man to pursue domination over his fellow man in an endlessly escalatory manner: being neither rational nor reasonable, "it would be satisfied only if the last man became an object of his domination…that is, if he became like God."[90]

Preventing the universal quest for god-hood is morality. One of the greatest contributions made by the now-shattered supranational ethics of aristocratic society was the set of limits it imposed on each sovereign's pursuit of power. The notoriously malleable concept of national interest, employed by countless statesmen to justify their various military adventures, was, for a time, held within certain bounds: a foreign policy contemplated within this structure of normative standards "actually sacrifices the national interest where its consistent pursuit would necessitate the violation of an ethical

89. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, 192.

90. Ibid., 193.

principle."[91] For Morgenthau, morality's proper place is outside of man's lust for power, and its proper function is the constraining of that lust's expression. Democracy's ascent corrupts this position and operation by permitting morality's cooptation by the *animus dominandi*. Where before morality established the borders of legitimate state action, now it is state action that determines the content and bounds of morality.

Power and Morality: Nietzsche

While the lust for power described by Morgenthau shares much with Nietzsche's will-to-power theory, there are illuminating points of departure, most notably the nature of morality, and its relationship to will-to-power. In Nietzsche's assessment, morality is the result of man's will-to-power, and therefore, rather than a check on it, is in fact one of its most potent instantiations. To characterize aristocratic cosmopolitanism as a check on human "evil," as Morgenthau does, is to demonstrate a misunderstanding of will-to-power as the constituting active force of biological life, and therefore the subjectivity of "evil" itself. In the creation of a community, morality constitutes a response to dangers, conditions, and needs. Nietzsche's frequent refrain that "fear is the mother of morality" speaks to the situational character of morality:

> Certain strong and dangerous instincts such as adventurousness, recklessness, vengefulness, slyness, rapacity, lust for power, were previously not only honoured…but they also had to be cultivated and bred, because people continually had need of them in their common danger against common enemies.[92]

Values emerge in response to particular dangers, and are therefore part of the natural and endless struggle that constitutes life. Nietzsche makes this clear when he has

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91. Morgenthau, "The Twilight of International Morality," 82.

92. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 87.

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Zarathustra declare that a people's moral code is its "tablet of overcomings; behold, it is the voice of its will to power."[93] However, while not a check on will-to-power in itself, morality may be used to check the will-to-power of rival moral codes. Such was the case with the slave revolt in morality: oppressed by the power and values of a dominating class, the weak responded to this danger by creating a new moral code that ultimately defeated the established order.

Consistent with its grounding in a community's will-to-power, morality is inherently adaptive: if a morality outlives the threat that inspired its creation, a community must craft for itself a new "tablet of values" capable of defending against new dangers. Failure to do so threatens a people with stagnation and decline as it suffocates under the restrictions of an increasingly outdated and unresponsive value system. Such is the situation in which Nietzsche believes Western civilization currently finds itself. Judeo-Christian tradition has outlived its usefulness with respect to preserving the West's cultural health. Now that the threats which prompted its original creation have long-since passed, this system of values has become a threat: whereas in the beginning the life-negating nihilism at the heart of Christianity was kept at bay by the vital, life-saving struggle of the actively unfolding slave revolt in morality, now, with the revolt's resounding success, that nihilism is free to spread unimpeded and exact its ultimate toll, the last man. The very same decline of traditional morality that causes Morgenthau's lamentations inspires Nietzsche's imagination as he contemplates a new future: God's death is an opportunity, if acted upon, for Western civilization to create new values, and look to a new horizon.

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93. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 51.

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Post-God International Morality

With the above conditions in mind, to understand Nietzsche's theory of international politics we must ask the following question: what are the new dangers that will determine the morality of Western civilization's future? To answer this question we return to the Death of God.

The primary danger Nietzsche fears in a post-God West is the definitive and final triumph of the last man over all other human types. Western homogenization coupled with democracy's political hegemony has sapped the West of its cultural energy. The last man expresses this sentiment by embodying the malaise and passivity characteristic of a decadent culture no longer mindful of life's fundamental dynamics, and therefore the importance of vitality to health. An average Westerner no longer feels the disciplining pressure of necessity, the need to harden himself, for when a society:

> arrives at a period of good fortune, the tremendous tension relaxes; perhaps there are no longer any enemies among its neighbours and its means for living, even for enjoying life, are plentiful. At one single stroke the coercing bond of the old discipline is torn apart: it is no longer felt to be essential, critical for existence…[94]

Raised for generations in an environment of such "good fortune," Western man is so accustomed to ease and comfort that he views struggle, pain, and strife as immoral and therefore in need of complete eradication: "'At some point, we want there to be *nothing more to be afraid of*!' At some point—the will and the way *to that point* is what everyone in Europe todays calls 'progress.'"[95] Should Western civilization continue to be swaddled in this blanket of comfort, Nietzsche fears man's possible irreversible decline into mediocrity and ill-health.

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94. Nietzsche *Beyond Good and Evil*, 159.

95. Ibid., 88, emphasis in original.

The most pressing new danger confronting Western civilization is its increasingly thorough ignorance of, and estrangement from, will-to-power and life's governing forces. As we have seen, Nietzsche understands vital life, that expressed in, and manifested by, "the true will to power" to involve "oppression, harshness, [and] forcing one's own forms on others."[96] Consequently, in rejecting struggle and suffering, Western man denies the "*fundamental nature* of living things."[97] With respects to political activity, this alienation expresses itself as a lack of will throughout Western civilization to take on the great tasks, duties, and projects conducive to human flourishing.

But the depth of the crisis presented by the Death of God denies to the West the familiar solution of nationalism. As discussed in the previous chapter, Nietzsche links Judeo-Christian metaphysics with the valuation of truth: for over two millennia Western civilization has been motivated by a belief in the supremacy of truth's value over falsehood, the universal beneficence of truth, and the necessity of truth for determining life's worth. Science has continued this perception of, and reliance on, truth with the principles of objectivity and supreme value. However, Nietzsche argues that science, owing perhaps to an overly zealous commitment to truth, has undermined the credibility of its own foundations by bringing into disrepute the divine and temporal orders of Judeo-Christian tradition: the natural world is revealed to be an essentially random assortment of colliding energies with no "eternal reason-spider" to provide eternal and

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96. Ibid., 153.

97. Ibid., emphasis in original.

ultimate meaning.[98] Denied God's metaphysical order of unchanging being, Western civilization is forced to reassess the foundations of its relationship to existence.

Nietzsche's Death of God thesis further undermines nationalism's long-term significance, for nationalism fails to address in a sufficiently penetrating manner the current problem. As a replacement for God, the state constitutes only a pale simulacrum lacking an original sense of meaning, and new ground for will. This misguided turn to nationalism Stefan Elbe calls "incomplete nihilism": Europe's need for truth, which can "no longer be satisfied by Christianity following the 'death of God,'" finds in "nationalism and other forms of incomplete nihilism" only temporary alleviations from the trauma of lost purpose.[99] Morgenthau's "nationalistic universalism" may be properly understood as "incomplete nihilism" insofar as it replaces the omnipotent authority of God with the materially limited authority of the state. In addition to the immediate problem of the state's terrestrial boundedness, the value system it promotes is fatally derivative: modern national moralities are essentially composed of the same values that God's death has undermined. This unoriginality prevents the West from responding to modernity's dangers, for the values in question no longer speak to current needs and conditions.

Critical to the present study is Nietzsche's proposed solution to the West's cultural malaise and lack of will. While rooted in domestic experiences, these ailments find much of their cure in international politics. Writing about Europe's declining will, Nietzsche posits this possible remedy:

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98. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 143.

99. Stefan Elbe, *Europe: A Nietzschean Perspective*, 53.

[A]n increase in the Russian threat so great that Europe would have to decide to become equally threatening, that is, to make use of a new ruling caste in order *to gain a will*, a terrible, long-lived will of its own that could set itself goals over millennia—so that the long-drawn-out comedy of its small-state system and likewise the multiple wills of its dynasties and democracies would finally come to an end. The time for petty politics is over: even by the next century, we will be battling for mastery over the earth—*forced* into politics on a grand scale.[100]

"Morality is primarily a means of preserving the community and saving it from destruction," Nietzsche writes in *The Wanderer and His Shadow*.[101] What Europe desperately needs is a sense of fear strong enough to overwhelm the "petty politics" of the past. Such a fear may drive Western civilization to finally create a post-God morality capable of sustaining a new "terrible, long-lived will."

It is important to keep in mind the type of fear that justifies Nietzsche's advocacy of an escalation in international tensions. Russia, while vast in territory and population, attracts Nietzsche's attention more for its cultural resources than anything else: Russia is a place "where the energy to will has long been stored up in reserve…[and] waits ominously to be released."[102] There is no doubt that Nietzsche expects Western and Russian soldiers to clash on the battlefield. But it is critically important to keep in mind that it is cultural defeat that Nietzsche fears above all others, and that only for the sake of preventing it, may military action ever be justified: Western civilization's culture, more than its land or treasure, is what Nietzsche fears might fall into the "gaping Asiatic maw."[103]

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100. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 101.

101. Nietzsche, "The Wanderer and His Shadow," 221.

102. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 101.

103. Nietzsche, "The Wanderer and His Shadow," 314.

Nietzsche's coming international politics are necessarily supranational for they involve matters beyond the grasp of individual states. Western physiological, political, and cultural changes, themselves determined by millennia-long influences, have brought an end to "the age of city-state culture."[104] Europe's desire "to be one" is a consequence of these civilizational developments. But underlying such changes are the fundamental dynamics of the natural world, and the processes whereby organic life operates, namely, will-to-power. Appreciative of this foundation, Nietzsche is careful to render his diagnosis of the West's ills, and their potential cures, with direct reference to culture: it is by means of values and culture that man establishes his relationship to the primal forces of life, and it is this relationship that ultimately determines his health.

Part IV: Nietzsche's Grand Politics

The positive contributions that Nietzsche believes physical combat may make to the health of a community means that international war is a necessary and natural aspect of human political relations. Consistent with this conclusion, Nietzsche relies on non-Western stimuli for Western civilization's regeneration. But the scope of conflict called for given the depth and breadth of cultural decline causes one to question the nature of Nietzsche's future politics.

What sets the coming wars apart from those of the past are the size of the actors involved, and the stakes put at risk by either victory or defeat. Nietzsche's admonishment at Europe's current rulers over their continued pursuit of "petty politics" is informed by changes in Western civilization. As previously discussed, the two most consequential of these developments are Western man's homogenization, and the Death

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104. Ibid., 242.

of God. The former ensures that whatever political entity eventually emerges from Europe's current disorder will be one spanning nations. Glimpses of this new political community may be found in the multinational unity of the European Union. Should that vast collection of people, material, and merging cultures acquire a single decisive will, one strong enough to bend such resources to the service of a single purpose, the ensuing international struggles would be "grand" indeed.

With respect to the second development, the crisis of meaning caused by the Death of God has driven Western civilization into a potentially transformative state of desperation: the depth of trauma following God's departure requires a remedy equal in significance. "Petty politics" belong to the past, according to Nietzsche, because the current needs of man outstrip their capacities. Rather than this or that tract of land, this or that tattered shred of honor, tomorrow's wars will be waged for nothing less than the meaning of existence itself. To win "mastery over the earth" is to determine the political and spiritual foundations of the coming age. Consequently, the West must create a will of such endurance that it may not simply survive, but thrive within this emerging international environment.

At this point the reader may be forgiven for thinking that the Cold War, constituted by a robust alliance of democracies set against a formidable bloc of soviet states, stands as a repudiation of Nietzsche's "grand politics," and the socio-political changes that will be needed to execute them. If the West is as weak-willed, and as dangerously enamored by democracy as Nietzsche claims, then how does one explain the tremendous resolve that led to the victorious conclusion of this sixty-year-long struggle? Indeed, with the world seemingly split between two empires of unprecedented power, the

stakes involved in this confrontation were no less than the earth itself. Furthermore, insofar as each side espoused what appeared to be antithetical moral and political systems, the struggle was for meaning, not merely material.

Against this conclusion I argue that the Cold War was not an example of "grand politics," nor that the West, in waging it for as long and vigorously as it did, proved itself strong enough to discredit Nietzsche's criticisms and associated worries. For certain, the East and the West held vastly different beliefs about political and economic governance. But beneath these differences was a shared belief as to the standards by which life's quality should be judged, and the ends for which it should be lived. The Soviet and American citizen alike sought a life of comfort and material satisfaction. In this respect, the Cold War was fought not over different conceptions of the good, but rather the means by which it may be best attained: capitalism and communism each believed they could provide the maximum of human contentment with the minimum of toil. Of the outwardly contradictory positions held by the democrats, anarchists, and socialists of his day, Nietzsche concludes that regarding the fundamental matter they are all "united in their belief in a morality of *communal* pity, as if it were Morality itself, the summit, the *conquered* summit of humankind."[105] Each movement seeks above all else to provide mankind with the most comfortable life, and respond in a soothing way to modernity's universal revulsion at suffering. But as Nietzsche's theory of will-to-power asserts again and again, suffering and struggle are not only intrinsic to life as such, but in many respects *necessary* for human flourishing. To abandon striving's pain in favor of passivity's relaxation is to condemn one's self, and one's people, to ill-health and decline.

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105. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 90, emphasis in original.

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In this way, by sharing the same standards regarding the life that ought to be lived, the Cold War's two adversaries pursued the same goal: the last man. From Nietzsche's perspective, the Cold War was ultimately a struggle of unprecedented scale over the relatively petty issue of the means by which shared ends would be attained.

Grand vs. Civilizational Politics

The "grand politics" envisioned by Nietzsche bear some resemblance to the civilizational politics of Samuel Huntington, insofar as both move international politics' center of gravity from the state to culture. In light of the influence of Huntington's theory in contemporary debates about international politics, it will prove productive to expand upon the similarities and differences between each. With respect to similarities, both Huntington and Nietzsche see international politics' future as one of supranational cultural associations rather than individual nation-states. Civilizational, not state identities will constitute the points of differentiation according to which the international system will be organized. In this way, the age of "petty politics" is superseded by that of "civilizational politics."

Huntington believes in collective identities that exist beneath superficial national affiliations. A civilization involves shared "values, beliefs, institutions and social structures."[106] As these points of identification can and often do traverse national borders, "most civilizations contain two or more nations."[107] Civilizations are systemized collections of shared experiences accumulated over vast stretches of time. Since these constitutive experiences are lived by successive generations over the course of centuries,

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106. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 42.

107. Ibid., 44.

civilizations exist largely independent of the superficial politics of nation-state competition: "Empires rise and fall, governments come and go, civilizations remain."[108]

Nietzsche shares Huntington's appreciation for those mechanisms of unity that reside below the surface of national politics. Despite dividing Europe into its separate cultural communities, Nietzsche never removes them from the larger *European* culture. Indeed, the motive behind segregating Europe's societies in his analysis is the fuller appreciation of what each has to contribute to Europe as a whole: "European *noblesse*…is *France's* invention and accomplishment"; German music is "*the voice of Europe's soul*"; "Europe [owes] to the Jews…the grand moral style, the horror and majesty of everlasting demands, everlasting meanings, the whole sublime romanticism of moral questions."[109] Beneath national divisions and local cultural idiosyncrasies, Nietzsche sees a unifying European identity shaped by over two millennia of shared experience.

Despite their agreement regarding the existence of supranational cultural ties, Huntington and Nietzsche part ways when it comes to the reasons for, and consequently the nature of, civilizational politics. Huntington argues that the emergence of civilizational politics is the result of the reduced salience of national and ideological politics. "In the post-Cold War world, states increasingly define their interests in civilizational terms."[110] The international political significance of the Cold War's conclusion is the room it has provided for pre-existing cultural identities to re-assert

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108. Ibid., 43.

109. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 145; 138; 141.

110. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, 34.

themselves. Therefore, rather than a genuinely new age of international politics,

Huntington's civilizational politics marks a return to traditional identities and values. As

"[r]eligion is a central defining characteristic of civilizations," Huntington's civilizational

politics involves a reassertion of historical religious values.[111]

From Nietzsche's perspective, the coming changes in international politics are

more the result of physiological changes in man than a resurgence of historical identities.

Through homogenization, principally in the West, modern man is embarking upon a new

age of international politics: "Europe wants to be one" because the citizens of Europe's

nations are increasingly coming to resemble one another in values, temperament, and

character. The Western "herd" spans national identities because all such identities have

been shaped by the conditioning influences of Judeo-Christian tradition, democracy, and

the Death of God. Independent of great power rivalries and shifts in the international

balance of power, Western civilization's cultural and social transformation progresses.

Ultimately, Nietzsche understands transformations in man's character and capacities to

be the drivers of political change, be they domestic or international.

Furthermore, by placing man within history, Nietzsche recognizes the

impossibility of returning to previous times. With respect to Western civilization, its

future cannot entail a return to the past because that civilization has fundamentally

changed. Nationalism, informed as it is by Judeo-Christian values, cannot suffice in a

post-God world, for the underlying metaphysics are no longer sufficiently believed in.

The "European problem," according to Nietzsche, is the problem of creating a future for

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111. Ibid., 47.

Europe that *overcomes* rather than replicates tradition.[112] Contrary to Huntington's civilizational politics of nostalgic tradition, Nietzsche envisions a civilizational politics of transvaluation: "grand politics" will be determined by *new* values and *new* points of competition.

Conclusion

This chapter has endeavored to outline the core elements of Nietzsche's theory of international politics. Will-to-power, and the natural dynamic forces it expresses, play a critical role in this theory, for it is these concepts that inform Nietzsche's understanding and judgements regarding international politics. Nietzsche's insights into the natural order lead him to promote aristocratic forms of political organization: aristocracy facilitates the establishment of those life-enhancing hierarchies conducive to the fostering of creative vitality. These same insights lead Nietzsche to render unique judgements regarding international politics, most notably with respect to armed conflict: war is valuable only if it is waged for, and contributes to, cultural health. Culture, not the state, is the center of gravity around which Nietzsche's international politics revolve. When welcoming the coming age of global struggle, Nietzsche never strays from the principle of culture's central importance. It is this importance that leaves him so troubled by the prospect of the last man's hegemonic rule over Western civilization, and explains the attention he pays to international politics: in international politics Nietzsche finds a source for the "enormous counterforces"[113] needed to beat back the last man's definitive

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112. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 143, emphasis in original.

113. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 164.

ascendency, an unhealthy domination that would mark the end of Western civilization's creative vitality.

CHAPTER SIX

Nietzsche's Natural Constructivism

Introduction

With the scope and content of Nietzsche's international political theory now established, I would like to situate it within the field of international politics as it currently stands. Despite the extent of its uniqueness, Nietzsche's theory shares much with constructivism regarding basic points of understanding and perspective. Below I defend this association while simultaneously highlighting key points of difference. My intention in doing so is to present Nietzsche's international political theory in a way that both bolsters constructivism, and challenges it in a productive manner.

While there is a variety of thought within constructivism, the present discussion focuses on that of Alexander Wendt. This restriction is the result of two considerations, each of which reflect the present study's purposes. First, in addition to being an insightful and thorough theorist, Wendt goes to great lengths to facilitate productive discussion between his own theory of international politics and those already established within the field: Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics* manages both to challenge the established intellectual traditions that dominate international politics, as well as open pathways of dialog. In associating Nietzsche's theory with that of Wendt, I hope to promote equally productive relationships between Nietzsche and the dominant theories of international politics.

Second, Wendt's constructivism grants substantial influence to material factors in the determination of individual and collective interests, and consequently the character of international relations. Wendt summarizes these factors in the two iterations of what he calls "rump materialism." I discuss these, and then expand them to include aspects of will-to-power as understood by Nietzsche. As such, Wendt's constructivism assists in the introduction of Nietzsche as an international political theorist by providing a space within international politics for him.

The present chapter is organized around four points of inquiry: the constitutive role of ideas and values; human nature's malleability; the constraints imposed by will-to-power; and, finally, the "Hobbesian international culture" of Nietzsche's theory. With respect to the first, I argue that both Wendt and Nietzsche agree regarding the constitutiveness of identities and those values underlying them: rather than fixed, collective as much as individual interests are primarily determined by particular perspectives, which in turn result from similarly particular environmental pressures and experiences. Consistent with Wendt's "security systems," Nietzsche acknowledges the variety of international politics open to man by virtue of the variety in modes of valuation, and contexts in which to create values.

Second, Nietzsche's description of human potential, specifically its malleability in the face of social, historical, and environmental factors, overlaps in substantial ways with that presented by Wendt. For Nietzsche, man's behavior, like that of all animals, is adaptive rather than fixed. The dangers of Western homogenization, as well as the need for aristocratic hierarchy, demonstrate Nietzsche's appreciation for man's plasticity, and the significance this has for international relations. Similarly, in describing human nature

as "socially contingent, not materially essential," Wendt draws our attention to the deep ways in which humans can and do change.[1]

Third, despite important commonalities, Nietzsche's theory of international politics departs from Wendt's constructivism by rooting itself in a normatively substantive context, namely, will-to-power.[2] According to Nietzsche, while human nature is malleable, it does not exist in a realm beyond the natural order: man, being a biological organism and therefore inextricably enmeshed within the dynamic forces of life, is affected by these forces insofar as they establish not only the limits of variety, but also the determinants of health. Most notable among these factors is the essentialness of conflict to life: a vital organism "will want to grow, to reach out around itself, pull towards itself, gain the upper hand…because it is *alive*, and because life simply *is* the will to power."[3] With respect to international politics, this understanding of life's essential character means that struggle and war are not only natural, but actually indicative of health. This instructive grounding in will-to-power opens a critical space between Nietzsche's theory of international politics and Wendt's constructivism, one that I exploit in the name of fruitful dialog.

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1. Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 133.

2. Consistent with the value-neutrality intended by its author, I present Wendt's constructivist theory of international politics as essentially descriptive, and therefore largely devoid of normative premises. I underscore this point in light of comments made by Wendt regarding the influence of Marxism on his work: "At that time [the 1980s], I actually considered myself a Marxist. I read a lot of Marxist state theory and about the internationalization of capital, and I guess I remain sympathetic to Marxism this day." (Alexander Wendt, "Theory Talk #3: Alexander Wendt on UFO's, Black Swans and Constructivist International Relations Theory," interview by Peer Schouten, in *Theory Talks*, 24 April 2008, http://www.theory-talks.org/2008/04/theory-talk-3.html). Despite these comments, the constructivism found in Wendt's *Social Theory* is intended to exist beyond the reach of value-based theories, Marxism being no exception.

3. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 153.

Finally, I clarify the position of Nietzsche's theory with respect to constructivism by examining and adapting Wendt's concept of "Hobbesian culture." According to Wendt, and international Hobbesian culture is characterized by the combative identities it fosters among its members, who, by virtue of such identities, view one another as opponents, and the international system as an arena of endless conflict. However, while animated by combative identities, this culture fails to capture in total Nietzsche's aristocratic model by remaining too focused on material, as opposed to cultural, competition. In response, I augment Wendt's Hobbesian culture by replacing its original material interests and metrics of power with those of culture as conceived by Nietzsche. The result is an informative representation of Nietzsche's theory of international politics, as well as an example of the type of productive dialog I hope to facilitate with this study.

Part I: Constitutive Ideas

Perhaps the most notable characteristic of constructivism is the constitutive role it ascribes to ideas and identities in determining human behavior. A similar relationship exists between ideas and the behavior of human communities to the extent that such communities are viewed as unitary actors possessed of interests and the desire to satisfy them. Wendt's constructivism in particular problematizes such fixtures of international politics as anarchy and national interest by making the content of each a function of underlying constitutive ideas and identities. Like Nietzsche, Wendt recognizes that the shape and character of an international system is in many respects plastic and underdetermined.

An informative example of ideas as constitutive variables is found in Wendt's discussion of, and challenge to, Kenneth Waltz's formulation of anarchy and its

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underlying "logic." A defensive neo-realist, Waltz argue that international anarchy

possesses an intrinsic "logic" that incentivizes self-help behavior with respect to security:

"Self-help is necessarily the principle of action in an anarchic order. A self-help situation

is one of high risk…of war in the world of free states."[4] In the absence of a world

government to impose a hierarchy of authority, states are incentivized to unflaggingly

defend their national "independence": without a supranational actor sufficiently powerful

to provide security across the system, states have only themselves upon which to rely.

Waltz characterizes such self-help as the necessary and inevitable result of anarchy, its

logic only alterable either through the establishment of a world government or a radical

shift in power's distribution (unipolarity).[5]

Challenging Waltz's characterization of international anarchy, Wendt argues that

ideas and identities are chiefly responsible for determining the types of relationships

states establish. According to Wendt, the types of interactions in Waltz's neo-realist

anarchical system only occur if one assumes the active dominance of particular ideas:

defensive neo-realism's international system is populated by status quo states who cease

their pursuits of power once "security needs are met."[6] Waltz's states see each other as

insecure rather than simply power hungry, and therefore one's accumulation of power

does not *necessarily* portend future aggression: they "want to preserve what they already

have rather than try to get more."[7] In contrast, John Mearsheimer's offensive neo-

realism, though observing the same international anarchy as Waltz, ascribes to states a far

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4. Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 111.

5. Ibid., 107.

6. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 104.

7. Ibid., 104.

more expansive, and less restrained disposition: "The system is populated with great powers that have revisionist intentions at their core."[8] These "revisionist intentions" necessarily lead to behavior quite different than that described by Waltz.

For Wendt, this split within neo-realism demonstrates the formative influence of identities on anarchy's logic: the character of international anarchy is determined more by state identities than it is by supposedly immutable features intrinsic to the system. "Role identities," those adopted by states, and which are responsible for anarchy's logic, result from experiences: "role identities…are not based in intrinsic properties and as such exist *only* in relation to Others."[9] An actor's position within a social order, be that order domestic or international, depends on the experience-produced perception of others, perceptions that once internalized come to constitute that actor's role identity. Through the unfolding of international relations, states form a "Self as it sees itself through the Other's eyes."[10] As with Nietzsche, Wendt views international identities and the values that flow from them to be socially determined: far from fixed, human behavior is constitutively shaped by environmental and experiential factors.

Wendt's treatment of state sovereignty further clarifies what is meant by socially determined state identities. Being constructed rather than given, sovereignty, to be effective as a principle of international politics, must be so internalized that it is experienced as an essential component of statehood itself. If this occurs, sovereignty becomes part of the role identity of a system's members, and therefore requires that

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8. John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2001), 29.

9. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 227.

10. Ibid.

actors conduct themselves in ways consistent with "substantial rights and behavioral norms."[11] As a characteristic of legitimate states, sovereignty's authority flows from its repeated affirmation in the relations between states. Should states decide to no longer conduct themselves in ways consistent with the principle, then its meaning will necessarily change. For Wendt, sovereignty is a social construction that rests upon the internalized identities and norms of the system's primary actors.

Nietzsche's slave-noble relationship, and the social constitution of identities, dovetails with the intersubjective formation of identities in Wendt's constructivism. In the previous chapter I articulated Nietzsche's aristocratic model of society, an important aspect of which is its facilitation in the production of creative genius. However, while defending the superiority of persons possessed of such genius, Nietzsche recognizes that it necessarily rests upon a foundation of society's mediocre masses. This particular dependence of the strong on the weak enriches our understanding of why Nietzsche spends so much time discussing alternative socio-political orders: to paraphrase Aristotle, being neither beast nor god, Nietzsche's creative elite is a political animal in continual need of society's material and ideational resources.[12]

The mutually dependent and constitutive relationship between society's elite and its masses may be divided into two parts: material needs; and identity formation. Most obvious is the material dependence of an aristocratic class on society's underclass. Nietzsche agrees with the Ancient Greek view that labor is a "disgrace" and anathema to creativity: "it is impossible for man, fighting for the continuance of bare existence, to

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11. Ibid., 228, emphasis in original.

12. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.2.1253a25.

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become an *artist*."[13] To fulfill their artistic responsibilities, creative geniuses must be

freed from having to procure for themselves the basic means of existence. This

antagonism between sustenance and art requires that for a society to be successful in the

production of vitally creative works it must establish a "strongly and soundly

consolidated mediocrity" that can be exploited.[14] In this way, Nietzsche's aristocracy

requires duties and responsibilities that bind society's classes to one another: the many

provide for the few so that these privileged persons can go on to create those life-

enhancing works responsible for society's elevation and flourishing. It is "around

inventors of new values that the world revolves," and as these creators are embedded in,

and dependent on, society, they are creatures *of* society, and therefore can only be

properly understood within this societal context.[15]

 But as Nietzsche's aristocratic model is essentially exploitative, where "the

misery of toiling men must still increase to make the production of the world of art

possible to a small number of Olympian men," it requires particular social identities in

order to function effectively.[16] Chief among the characteristics that distinguish the

healthy from unhealthy aristocracy is the identity this class holds with respect to its place

within the larger society: a "corrupt" aristocratic elite sees itself merely as a "*function*" of

society, whereas one of vitality believes itself to be society's "essence and highest

justification."[17] While independently affirming their experience of power, as befits the

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13. Nietzsche, "The Greek State," 7, emphasis in original.

14. Nietzsche, "The Anti-Christ," 191.

15. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 45.

16. Nietzsche, "The Greek State," 7.

17. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 152.

noble mode of valuation, Nietzsche's creative elite nonetheless require society in order to manifest the social identity as a community's "highest justification." This process of social identity formation occurs in the underclass as well as it comes to internalize an identity that legitimizes its place and function in society.[18]

As with Wendt, Nietzsche is quick to recognize the importance of ideas and their constitutiveness with respect to international relations: "No *people* could live without first evaluating."[19] According to Nietzsche, a community constructs its values and corresponding identity in large part as a response to conditions and interactions. Confronted by a "common danger," and standing "against common enemies," a people secures itself by cultivating "dangerous instincts, such as adventurousness, recklessness, vengefulness, slyness, rapacity, lust for power."[20] As with Wendt's Self-Other dynamic, Nietzsche argues for the inherent social quality of values by drawing our attention to the interaction involved in the process of their formation.

The process of communal value formation as described by Nietzsche draws our attention to a related issue with regard to slave and noble modes of value creation. Whereas the slave mode is presented as reactionary and negative in kind, the noble mode is often characterized as entirely positive and self-generative: the slave first looks to the other to determine what he does not want to be; the noble first looks to himself to determine what he is and wishes to continue being. However, when it comes to value

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18. Ibid., 54-55; Nietzsche, "The Greek State," 9-11.

19. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 51, emphasis in original.

20. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 87.

creation on the scale of communities, the line between these modes begins to blur, for the noble type requires society to engage in a degree of outward-looking value creation.

As with the West's slavish "religion of pity," according to which the greatest fear is suffering, and therefore the greatest goal of politics is the removal of all such misery from human affairs[21], the noble type's "grand feeling of distance" fears egalitarianism and its unhealthy relaxation of agonistic tensions.[22] Indeed, Nietzsche explicitly invokes fear as a beneficial mechanism whereby the noble type of valuation may re-emerge in Europe with the institution of a new aristocratic hierarchy: "I am talking about an increase in the Russian threat so great that Europe would have to decide to become equally threatening, that is, to make use of a new ruling caste…"[23] This fear is critical for the type of value creation Nietzsche envisions as essential to Europe's future re-vitalization. Without it, the West is likely to continue advancing into the age of the last man, fear of which Zarathustra himself exploits in an attempt to motivate a community to action: "Alas! There will come the time of the most despicable human, who is no longer able to despise himself. Behold! I show to you *the last human*."[24] Be it the noble or slave mode, value creation necessarily involves some degree of interaction with, and reaction to, one's environment. Given life's natural combativeness, such reactions are almost invariably inspired by a threat, perceived or real. As we have seen, Nietzsche understands values to be the most important means by which a community confronts such threats, as it is values, when properly crafted, that foster the development of those types

21. Ibid., 90.

22. Ibid., 150.

23. Ibid., 101.

24. Nietzsche *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 15.

of citizens most able to defend society against its enemies. In this way, "fear," as Nietzsche tells us, "is the mother of morality."[25]

Part II: Human Nature

The agreement between Wendt and Nietzsche regarding the constitutiveness of ideas extends to human nature, insofar as each thinker understands man's nature to be quite malleable. Rather than fixed, human nature is presented by both Nietzsche and Wendt as open to change, its content being shaped by factors external to man himself. Specifically, Nietzsche and Wendt pay close attention to the environments, along with their associated pressures, in which people live when explaining the actions of individuals and collectives. This confluence between Nietzsche and Wendt furthers the present chapter's argument that Nietzsche's international political theory, while not identical to, may be comfortably associated with, constructivism.

Of human nature, Wendt argues against classical realism's presentation of man as a creature of intrinsic selfishness and power-seeking. As a model for the latter, Wendt looks to Hans J. Morgenthau, "who thought that human nature contained a will to power or 'animus dominandi' that provided a constant well-spring for revisionism."[26] According to this classical realist approach, man is, and will always be, essentially selfish. As essential, this selfishness informs every human interest and action, from basic survival, to power seeking, to vanity. In conceiving of man in this way, classical realism focuses on how best to limit excesses of selfishness through institutional arrangements and balances of power.

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25. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 88.

26. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 105.

Contrary to realism, Wendt believes that human behavior is only marginally determined by unchanging characteristics:

> Human nature does not tell us whether people are good or bad, aggressive or pacific, power-seeking or power-conferring, even selfish or altruistic. These are all socially contingent, not materially essential.[27]

Wendt is quick to qualify this description with what he terms "rump materialism," the contents of which include those specific human needs he views as part of man as such.[28] However, while universal, the *behavioral* significance of these needs is affected by the extent of their satisfaction: "The effort to prevent the fear and anxiety associated with unmet needs is part of human nature, but fear and anxiety themselves are socially contingent."[29] A need's universality does not directly corresponding with a similarly universal type of behavior. Instead, human nature, to the extent it is understood as human behavior, is a function of the way and extent to which man's needs are met. Therefore, realism's man exists only in those social environments where the need for physical security is insufficiently fulfilled: selfishness, mistrust, and aggression are to be expected in an environment where fear of death is widespread. Given the varying levels of satisfaction across communities with respect to these needs, one should not assume permanence in human behavior: echoing Nietzsche's characterization of man as the "*animal that has yet to be established,*"[30] Wendt understands human behavior to be, "much more than other animals…underdetermined by our nature."[31]

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27. Ibid., 133.

28. Ibid., 131-2.

29. Ibid., 132.

30. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 56, emphasis in original.

31. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 133.

As with Wendt, Nietzsche conceives of social conditions as deeply influential when it comes to determining human nature's character: "A *species* comes into being by struggling for a long time with essentially similar *unfavourable* conditions."[32] Both individual and community are shaped in profound ways by those external conditions against which they struggle and hope to overcome. The formative role played by external conditions explains Nietzsche's lengthy analysis of the variations between Western civilization's nationally segregated cultures. Those external conditions of most importance involve the fears and dangers against which a community struggles, for its these that largely dictate the defining traits a people will cultivate as the means to survival and potentially overcoming.[33] Much like Wendt's constructivism, Nietzsche's theory of international politics presents human nature, and consequently international relations, as "underdetermined" in many key respects, for value creation is a process influenced by environmental factors that range from physical threats, to particularities of climate, to historical experiences. However, one critically important factor affecting human nature and value creation absent from Wendt's constructivism is nature itself, whose primal forces as represented by Nietzsche's concept of will-to-power inform the development of every organism.

Part III: Will-to-Power

While recognizing human nature's plasticity, Nietzsche denies that every permutation is equally conducive to health, and therefore equally valuable. As we have seen, Nietzsche finds in the processes of life certain primal forces and established

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32. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 158, emphasis in original.

33. Ibid., 87, #201; Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 51.

dynamics that must be recognized and adapted to if an organism is to thrive. With respect to man, in order to flourish will-to-power's duel drives of survival and vitality must be reconciled through the transfigurative powers of values, and formally instituted in the form of culture. When applied to international politics, will-to-power distinguishes Nietzsche's theory in key ways from Wendt's constructivism by establishing a reference point, albeit a dynamic one, from which to assess the legitimacy of alternative international systems: as Nietzsche understands competition and struggle to be intrinsic to life's processes, and essential to an organism's wellbeing, he judges those systems that foster such activity superior to those that do not. Furthermore, as cultural competition, specifically that involving values, is the most conducive to life-enhancing value creation, a combative international system comprised of culturally minded, and politically organized populations, is one most capable of elevating the human species as a whole.

At first glance, Wendt's rump materialism appears to address non-ideational interests and motivations similar to those found in Nietzsche's will-to-power. However, upon closer scrutiny the interests involved with this materialism ultimately prove to be derivative of society and its influences, rather than any irreducible core aspect of human nature, much less nature itself. In the second iteration of his rump materialism, Wendt supplements the physical needs identified in the first (sustenance, security…etc.) with those of perception and emotion. Of the latter, "self-esteem" is the most germane:

> [H]uman beings need to feel good about themselves. This is achieved primarily through social relationships, and as such its content can vary hugely, including 'needs' for honor, glory, achievement, recognition…power.[34]

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34. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 132.

According to Wendt, should a people's "need" for self-esteem be left unsatisfied, it may be motivated to pursue aggressive policies in the hope that victory will provide the desired affirmation. By explaining behaviors associated with rump materialism's needs as a function of the latter's satisfaction, Wendt undermines the independence of rump materialism itself: human action, domestic or international, is determined by the extent of society's ability to provide satisfaction. Rather than establishing the boundaries of human nature's plasticity, both iterations of this materialism merely present more factors open to change and variation.

While agreeing with Wendt that ideas are constitutive, and external conditions powerfully determinative, Nietzsche does not stop at human needs and their satisfaction when examining the character of human nature's variability. Whereas Wendt identifies a set of basic human needs, and acknowledges the wide variety in ways these needs may be met, Nietzsche understands these needs themselves to be derivative of, and dependent on, an even more basic element, will-to-power: this foundation, being, again, "simply the will to life," consists of what Nietzsche believes to be the natural world's essential animating impulses.[35] It is from study of these impulses as they operate in and through organisms, man included, that Nietzsche comes to his conclusions regarding the requirements of health: if certain behaviors are indicative of vitality, and others of degeneration, then it may be possible to determine which modes of life correspond with which degree of health. In this way, while not articulating a strict set of rules according to which all humans ought to live, Nietzsche nonetheless does present a body of general parameters that reflects what he understands as the basic dynamic processes underlying the natural

35. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 153.

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world. For this reason Nietzsche believes he is justified in moving on from merely describing and explaining human variety, to the considerably more engaging, and dangerous, work of evaluating it.

An example of the advancement made possible by Nietzsche is found in Wendt's analysis of Morgenthau, specifically the latter's *animus dominandi*. Owing to this *animus dominandi*, an insatiable lust for power embedded deep within man's nature, international politics is inherently conflictual. However, contrary to Morgenthau, rather than an ineradicable aspect of human nature, Wendt understands the *animus dominandi* to be the product of ideational interests, and therefore open to change. The behaviors Morgenthau attributes to an irrational and unquenchable drive, Wendt attributes to the unmet needs of rump materialism. Once satisfied, these needs will no longer give rise to the antagonistic behaviors Morgenthau argues are responsible for much of man's troubles. Consequently, international relations are not conflictual because man-qua-man is combative, but because there are idea-determined assumptions and identities operating on a systemic level: any theory's "conclusions about the effects of anarchy and the distribution of power *depend* on [motivational] assumptions."[36] Insofar as such motivations result from met or unmet needs, Morgenthau's *animus dominandi* expresses only one configuration of ideas and identities, rather than the essential basis of identities as such.

Moving beyond Wendt's reduction of human behavior to the satisfaction of basic human needs, Nietzsche presents will-to-power as a determinant of behavior that resides beneath these needs, and consequently influences their expression. For certain, Wendt

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36. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 105.

and Nietzsche agree that socially constructed ideas, identities, and values play a constitutive role in shaping human reality. But beneath their influence Nietzsche argues for the presence of nature's primal animating forces, the two most influential of which I identify as the drive for survival, and the drive for vitality. While ideas shape human relations, they cannot escape the necessities of health established by these forces: "not out of some morality or immorality, but because it is *alive*" a healthy organism "want[s] to grow, to reach out around itself, pull towards itself."[37] For Nietzsche, healthy organisms *necessarily* behave in this way because such is the character of life as such. Furthermore, as ideas, identities, and values are the products of living people, they presuppose the natural forces Nietzsche presents in will-to-power, and therefore are influenced by them. Indeed, much of Nietzsche's concern with, and criticism of, Western civilization is the extent to which it has engaged in identity formation and value creation without taking into account will-to-power's place and role.

A brief discussion of Wendt's "Kantian culture" will help to clarify the unique character of Nietzsche's prescriptive theory. Wendt's international "Kantian culture" is characterized by the "friendship" identities its members share. This "friendship" has two defining social qualities: first, "disputes will be settled without war or the threat of war"; and second, "[states] will fight as a team if the security of any one is threatened by a third party."[38] As essentially descriptive, Wendt's theory cannot asses the merits of this

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37. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 153, emphasis in original.

38. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 298.

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Kantian culture regarding human wellbeing, and its relative status with respect to alternative international arrangements.[39]

Founded on, and continually informed by, his insights into the essential character of life, Nietzsche's theory of international politics is of necessity prescriptive. Moving past the initial step of describing the alternative cultures an international system is open to adopting, Nietzsche presents a theory capable of judging and evaluating. To Nietzsche, Wendt's Kantian culture is unhealthy, for it cultivates relationships not conducive to human flourishing: "To refrain from injuring, abusing, or exploiting one another, to equate another person's will with our own," if expanded to a rule of society itself, is "a will to *deny* life, a principle for dissolution and decline."[40]

For peace to be healthy, it must exist between those adversaries who have proven themselves equals in both vitality of culture as well as will. Recalling the role of law in Nietzsche's aristocratic model, the goal is to minimize the useless expenditure of energy that results from battling equals. This impermanent peace is dependent on the status of the relevant parties, rather than on an unqualified commitment to peace as a principle, and should a shift in power occur, combat may resume. Additionally, peace of this sort frees actors to engage in life-elevating conflicts of culture with others, be they inferiors or perhaps even superiors depending on the hierarchical order. The indiscriminate

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39. In an article published several years after *Social Theory* titled "Why a World State is Inevitable," Wendt appears to move beyond the bounds of his theory's descriptive limitations by advocating on behalf of a world state. However, even here, Wendt remains reluctant to present a set of normative standards: "the theory is progressivist, although in an explanatory rather than normative sense." (Alexander Wendt, "Why a World State is Inevitable," *European Journal of International Relations* 9, no. 4 (Dec. 2003): 491). Instead of presenting grounds demonstrating the world state's superiority, Wendt relies on its inevitability to validate his supportive position, as the article's title suggests. In contrast, Nietzsche presents a general normative basis, will-to-power, by which one may judge alternative domestic and international political configurations.

40. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 152, emphasis in original.

"friendship" of Kantian culture would "deny life" in the sense meant by Nietzsche in that its strictures on behavior would prevent vital communities from acting in ways consistent with their health. In Nietzsche's theory of international politics, friendship, far from a universal ideal, is a transient privilege meant not to end conflict, but to make it more productive.

Part IV: Nietzsche's Hobbesian Culture

Mindful of the distance that now exists between Nietzsche and Wendt, I would like to conclude this chapter dedicated to examining the constructivist qualities of Nietzsche's theory by identifying a space for it within Wendt's constructivism. To this end, in what follows I argue that Wendt's "Hobbesian culture," once properly modified, quite effectively illustrates the general character of the healthy and vital international system called for by Nietzsche's theory.

An international system animated by "Hobbesian culture" is one that embraces "enmity" as a good: antagonistic relationships are valued as productive, rather than lamented as wasteful or immoral. Such a culture closely resembles Nietzsche's aristocratic international system in which struggle is actively embraced, and rights are a function of cultural power. As the latter system is sustained by socially created ideas and identities, it demonstrates the constructivist character of Nietzsche's theory of international politics.

One of the most important contributions of Wendt's constructivism to international political theory is its problematizing of international anarchy. Unlike those theories that characterize international anarchy as possessing an immutable logic, Wendt's seeks to destabilize this logic by proving anarchy's malleability: an international

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system's "anarchy is a nothing" because anarchy depends on the shared ideas and identities of the system's relevant actors.[41] Each of the three international cultures Wendt discusses (Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian) correspond to a particular body of shared ideas and identities that in turn produce a corresponding anarchy.

Of Hobbesian culture, Wendt describes it as one defined by other-as-enemy identities: states "operate on the principle of *sauve qui peut* and kill or be killed."[42] Viewed as potentially lethal rivals, neighbors are never fully trusted, and therefore relations across the system tend to depend primarily on prevailing power balances: strength inspires fear among weaker states, and tentative accommodations among equals.

If sufficiently internalized across a system, Hobbesian "enmity" as a state identity transforms Hobbesian culture into one analogous to Nietzsche's aristocratic model: "deep revisionism seeks to remove the Other from the game, enmity needs the Other to constitute its identity."[43] In this system, conflict acquires a constitutive significance insofar as it provides actors with the means to define themselves. Here, not simply a state's identity, but its standards of excellence, are determined by the struggles in which it engages: "an end in itself," competition is "'right,' 'glorious,' and 'virtuous.'"[44]

Like this enmity, Nietzsche's international political theory esteems agonistic relations above all others. So important is this agonism for health that Nietzsche seeks to redefine the concepts "friend" and "enemy": "In one's friend one should have one's best

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41. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 309.

42. Ibid., 265.

43. Ibid., 273.

44. Ibid., 274.

enemy. You should be closest to him in your heart when you strive against him."[45] As struggle, conflict, and overcoming are activities intrinsic to life, and therefore essential to human wellbeing, to be a friend is to "*be able* to be an enemy."[46] The society of peers found in Nietzsche's aristocratic model is populated by such "friends," owing to the noble mode of valuation they perform: the noble type celebrates himself when he accommodates another, for in the other he sees his own power, and should the other exceed him in power, he will seek his own increase, for he wishes to celebrate himself on this new, elevated level. A society of this type, be it domestic or international, promotes vitality by allowing healthy organisms to act in ways consistent with their vitality. These ways make friends of enemies as it is by opposing these enemies that one betters oneself.

At first glance, Wendt's Lockean culture has much in common with Nietzsche's ideal international system. Structured according to the shared identity of "rival," Lockean states see one another as "competitors who will use violence to advance their interests but refrain from killing each other."[47] According to Wendt's characterization, this culture is animated by struggle rather than peace, as it fosters endless competition among its participants. States remain egoists, and therefore international security remains one of self-help: "states are still self-regarding about their security but are concerned primarily with absolute gains rather than relative gains. One's position in the distribution of power is less important."[48]

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45. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 49.

46. Ibid., emphasis in original.

47. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 258.

48. Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization*, 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 400.

Lockean culture's preoccupation with absolute over relative gains is justified by its conception of rights: "rivals expect each other to act as if they recognize their sovereignty, their 'life and liberty,' as a *right*, and therefore not to try to conquer or dominate them."[49] In addition to accepting sovereignty as an idea and aspect of identity, Wendt's Lockean state relies upon the authority of international law when asserting its claims to sovereignty and non-intervention. Understood "as a *right*" essential to statehood, sovereignty relaxes the struggle of international politics: with their lives protected, communities become less concerned with balances of power, and more concerned with what other systems would consider secondary concerns such as economic success.

To Nietzsche, the fatal flaw of Lockean culture is its lack of discrimination when according rights. By delinking rights from merit, Lockean culture fosters unhealthy relationships between communities by disregarding the importance of hierarchy: "we have duties only towards our peers," and such are those who possess "truly similar strength and standards."[50] There are no unconditional rights in Nietzsche's international politics because rights, if they are to be life-enhancing rather than life-degrading, must reflect the ever-shifting distributions of vitality and will among actors.

Consequently, international law cannot be relied upon to enforce rights. Genuine law is for Nietzsche that "which rests upon contracts between equals," and therefore "holds good so long as the power of the parties to the contract remains equal or

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49. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 279, emphasis in original.

50. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 155; 152.

similar."[51] Law, both domestic and international, emerges from, and is determined by, the relationships of power within a system; it is a product of, not an independent remedy for, such relations. Nietzsche resists institutionalizing rights and laws, as such a process threatens to rob culture of its dynamism and receptivity: to remain life-affirming, rights and laws must be allowed to change alongside changes in the balances of cultural power, as it is these balances that are responsible for the legitimacy of both.

Unlike Lockean culture, Hobbesian culture embraces the flux of international politics and its norms. According to Wendt, if sufficiently internalized, Hobbesian culture promotes an unending competition between states: "[they] all know that this is how the game is played and that it is only a matter of time until they are under attack again."[52] While not necessarily the extreme of kill-or-be-killed, Hobbesian culture promotes a belief among states that they must continually prove themselves if they wish to preserve their current status as sovereign and independent. In this way, the right of sovereignty is contingent on the merit of those claiming it.

Nietzsche recognizes the importance of rights for society, but approaches them in a way far different than that of Lockean culture. While "mutual reverence and rights are the *essence* of all society," their content and extent of applicability are conditional.[53] In contrast to peers, persons and communities "may treat those of lesser rank, anything foreign, as [they] think best…or in any event 'beyond good and evil'."[54] For Nietzsche, restraint of the proper and healthy sort depends on relative balances of creative vitality,

51. Nietzsche, "The Wanderer and Hid Shadow," 206.

52. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 271.

53. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 162, emphasis in original.

54. Ibid., 155.

which with respect to communities is expressed and represented by culture. A "right" has no intrinsic force, as its behavioral significance is due to the will and power that continually legitimizes it. Wendt echoes this understanding when he says of rights that they are "social capacities that are conferred on actors by others' 'permission' to do certain things."[55]

While much is shared between Nietzsche's aristocratic international system and that of Wendt's Hobbesian culture, each operates according to different conceptions and metrics of power. States in Wendt's Hobbesian culture are occupied by considerations of material power, and consequently understand their competitions of enmity in terms of military capability. For example, when a Lockean system's "live and let live" norm falls into disrepute, it "quickly degenerate[s] into a Hobbesian [system]."[56] By distinguishing between international systems according to their respective "death rate," Wendt demonstrates this bias toward material conflict.[57]

Moving beyond Wendt's materialist approach, Nietzsche's international political theory centers on cultural power, and argues for the superiority of cultural conflict. For Nietzsche, international politics' value lies in the productive competitions of ideas and values it facilitates: the international system offers an invaluable opportunity for mankind to elevate itself by engaging in ever-higher levels of cultural struggle on ever-grander scales. This is the spirit in which Nietzsche examines Europe's various cultures, most notably in *Beyond Good and Evil*: book VIII of that work is a probing analysis of each

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55. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 280.

56. Ibid., 287.

57. Ibid., 105.

country's cultural strengths and weaknesses, with close attention payed to the ways in which each culture may contribute to, or detract from, the health of European man. The glaring absence of any substantial discussion of military capabilities despite the armed conflicts these countries have been routinely engaged in speaks not only to Nietzsche's overarching interest in culture, but also to his opinion that strength of arms in itself has little to do with creative power and health in international relations.

Similarly, inter-cultural competition must be kept in mind if one is to properly understand Nietzsche's interest in Russia. Europe's "greatest danger" is not the Russian empire's military, but its "energy to will," which "has long been stored up in reserve…[and] waits ominously to be released…"[58] However, rather than call for a reduction or destruction of the Russian danger, Nietzsche hopes for its *increase*, again, within the context of culture: while Russia may decline as a result of "entanglements in Asia," internal revolts," and "parliamentary idiocy," the outcome more to Nietzsche's "liking" is an "increase in the Russian threat so great that Europe would have to decide to become equally threatening… that is, to make use of a new ruling caste in order *to gain a will*…"[59] Consistent with the connection argued for in the present study between cultural competition and creative vitality, Europe's future wellbeing depends not only on international politics, but an international politics animated by cultural competitions of unprecedented scale.

In this way, Nietzsche's international culture distinguishes itself from Wendt's Hobbesian culture: whereas the latter looks to military capacities, Nietzsche's places

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58. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 101.

59. Ibid.

greater importance on cultural resources, for the world revolves "around inventors of new values," not stockpiles of arms.[60] Creative will, "grand feeling of distance," artistic genius: these are the metrics of the type of power Nietzsche's international system considers when according rights and privileges. The state that defends a culture rich in such qualities deserves international recognition, just as one that pampers the "herd" deserves to be overcome.

While Nietzsche's Hobbesian international system is inherently conflictual, and to this extent realist, it is such by virtue of constructivism's, not realism's reasoning. For realism, international politics takes the form it does as a consequence of man's unchanging nature:

> Political realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature…Human nature, in which the laws of politics have their roots, has not changed since the classical philosophies of China, India, and Greece endeavored to discover these laws.[61]

This unchanging nature inevitably leads men into conflict unless prevented by the wise administration of political restraints.

Unlike realism, Nietzsche's theory of international politics understands relations to rest upon specific identities that have been adopted by relevant actors. Consistent with constructivism, Nietzsche views these identities and their corresponding values to be products of local experiences and subjective interpretations: "Knowing means: 'to place one's self in relation to something,' to feel one's self conditioned by something and one's self conditioning it."[62] This dynamic subjectivity means that an international system's

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60. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 45.

61. Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 7th edition (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2006), 4.

62. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 267.

character depends on the identities and roles crafted by its members in the course of their ongoing interactions. The human nature from which realism derives its "objective laws" is for Nietzsche only one among many possibilities, each of which requires sustaining identities and values. But whereas Wendt's constructivism presents man as infinitely malleable, with each variation being equally legitimate, Nietzsche's theory presents health as a standard of judgment, and will-to-power as the most fundamental of grounding realities: though human nature is characterized by remarkable plasticity, the basic processes of life's dynamics are not, and therefore to thrive, man must cultivate modes of existence that resonate with these underlying forces.

Conclusion

The present chapter has sought to situate Nietzsche's international political theory within the established field of international politics. Owing to its agreement with constructivism regarding several critical premises, I argue that Nietzsche's theory may be identified as constructivist in character. Most important of these premises is the view that human nature, behavior, and international relations are open to a wide variety of forms. According to Alexander Wendt's constructivism, man is "underdetermined" in light of the constitutive role played by ideas, identities, and experiences. Nietzsche makes a similar argument when he underscores the importance of creation and invention in determining the ways in which man experiences the world: "[man] is *not* the result of a special design, a will, a purpose…*We* invented the concept 'purpose.'"[63] For both thinkers, ideas are constitutive in the sense of determining the meaning of power, security, wealth…etc., and therefore the subjective reality of existence itself.

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63. Nietzsche, "Twilight of the Idols," 65, emphasis in original.

But Nietzsche's theory is not a perfect fit with respect to Wendt's constructivism, and I have articulated several points of incongruity. Mindful of will-to-power's connection to human flourishing, Nietzsche's theory includes important normative considerations that result in significant qualifications to human plasticity: as an animal *inextricably bou*nd to life's processes, man is not absolutely free, and in order to thrive he

CHAPTER SEVEN

The End of International Politics: Post-God Liberalism and Universal Human Rights

Introduction

Owing to the complexity and far-ranging character of Nietzsche's thought, the present study, despite being focused on Nietzsche's international political theory, has necessarily covered a number of related ideas and issues. In order to understand this theory, one must understand the basic components of which it is composed: Nietzsche's theory of international politics is informed by, and the result of, his theory of will-to-power, which privileges creative vitality over comfortable security. As such vitality is most forcefully fostered by ideationally-rooted conflict, culture, state, and the international system are understood to be both natural and essential features of human life. However, while the present study has established not only the founding elements of Nietzsche's theory, but also its specific content and place within the larger field of international political thought, one significant issue has yet to be directly addressed: the challenge Nietzsche's illiberal theory of international politics poses to the present liberal international order.

As Nietzsche's thought is fundamentally illiberal, his theory of international politics is similarly so. Though Nietzsche rejects liberalism in general, this chapter focusses on a specific iteration I term post-God liberalism. Though sharing much with liberalism with respect to values and political commitments, post-God liberalism refers to that type which has taken shape as a consequence of, and reaction to, God's death.

Specifically, it is a liberalism untethered to religious or metaphysical foundations, instead acquiring its legitimacy from the implicit, quasi-instinctual moral dispositions of the modern Western man. Most forcefully manifested in the democratic values of individual freedom and equality, these dispositions are a continuation and distillation of the "herd animal morality" that Nietzsche associates with the slave revolt in morality more than two millennia ago. Furthermore, insofar as this morality expands beyond domestic societies, and increasingly comes to determine the norms of the international system, from Nietzsche's perspective, post-God liberalism threatens to undermine the beneficial effects of international politics by rendering impossible the life-enhancing conflicts prescribed by his international political theory.

My argument is composed of two parts: an analysis of modern liberalism as understood by Nietzsche, and its post-God qualities; and the implications of this post-God liberalism for international politics according to Nietzsche's theory of international politics. To begin Part One, I introduce the concept of post-God liberalism within the context of Nietzsche's herd animal morality. Specifically, post-God liberalism is the historically conditioned political expression of Nietzsche's more general idea of herd animal morality: post-God liberalism seeks to satisfy the instincts of the slave revolt's herd morality in ways reflective of Western civilization's post-God context. At this point I introduce the political thought of John Rawls, whose theory of democratic society, and the intuitions upon which it rests, offer an instructive articulation of this post-God liberalism. As I argue, Rawls's "fundamental intuitive ideas" of freedom and equality, which he attributes to democratic society's "public political culture," are the equivalents of those "modern ideas" Nietzsche traces to herd morality, ideas that champion freedom

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and equality in order to ensure the dominance of the weak over the strong, and tranquility over struggle. Furthermore, just as the values of Nietzsche's modern European herd morality have become untethered from metaphysical and religious foundations, the fundamental intuitive ideas of Rawls's public political culture reside outside of, and do not rely on, comprehensive doctrines for their authority: Rawls's democratic citizen is animated by normative intuitions whose validity and primacy are experienced as self-evident.

In Part Two, I examine the internationalization of post-God liberalism. To facilitate our understanding of this, I examine John Rawls's *The Law of Peoples*, in which he adapts and expands his theory of political liberalism from domestic to international society. I argue that the values imbedded within, and the universal ambitions of, Rawls's Society of Peoples are consistent with those of post-God liberalism: inspired by herd instincts, the herd morality of post-God liberalism declares "'I am Morality itself, and nothing else is!'"[1] In this regard I draw attention to the doctrine of universal human rights, and respond to post-God liberalism's globalization from the perspective of Nietzsche's theory of international politics.

Next, I assess the implications of post-God liberalism's potential hegemony over the international system from within Nietzsche's theory of international politics. According to this theory, two principle dangers arise from such an expansion of influence and control. First, to the extent that herd animal morality is that of the last man, and that its establishment actively encourages his propagation, the increasing appeal of post-God liberalism's rights and values threatens to spread the last man to non-Western societies,

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1. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and* Evil, 89.

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thereby facilitating their cultural decline. Second, and more importantly with respect to Nietzsche's theory of international politics, the global hegemony of any single set of values or normatively consequential instincts robs the international system of the diversity necessary to the life-enhancing struggles Nietzsche understands as key to human flourishing. In the case of post-God liberalism, this unhealthy possibility is made particularly dangerous, as this morality is exceptional in its misunderstanding of, and estrangement from, the fundamental animating dynamics of life.

As the final chapter of this study into Nietzsche's theory of international politics, I conclude with a brief summary of its main components.

Part I: Post-God Liberalism

Herd Morality as Democratic Values

Though Nietzsche rejects liberalism in general, he takes particular issue with its most recent incarnation, what I term post-God liberalism. This species of liberalism is markedly unhealthy from a Nietzschean perspective due to its universal levelling of mankind through the mechanism of equal rights, and its unqualified aversion to suffering and struggle. To properly appreciate this critique, we must understand the historical character of post-God liberalism.

While Nietzsche's philosophy is based upon insights into what he understands as the fundamental dynamics of life, it recognizes that historical, social, and political experiences have profound consequences for the ways in which these dynamics are related to, and expressed by, man. For this reason, Nietzsche gives special attention to Western civilization's origins and enduring influences: Western man has been shaped in

deep and abiding ways by two millennia of Judeo-Christian conditioning in the forms of religion, philosophy, and culture. It is this historical experience that makes the Death of God such a cataclysmic event, for this death entails the destabilization and eventual collapse of all that Western man has come to rely on with respect to the world and his place in it.

Faced with such a fate, Nietzsche argues that the West must overcome the latest manifestation of its Judeo-Christian heritage, a collection of moral intuitions and political practices I term post-God liberalism. By this term I mean to emphasize the historical context in which it exists, and to which it applies. As the present chapter argues, the type of liberalism coming to dominate Western civilization is one born of God's death, and therefore ought to be understood in the light of that event. It is not strictly speaking a secular liberalism, nor one necessarily opposed to immutable truths akin to those found in Christianity; indeed, this liberalism continues the cause of Judeo-Christian tradition: "the *democratic* movement is Christianity's heir."[2] What distinguishes post-God liberalism is that its defining values are no longer tethered to the theological and metaphysical foundations of its predecessors, foundations that in earlier times were necessary to legitimize and justify those values. In place of these foundations, post-God liberalism derives its legitimacy from the physiological conditioning performed by Judeo-Christian tradition: man instinctively and habitually manifests the tradition's tenets in his behavior and ethical dispositions without feeling the need to call upon transcendent sources of authority. This turn away from metaphysics is a direct consequence of God's death, for, as discussed in Chapter Four, Western man has become increasingly disenchanted with

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2. Ibid., emphasis in original.

other-worldly doctrines, preferring instead the comforts and assurances of this world as provided by the natural sciences.[3]

Critical to post-God liberalism is the extent to which the values of herd morality as described by Nietzsche have become ever more intuitive, unreflective, and, consequently, politically influential. In Nietzsche's estimation, though religion has largely receded into the corners of Western society, at least with respect to its being experienced with passion and zeal, the effective content of Judeo-Christian morals have continued their deepening permeation of Western civilization. Nowhere is this spread and influence more evident than in the seemingly irreconcilable and over-heated political movements of modern Europe: despite their outward hostility towards one another, as well as their seemingly incompatible politics, among the "anarchist dogs," "peaceably industrious democrats," and "socialists," Nietzsche perceives a shared "fundamental and instinctive enmity towards every form of society other than *autonomous* herds."[4] In keeping with this herd morality's Judeo-Christian heritage, these political movements champion equality so as to guard against those strong enough to assert an "exceptional claim," and take pride "in their mortal hatred of any suffering."[5] Nietzsche is unsurprised by this continuity between Judeo-Christian morality and the normative convictions of Western political movements because he understands the latter to be the former's logical successor:

> Indeed, with the help of a religion that played along with and flattered the most sublime desires of the herd animal, we have reached the point of finding an ever

3. Ibid., 52.

4. Ibid., 90, emphasis in original.

5. Ibid.

more visible expression of this morality even in political and social structures: the *democratic* movement is Christianity's heir.[6]

Consistent with the transformative influence Nietzsche attributes to Judeo-Christian tradition with respect to man's physiological constitution, following the Death of God Western civilization found it all-but impossible to create a new system of values. Re-christened as "modern ideas," Western man has been able to retain possession of his comfortably familiar values in a manner that, at least partially, responds to the post-God reality of his historical moment. No longer explicitly bound to any religion or metaphysical system, these values have assumed the status of self-evident truths, convictions so ubiquitous and unreflectively endorsed that to question them is to become a "*criminal*."[7] Understood in this way, the values of such post-God herd morality are experienced by citizens of Western democracies as intuitive knowledge: "Europeans nowadays *know* that which Socrates thought he did not know…people 'know' what is good and evil."[8] However, for all of their force and vigor, Nietzsche is clear that such intuitions are born from an instinct particular to a type of human animal, "the instinct of man the herd animal that thinks it knows, that glorifies itself and calls itself good whenever it allots praise or blame."[9]

Western man remains committed to Judeo-Christian tradition's moral program: "*Morality in Europe today is herd animal morality*."[10] Also referred to as the "morality

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6. Ibid., 89.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid, emphasis in original.

of timidity," this morality of the meek judges suffering an injustice of the highest order, and strength a threat to the weak: "everything that raises an individual above the herd and causes his neighbour to fear him is henceforth called *evil*; a proper, modest, conforming, equalizing mentality, what is *average* in the scale of desires gains a moral name and respect."[11] Such moral intuitions have as their objective the preservation and security of the many, as opposed to the cultivation and elevation of the exceptional.

Man's herd instinct, nurtured by Judeo-Christian tradition, most notably with the slave revolt in morality whereby the average and weak were elevated above the exceptional and strong, continues to dominate Western civilization in the post-God environment of democratic politics. Modern Western democracy's granting of equal rights to all, and general commitment to the safety and comfort of every citizen, is for Nietzsche but the political institutionalization of herd morality. As this morality opposes hierarchies, suffering, and strife, it necessarily exacerbates Western man's ongoing misunderstanding of, and estrangement from, the natural world's fundamental dynamics, which alone are responsible for his vitality. Re-examined through the lens of herd instinct, and situated within an unfolding post-God context, Western liberalism, and the democratic politics it entails, facilitates the "degeneration and diminution of man into a perfect herd animal (or, as they call it, man in a 'free society')…[the] beastialization of man into a dwarf animal with equal rights and claims…"[12] In this way, rather than constituting an overcoming of God's death by way of new life-enhancing values, post-

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11. Ibid, 88, emphasis in original.

12. Ibid., 92.

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God liberalism as manifested in Western democracies leaves man mired in an unhealthy herd morality uniquely suited for the cultivation of last men.

Rawls's Democratic Culture of Intuitions

In the political writings of John Rawls, we are presented with a clear and compelling articulation of the moral sentiments and political commitments of modern Western democratic society. In what follows I make the case that Rawls's account tracks quite closely to Nietzsche's description of herd morality, and the post-God liberalism it informs. By discussing Rawls in this context, not only are we provided an opportunity to bring Nietzsche into direct conversation with contemporary political thought, but also to highlight the relevance of Nietzsche's international political theory by showcasing its applicability to one of the most important issues in the field, human rights.

As with the herd morality of Nietzsche's last man and post-God liberalism, Rawls's theory of political justice is born of, and speaks to, a particular historical experience, namely, democracy in the West.   For our purposes, the most important development of this history is what Rawls calls the "fact of reasonable pluralism": a "basic feature of democracy" is the "fact that a plurality of conflicting reasonable comprehensive doctrines, religious, philosophical, and moral, is the normal result of its culture of free institutions."[13] As with all relatively open liberal societies, there exists at any time a number of competing comprehensive doctrines. Insofar as each of these doctrines involves an identifiably distinct system of values, world view, or ideal of societal order, pluralism as such poses a difficulty with respect to social cohesion and governance. In the case of democratic society, this problem requires certain rudimentary

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13. Rawls, John, *Political Liberalism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 441.

limits on the types of comprehensive doctrines allowed to compete for status and political influence: "fundamental religious doctrines, the doctrine of the divine right of monarchs and the various forms of aristocracy" are deemed illegitimate because they "fail to establish the equal basic liberties" essential to liberal democracy.[14]

Over time, Rawls argues, the emergence and steady influence of those rights and liberties associated with liberal democracy have resulted in the transformation of pluralism as such into "reasonable pluralism." Gradually, the precarious stability of simple pluralism's "modus vivendi" creates a space in which a new understanding of, and relationship to, democratic society's political principles is cultivated: "as citizens come to appreciate what a liberal conception achieves, they acquire an allegiance to it, an allegiance that becomes stronger over time."[15] This increasing salience of liberal society's political conception of justice results in a change in the comprehensive doctrines themselves, as their hierarchical position with respect to that conception is reversed: for "many if not most citizens…[s]hould an incompatibility later be recognized between the political conception and their comprehensive doctrines, then they might very well adjust or revise the latter rather than reject the political conception."[16] The specific revisions Rawls has in mind involve the incorporation, and ultimate elevation, of those liberal democratic principles fundamental to his political conception of justice. First among these are the freedom and equality of citizens: "[A]ll reasonable doctrines affirm such a society with its corresponding political institutions: equal basic rights and liberties

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14. Ibid., 483.

15. Rawls, John, *Justice as Fairness: a Restatement*. Edited by Erin Kelly. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 194.

16. Ibid., 193.

for all citizens."[17] In this way, merely comprehensive doctrines become reasonable

comprehensive doctrines, thus creating a new and powerful foundation for political

solidarity within societies marked by ideological and normative variety.

To locate and identify those values he marks as essential to this transformation,

Rawls looks to democratic society's "political culture": "[T]he political culture of a

democratic society, which has worked reasonably well over a considerable period of

time, normally contains, at least implicitly, certain fundamental intuitive ideas from

which it is possible to work up a political conception of justice suitable for a

constitutional regime."[18] Composed of "certain familiar ideas," this public political

culture provides a sound "philosophical and moral basis" for the conception of justice

Rawls argues is most consistent with the ideals of democratic society.[19] Of critical

importance is the experienced quality of these ideas, and the role they play in guiding the

thoughts and actions of citizens. Rather than explicitly identified, "such ideas are not

often expressly formulated, nor their meanings clearly marked out."[20] Indeed, Rawls sees

it as one of his tasks to "organize" these intuitions "into a coherent political conception of

justice."[21] In this way, as a "shared fund of implicitly recognized basic ideas and

principles," the public political culture constitutes a resource of presumptively valid

17. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 483.

18. Ibid., 38, n41.

19. Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, 5.

20. Ibid., 6.

21. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 8.

convictions upon which political institutions may be built, and against which political

practices may be judged.[22]

Of the many ideas found in the public political culture, Rawls singles out three as

particularly important with regards to the political structure of society, and the self-

perceptions of its citizens. These ideas are "society as a fair system of social

cooperation," the freedom and equality of citizens, and "a society effectively regulated by

a public conception of justice."[23] Taken together, these three "fundamental intuitive

ideas" have a powerful effect on a democratic society's political structure, for they render

utterly unpalatable alternative organizational models, such as a "fixed natural order,"

ecclesiastical supremacy, or aristocratic hierarchy.[24]

Ultimately, it is the intuitive nature of these ideas that renders them so important

to Rawls's project, for by being such they are able to provide an independent sphere of

ideational consensus that allows a pluralistic democratic people to remain faithful to its

conscience. This is accomplished in two intimately related ways. First, with what Rawls

calls a "reasonable overlapping consensus," reasonable comprehensive doctrines, despite

their myriad doctrinal differences, nonetheless endorse the critical fundamental intuitive

conviction of society as a fair system of cooperation: "The hope is that this idea, with its

index of primary goods arrived at from within, can be the focus of a reasonable

overlapping consensus."[25] Agreement on these points is possible because, as we have

seen, reasonable comprehensive doctrines by definition contain within their system of

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22. Ibid., 9.

23. Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, 5.

24. Ibid., 6.

25. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 40.

values a positive embrace of the fundamental intuitive ideas Rawls understands as essential to liberal democracy.[26] This is both the necessary and sufficient condition for their designation as "reasonable."

The nature of agreement in a reasonable overlapping consensus, being centered on society's fundamental intuitive ideas as opposed to an accidental intersection of principles, brings us to the second way in which these ideas are critical to Rawls's conception of contemporary liberal democratic society. Owing to its derivation from the fundamental intuitive ideas of society's public political culture, the political conception of justice to which reasonable comprehensive doctrines subscribe is "freestanding": "the idea of a political conception of justice as a freestanding view starting from the fundamental ideas of a democratic society and presupposing no particular wider doctrine."[27] The traditional method of reaching accord between irreconcilable comprehensive doctrines for the sake of social stability involves examining the doctrines for commonly held values, and then working these values up into a system capable of regulating key aspects of political behavior. However, while this may produce a practicable arrangement, so long as each faction continues to understand these values from within its respective comprehensive doctrine, society's stability remains precarious, for it is the irreconcilable doctrines that determine the meaning and significance of the values upon which social order depends. Furthermore, the comprehensive doctrines, rather than society's conscience, determine the principles of justice according to which government's institutions will operate: justice, far from an ideal around which society

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26. Ibid., 483.

27. Ibid., 40.

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ought to be organized, is instead merely a pragmatic collection of fortuitously similar values.

In contrast, by being "freestanding," Rawls's political conception of justice is not "political in the wrong way," for it is neither derived from, nor dependent on, any comprehensive doctrine. Instead, as its content is drawn from the public political culture's fund of normative intuitions, modern democratic society's conception of justice is able to "leave aside comprehensive doctrines that now exist or that have existed, or that might exist…"[28] In Rawls's democratic society, justice is not a question of this or that comprehensive doctrine, but rather the independent intuitive convictions shared by individual citizens. Indeed, it is against these convictions that society's various systems of belief, be they religious or otherwise, are judged, and under the pressure of their intuitive certitude are these beliefs either made reasonable, or cast from political life. Rawls's political conception of justice is "freestanding" because the intuitive convictions upon which it is based are themselves freestanding, existing independent of comprehensive doctrines.

Nietzsche's Illiberalism

According to Nietzsche's historical narrative, the slave revolt in morality of Judaism and later Christianity, being a herd morality, set the West on a two-thousand year quest to rid the life of man of inequality and exploitation. With the Death of God, the convictions instilled and cultivated by Judeo-Christian tradition were transferred into the secular causes of democracy and political liberalism. As we have seen, Nietzsche understands calls for equality and the eradication of suffering as springing from the

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28. Ibid., 40.

instincts of a herd animal: such a creature, not possessed of great vital power itself, naturally fears those that do, and so crafts a morality and corresponding socio-political organization with which to protect itself.

Not only are the values Rawls places at the center of modern liberal democracy the same as those found in Nietzsche's modern herd morality, but the way in which they are experienced is similar as well. Whereas in earlier times, herd morality's values were directly tied to, and understood by their adherents to be, explicitly dependent on religious doctrines, today they require no such support. Instead, the moral rectitude of equality and freedom is no longer a matter of belief, but rather, one of intuitive certainty: today "people 'know' what is good and evil.'"[29] Such is the case for citizens of Rawls's "well-ordered society": as "freestanding…presupposing no particular wider doctrine," these people's fundamental intuitive ideas no longer need religion to imbue them with legitimacy and vigor.[30] In modern democratic society, freedom, equality, and tolerance are "settled convictions" held in common, rather than claims to be asserted and defended.[31]

Nietzsche agrees with Rawls that in the West such matters are "settled," but whereas Rawls takes this as a mark of progress worthy of celebration, Nietzsche views such certainty as mistaken and damaging. To Nietzsche's understanding, "equal rights for all," is a "poison" sapping the West of its vitality and creative will by further estranging it from those forces that dictate a species' flourishing.[32] Consistent with its

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29. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 89.

30. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 40.

31. Ibid., 8.

32. Nietzsche, "The Anti-Christ," 168.

Judeo-Christian heritage, this post-God liberalism pursues the values and interests of herd morality, its adherents "united in their tough resistance to every exceptional claim, every exceptional right and privilege."[33] Whereas Rawls sees this resistance as a noble stand against injustice, Nietzsche sees it as the deleterious domination of unhealthy instincts.

Against such life-depleting values, and the political institutions they inform, Nietzsche proposes values and forms of social organization aimed at re-invigorating Western civilization. Being beyond good and evil, the natural forces that underlie and animate the natural world are often, and for good reason, experienced by individuals as hostile and brutal: life's endless struggles, the ceaseless conflicts of organisms for not only survival, but power and the privilege of its expression, leave one exhausted and in search of relief. But as such retreat brings with it degeneration and decline, Nietzsche proposes and alternative approach, one practiced with great skill by the Ancient Greeks. Rather than wall one's self off from life's essential character, one might employ man's unique creative talents to transfigure an otherwise inhospitable reality into one that inspires and elevates. Nietzsche's artifice Nature is such a transfiguration, whose image is meant to guide a post-God West in the creation of politically consequential values that foster vitality.[34] Whereas post-God liberalism, exemplified by Rawls's theory of democratic society, pursues the goals of herd morality, namely, safety and security, Nietzsche's post-God aristocratic order, informed by will-to-power, aims to re-engage society with creative struggle.

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33. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 90.

34. I direct the reader to Chapter Two, and its discussion of the creator of the future as modeled by the character of Zarathustra. In his idea of redemption, Zarathustra crafts a vision of the world and human will whereby man is granted new and unprecedented powers over his past and future. This is in part a fantastical proposal, and yet, if fervently believed, may nonetheless inspire deeds of great creative force by liberating man from the oppressiveness of guilt.

To this end, such an order recognizes the necessity of exploitation and inequality, for such are natural and inescapable features of organic existence: the vital organism "will want to grow, to reach out around itself, pull towards itself, gain the upper hand…because it is *alive*, and because life simply *is* the will to power."[35] The morality born of this insight stands in stark contrast to that of post-God liberalism:

> [M]aster morality is foreign and embarrassing to current taste because of the severity of its fundamental principle: that we have duties only towards our peers, and that we may treat those of lower rank…as we think best…[36]

Political organization is so important to Nietzsche in the context of values and the future of Western civilization because those human capacities critical to the vitality of Western civilization are not only rare, but seemingly random in their occurrence: Nietzsche hopes to teach the West that "the future depends on their human will," and thus through "great risk-taking and joint experiments in discipline and breeding…nonsense and coincidence" will no longer dictate man's fortunes.[37]

Such, then, is the significance of aristocratic organization, both domestic and international, for by means of it the exceptional are educated in the "*grand feeling of distance*" that strengthens their will, and the broader population in the greater purposes of society.[38] Contrary to Rawls and Western civilization writ large, who see in the expansion of rights an advance on earlier ages, Nietzsche perceives them as symptoms of

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35. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 153.

36. Ibid., 155.

37. Ibid., 90.

38. Ibid., 150, emphasis in original.

decline: "progress" of this sort is "a false idea," for "onward development is not by *any* means, by any necessity the same thing as elevation, advance, strengthening."[39]

<p style="text-align:center">*Part II: International Post-God Liberalism*</p>

In light of Nietzsche's interest in and concern over liberalism's expansion of equality and rights in the domestic setting, his theory has much to say about this same process's operation in the international system. Consistent with his challenge to equal rights within domestic society, Nietzsche's theory of international politics takes issue with universal human rights on the grounds that they lead to unhealthy relationships between communities, and contribute to the general decline of the species.

Universal Rights

To better understand the specifics of this critique, I turn first to John Rawls, who, in his work, *The Law of Peoples*, applies political liberalism's values to the international system: "the Law of Peoples is developed within political liberalism and is an extension of a liberal conception of justice for a domestic regime to a Society of Peoples."[40] Expanded in this way, the fundamental intuitive ideas of democratic society are made those of the international system as a whole, guiding in a similar way the interactions between peoples, as well as the construction of those international institutions to which such communities are party. Ordered and governed by the Law of Peoples, Rawls's Society of Peoples dictates, among other things, that "peoples are free and independent", "equal," may not "instigate war for reasons other than self-defense," and are duty-bound

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39. Nietzsche, "The Anti-Christ," 128.

40. John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 9.

to "assist other peoples living under unfavorable conditions" to develop the liberal

cultural and political institutions that will allow them to join the Society of Peoples.[41]

Regarding this last point, such development entails at a minimum that a people "honor

laws of peace," have a system of law that "respect[s] human rights," and pursues a

"common good idea of justice" sensitive to the "fundamental interests of everyone in

society."[42]

　　If successful, progress of this sort denotes a community's "decency," the term

signifying a "normative idea of the same kind as reasonableness."[43] Much like the role of

reasonableness with respect comprehensive doctrines in the domestic setting, decency

involves a set of fundamental values meant to determine the character, and therefore a

significant amount of the content, of a society. And again, as with reasonableness,

decency determines inclusion into, or exclusion from, society: the "idea of justice"

entailed by decency grants to "societies so regulated the decent moral status required for

them to be members in good standing of a reasonable Society of Peoples."[44] Rawls's

Society of Peoples is a selective international community composed of politically,

socially, and ethically like-minded populations.

　　However, though the bar for membership is high, Rawls's Society of Peoples is

far from exclusionary, seeking as it does the universalization of its principles: "The long-

term goal of (relatively) well-ordered societies should be to bring burdened societies, like

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41. Ibid., 37.

42. Ibid., 67.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., 68.

outlaw states, into the Society of well-ordered Peoples."[45] While this society has yet to

materialize in the fullness envisioned by Rawls, there are certain aspects of the current

international system that mark movement towards the totalizing aims of political

liberalism. Perhaps the most obvious, as well as arguably most fundamental, of these is

the idea of universal human rights. Consistent with the equal rights granted to all

members of liberal democratic societies, universal human rights has become an ideal, or

point of aspiration, for the international system, whereby every individual regardless of

nationality is accorded an equal body of rights. "All human beings are born free and

equal in dignity and rights," pronounces the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[46]

These universal rights have direct consequences for international politics in particular

because of the influence they exert on state behavior and international norms of conduct.

In his *Political Theory and International Relations*, Charles Beitz articulates this

significance by presenting a theory of international economics that is morally consistent

with the obligations and responsibilities entailed by the doctrine of universal human

rights.

> In an interdependent world, confining principles of social justice to domestic
> societies has the effect of taxing poor nations so that others may benefit from
> living in 'just' regimes.[47]

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45. Ibid., 106.

46. United Nations General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III), http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/.

47. Charles Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 150. It is worth noting that *Political Theory and International Relations* was published before Rawls's *The Law of Peoples*, and was also partly responsible for its coming into being in the first place. Though differing on certain points, both works articulate and defend what are essentially the same set of values and moral principles, both of which I associate with post-God liberalism.

As this liberalism rejects exploitation in the name of justice, affluent communities are required to atone for the illiberal economic sins of their past: according to the conscience of this liberalism, the economic inequities of the current international system, its distribution of "benefits and burdens," are fundamentally unjust, and therefore require a globally organized redistribution of economic resources.[48] In this way, the international system's ethos becomes the promotion of justice as defined by political liberalism, with its most powerful members acting as the primary agents of change in the progressive cause.

In Carol Lancaster's *Foreign Aid*, universal human rights and the abolition of injustice are provided a narrative in which they are to be understood as part of an unfolding, and relatively linear, historical process. While originally born of, and pursued for, concerns of power and security, foreign aid has developed into a mechanism for the pursuit of humanitarian ends:

> [Foreign aid's] history reflects the development of an international norm that governments of rich countries should provide public, concessional resources to improve the human condition in poor countries.[49]

With the increasing influence of political liberalism's values, the interests of states have changed, and consequently the purposes of the international system. Universal in kind, these values do not discriminate between communities or individuals: the well-off are obligated to alleviate the suffering of all exploited persons and peoples by virtue of their membership in the human race.

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48. Ibid., 141.

49. Carol Lancaster, *Foreign Aid* (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 5.

From Nietzsche's perspective, such boundless expansionism is quite in keeping with the herd instinct in general, and the democratic movement in particular. Western civilization's global crusade for the embrace, institution, and realization of post-God liberalism's values echoes Christianity's tradition of proselytization and conversion: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations."[50] Once again, as "Christianity's heir," the democratic movement, animated as it is by a herd instinct, seeks the safety and comfort that can only come with the abolition of all pains and dangers. The culmination of the slave revolt in morality in which the weak brought low their brutal and exploitative masters through a transvaluation of values, universal rights aim to eradicate the human type "master" by making command itself immoral: "taken to its ultimate excesses," herd man's instinct for obedience causes commanders to "suffer inwardly from a bad conscience…"[51] The resulting "moral hypocrisy of commanders" redefines command into oblivion, for, in order to exercise his power with a clear conscience, an aspiring leader must first reduce himself to the "'first servant of the people', or 'instrument for the common good'."[52] Thus, with universal rights, herd man further protects himself against the dangerously exceptional, and comes ever-closer to that "common green pasture of happiness for the herd, with safety, security, comfort, ease of life for everyone… 'Equal rights' and Compassion for all suffering'."[53]

Against post-God liberalism's expanding body of universal rights, Nietzsche argues that all rights are conditional, and therefore he rejects the notion that man, simply

50. Matthew 28:19.

51. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 85.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid., 41.

by virtue of being such, is owed anything. As we learned in Chapter Five, Nietzsche

makes all human obligations subject to relevant ability: "duties" are owed only to our

peers. The conditional nature of Nietzsche's rights follow from his theory of will-to-

power, "which is simply the will to life."[54] Composed of the most fundamental of forces,

will-to-power precedes human valuations, post-God liberalism's being no exception: to

recognize will-to-power "means to resist familiar values in a dangerous way; and a

philosophy that dares this has already placed itself beyond good and evil."[55] In Ancient

Greece's cultural artistry Nietzsche discerns the importance and necessity of exploitation

for creativity and vitality: life's "fundamental nature" is one of "artistic energies which

burst forth" through the lives and works of exceptional creatures.[56] As such rare

individuals require leisure's freedom to craft their life-enhancing works, society's masses

must be exploited: "society can *not* exist for its own sake, but rather only as a foundation

and scaffolding to enable a select kind of creature to ascend to its higher task."[57]

Furthermore, Nietzsche understands the basic inequalities that exist between both persons

and communities with respect to vitality, power, and creative ability, to be not only

natural, but reflective of the fundamental character of life itself. Consequently, rather

than lament these disparities, and seek their eradication as post-God liberalism does,

society ought to organize itself around them so as to maximize its ability to thrive.

Though offensive to Western ears, Nietzsche's position regarding universal

human rights is not born of malice, but rather of what he understands to be a crucial fact

54. Ibid., 153.

55. Ibid., 7.

56. Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy," 38.

57. Nietzsche, *Beyond good and Evil*, 152, emphasis in original.

of the natural world, namely, that exploitation and suffering are "part of the *fundamental nature* of living things…"[58]

Rights, Culture, and International Conflict

The necessity of culture's artistry explains the criticisms Nietzsche levels against post-God liberalism's universal rights. To Nietzsche, such a regime of rights, one increasingly determinative of international norms and therefore of international behavior, is detrimental to mankind's health: in seeking to do away with important distinctions between individuals as well as communities regarding key characteristics and capacities, universal rights reduce mankind's overall vitality by hindering the development of exceptional creators. This concern of Nietzsche's directly relates to his conception of culture, for, by uncritically dissolving certain discriminatory borders between communities, universal rights threaten to empty every society of its life-giving "atmosphere":

> [A]ll living things require an atmosphere around them…every nation, too, indeed every human being that wants to become *mature* requires a similar enveloping illusion, a similar protective and veiling cloud.[59]

From Chapter Three we recall that one of culture's most important functions is to construct a circumscribed world within which meaning and purpose are made possible. The generation of this "protective and veiling cloud" entails an othering through the invention and acceptance of prejudicial and discriminatory values, for only by differentiating itself from its neighbor, may a community develop the will to, and interest in, those international struggles that enhance life: according to Zarathustra, it is right and

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58. Ibid., 153, emphasis in original.

59. Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," 97.

natural that a community "not evaluate as its neighbour," and that it celebrate those values that "allow it to rule and conquer and shine, to the horror and envy of its neighbour"; in these values is the "voice of its will to power."[60]

Contrary to what Nietzsche understands as the essential need for, and efficacy of, discriminatory values, post-God liberalism promotes a dangerous "historical sense" that hampers the creation of life-elevating values by rendering impossible the art of myth-making. As Nietzsche understands it, science's quest for truth, inherited from Judeo-Christian tradition and adopted by post-God liberalism, has "remov[ed] a protective atmosphere," and thereby exposed Western civilization to a life-denying "infinite horizon" in which it "must grow withered and dry."[61] Science, though benefitting man with its liberating de-divinizing insights, has imperiled him with exposure to the "true but deadly doctrines…of sovereign becoming, of the fluidity of all concepts, types and species, of the lack of any cardinal distinction between man and animal."[62] "[H]ampered" by this "infinity" in which every distinction on the basis of values is dissolved in the nihilistic soup of historical relativism, how is Western civilization to proceed?[63] A Nietzschean perspective glimpses the solution in the doctrine of universal human rights.

Weak of will, being for so long dominated by the interests of a herd instinct and therefore unable to create new values, the West chose to double-down, as it were, on Judeo-Christian tradition's familiar values in a way that satisfied the instinctual need for

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60. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 51.

61. Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," 115.

62. Ibid., 112.

63. Nietzsche, "Homer's Contest," 59.

security, all while maintaining some semblance of intellectual fidelity to the "historical sense." As discussed earlier, Nietzsche identifies the herd instinct's primary drive to be security. It has pursued this interest by changing the dominant system of values to one that favors the passive and average, as opposed to the active and aggressive. Universal rights, specifically those guaranteeing freedom and equality, are understood from this perspective as social and political mechanisms to achieve this end. But given the historical sense's historicizing of man, and the relativizing of values in general, the pursuit of security through the global dissemination of values becomes difficult: on what grounds can those values that alone ensure the herd's safety be embraced and institutionalized when one cannot readily appeal to their superiority with respect to alternative modes of valuation?

The language with which universal rights are presented and advocated for is illuminating on this issue. Post-God liberalism's universal rights are "human" rights, owed to, and possessed by, man as a biological and natural creature. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, employs the term human "dignity," as opposed to divine or transcendent worth. From a practical standpoint, this is quite reasonable in light of the world's religious pluralism: in order to increase the appeal of the declaration's rights, they could not be grounded in any one religious, philosophical, or moral tradition. However, this characterization of universal rights is also reflective of a Western post-God context in which appeals to religion are greeted with deep skepticism. By being both universal and human, freedom and equality are presented as not only non-discriminatory, applying as they do to all persons regardless of his or her particulars, but in an important way, neutral; they constitute a normative background that is so seemingly

unobjectionable as to almost go unnoticed. Characterized by Nietzsche as a regressive departure from Judaism, Christianity's expansion of God from the patron of a particular people, to the embodiment of an idea encompassing all of humanity sets the stage for this seemingly neutral doctrine of human rights:

> Formerly he had only his people, his 'chosen' people. In the meantime, just like his people itself, he has gone abroad, gone wandering about; since then he has sat still nowhere: until at last he is at home everywhere, the great cosmopolitan—until he has got 'the great majority' and half the earth on his side.[64]

> This "democrat among Gods" continued to dissipate until he was reduced to

"something ever paler and less substantial, became an 'ideal', became 'pure spirit', became 'absolutum', became 'thing in itself'…"[65] As the inheritor of Christianity's herd instincts and interests, the democratic movement continued this process of dissipation, bringing it to completion with the universalization of herd values now untethered from theological and metaphysical foundations. Of the fundamental intuitive ideas of freedom and equality, Rawls describes their embrace by citizens as often not involving deliberation as to their legitimizing basis: being intuitions, these values are not always, nor need be, "expressly formulated, nor their meanings clearly marked out."[66] Conforming more to a sense, as opposed to an argument, as to what is just, these values are experienced as intuitively true. As such, they are able to stand independent of a democratic society's moral, religious, and philosophical doctrines, while simultaneously exerting a formative influence on those doctrines.

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64. Nietzsche, 'The Anti-Christ," 139.

65. Ibid., 140.

66. Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, 6.

From Nietzsche's perspective, these values constitute a morality of great force as evidenced by the tremendous political, social, and behavioral consequences they have on society: to be a participant in a liberal society, be it domestic or international, is to knowingly or unknowingly have endorsed normative premises about the nature of man, and the purposes of political institutions.

Viewed from within Nietzsche's theory of international politics, post-God liberalism's commitment to, and dissemination of, universal human rights threaten to transform the international system from a venue for life-enhancing struggle to a stagnant community of like-minded mediocrities. Born of the universal "morality of *communal* pity," a morality that regards itself as the "summit of humankind," universal rights erode those borders without which vital cultures cannot take shape, and consequently remove the primary institutional drivers of invigorating international struggle.[67] It would do well to recall what Zarathustra says of communities and their differentiating value systems: "No people could live without first evaluating; but if it would maintain itself, it may not evaluate as its neighbour evaluates."[68] Here, the creation of values by a community is presented as both natural and necessary insofar as simply to exist, to "live," a community must possess a set of values around which it may coalesce.

But not any set of values will suffice should a people wish to endure in a condition of strength. Specifically, those values according to which it exists must be different than those of bordering communities. This points to the natural necessity of conflict and tension between communities on the basis of how each "evaluates." The

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67. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 90.

68. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 51.

value systems that best foster health are those that not only inspire their adherents to great collective acts of overcoming, but also provide to other peoples inspiration for similar deeds: "Whatever allows it to rule and conquer and shine, *to the horror and envy of its neighbour*; that counts as the lofty, the first, the measure, the meaning of all things."[69] The robust international system of Nietzsche's theory is one riven by deep normative divides over which communities ceaselessly compete. It is a system of profound ideological differences, for it is these differences that make possible the collisions of will that enrich and elevate man's life through the generation of great cultural works and similarly great individuals. Post-God liberalism's universal rights are antithetical to such a system as they deny the legitimacy of that system's animating differentiations. Viewed by Nietzsche as expressions of a herd instinct that seeks mankind's comprehensive pacification, the universal rights of freedom and equality would homogenize the international system, and therefore bring an end to the most meaningful forms of struggle, those between cultures. It would be a system of one culture, and one type of man, the last man; a system of "'no herdsman and one herd!'"[70]

Conclusion

Simultaneously radical and comprehensive, Nietzsche's thought presents numerous challenges to one seeking its application to a particular field of study. As the insights of his philosophy are rooted in a theory of life, one characterized by flux and dynamism, one is easily able to lose one's way: in order to understand any aspect of

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69. Ibid., emphasis added.

70. Ibid., 16.

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Nietzsche's thought, one must first appreciate the radical critiques of truth, value, and knowledge that permeate it.

While daunting, these same challenges reveal the profundity of Nietzsche's thought, and consequently the potential benefits to be enjoyed from its careful study. Nietzsche's problematizing of truth and knowledge are critical to understanding his writings, for it is by means of this destabilization that we are invited to encounter the underlying forces of life that he sees as foundational to every form of truth and knowledge. As the present work has labored to establish, as a conceptualization of these forces, will-to-power informs Nietzsche's judgements with respect to man and his socio-political arrangements. Examined through the lens of will-to-power's two dominant drives, survival and creativity, the world of man opens itself up to a new type of evaluation on the basis of health: the vital society or person is one that strikes a proper balance between both drives, whereas one that does not is destined to a pre-mature decline, either in the form of weakness and mediocrity, or wastefulness and enervation.

Similarly, it is with an eye to creativity that Nietzsche examines both culture and state. Given vitality's creative component, culture is critical to man's health, as it is by means of the artistry of value creation that a people may establish and maintain a life-enhancing engagement with life's animating forces. Nietzsche's Nature is an example of this health-promoting art: an artifice composed of both Ancient Greek and modern elements, it is intended to aid in Western civilization's re-vitalization by responding to those pressing needs born of a unique post-God context.

But culture's artistry of value creation is a difficult endeavor, requiring the cooperation of different elements both within and without of society in order to be

successful. One such element is the state, an institution that, while potentially hostile to creativity, nonetheless has the potential to provide invaluable assistance to culture. Specifically, Nietzsche sees in the state's power of coercion a mechanism for the institution of certain exploitative domestic social hierarchies essential to a robust culture: to free the exceptionally creative few of society from the dulling labors of subsistence, the bulk of society must be exploited, a condition the state is particularly adept at bringing about. Similarly, the state is critical in organizing a population into a collective actor possessed of a single will. With such a will, a community may not only defend itself from aggressors, but also partake of aggression itself: when guided by interests of culture, international conflict is something to be embraced as such struggles may manifest the health-enhancing agonisms of the biological world, whereas when guided by interests such as material domination, comfort, or economic gain, international conflict is a scourge that squanders a community's creative energies.

Nietzsche's analysis of, and prescriptions for, international conflict are informed by his understanding of man being an animal "plain and simple, without metaphorical intent."[71] This view means that, like all animals, man is profoundly affected by the conditions in which he exists, both past and present: environmental, political, and cultural forces determine much of man's physiological make-up, and therefore his capabilities regarding the form and content of his vitality. It is from this perspective that Nietzsche studies Western civilization, and theorizes about the prospects of its future. Having existed for two-millennia under the constitutive pressures of Judeo-Christian tradition,

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71. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 89.

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today's European is an historically unique type of human animal, one possessed of both attributes and deficiencies directly attributable to those pressures.

One such characteristic identified by Nietzsche that is of particular importance to the theory of international politics presented in this study is Western man's increasing homogenization: the all-encompassing pressures of Christianity, and later its heir, democracy, have selected for, and thus led to the flourishing of, a herd-like man of relative uniformity. As this similarity in physiological disposition comes to supersede national divisions, Nietzsche argues that Europe will gradually become a single international entity, one consequence of which is the transformation of international politics: Nietzsche's theory portends a coming age of international competition on a scale never before seen, involving actors of civilizational size for stakes of the highest order. While this emerging international environment is one that Nietzsche generally welcomes, given its potential for value-creation on a grand scale, it is also pregnant with danger, for the West is currently ill-equipped to meet the coming challenges. Before Western civilization can confidently take its place in this new environment, it must come to terms with, and pass through, the trauma of the Death of God. According to Nietzsche, by discrediting the god of Christianity, modernity's scientific spirit has brought into question those principles and values upon which the West itself has relied for meaning and purpose.

To begin, science has de-divinized man by revealing his thorough embeddedness within the natural world: no longer a creature of divine aspect, man is but one among so many other animals, albeit distinguished by a singular talent for creativity. But in undermining Christianity's metaphysical order, science unknowingly also brought into

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question its own authority: having undermined God, science undermined the Christian formula "God is truth, that truth is divine," and therefore the value and power of truth itself.[72] No longer certain of what had for centuries been the foundational tenets of its identity, the West now suffers from a perilously weakened will. Nietzsche worries this weakness may accelerate the West's decline into mediocrity as it grows ever-more passive. Most importantly, should the West fail to extricate itself from the nihilism born of God's death by creating new re-invigorating values, it invites the ascendance of Nietzsche's dreaded "last man," the quintessential herd animal. A West predominantly composed of such a type will surely lack the cultural vitality needed to compete and thrive in the coming international environment.

While deeply concerned with its dangers, Nietzsche still welcomes the Death of God for the rejuvenating social, political, and cultural projects it makes possible. Specifically, Nietzsche hopes that upon God's death the West may adopt a new aristocratic form of political organization: unlike the democratic movement's levelling egalitarianism, a healthy aristocratic political order distinguishes between persons in a way that fosters the "grand feeling of distance" that forms the basis of a will capable of great creative works. Examination of Nietzsche's critiques of the international relations between communities, be they those of Ancient Greece, or 19th-century Europe, reveals the extent to which his judgements are informed by this aristocratic model: much as the individual's standing within a healthy aristocratic society is determined by his or her creative vitality, Nietzsche assesses a community's place within the international system according to its relative cultural vitality. In such a system, rather than nationalistic states

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72. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 283.

pursuing petty material interests through wasteful wars, rival communities would compete for standing as determined by their cultural health and dynamism. In his "grand politics" of the future, Nietzsche envisions such a world, one in which the unique potentials of a post-God West are developed within an aristocratically organized arena. The hope, as Nietzsche understands it, is that such an environment would rescue Europe from its slide into last-manism as it is reminded of culture's, and ultimately will-to-power's, import.

Having constructed a theory of international politics from Nietzsche's thought, I conclude by situating it within the field of international politics. Doing so not only highlights the uniqueness of this theory by contrasting it with others, but it also sets the stage for what I hope to be a fruitful dialog between Nietzsche scholars and those of international politics. Regarding key premises, Nietzsche's theory of international politics and constructivism have the most in common. Consistent with constructivism's "intersubjectively constituted structure of identities and interests,"[73] Nietzsche argues that communities and individuals alike are shaped by the conditions in which they exist: as "fear is the mother of morality," man's physiological constitution is largely determined by variable forces as opposed to an immutable human nature.[74] Similarly, Wendt's "first contact" emphasizes the consequences of different experiences on the character of a community: just as amiable experiences foster cooperative identities, those of a hostile kind generate oppositional identities.

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73. Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It," 401.

74. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 88.

However, while sharing much with constructivism, Nietzsche's theory of international politics distinguishes itself in important ways. Most notable of these involves the issue of assessing the value or worth of the various international systems open to man given his substantial malleability. Informed by his insights into the forces and dynamics of life's basic operation, Nietzsche continually judges different social relations, political organizations, and cultural characteristics. Whereas Wendt's constructivism, possessing no such normative guidance, is prohibited from passing sentence on any particular international system, Nietzsche's theory of international politics does so without reservation: it challenges liberalism's penchant for passivity, realism's misplaced embrace of militarism, and the unengaged neutrality of Wendt's constructivism.

Finally, in light of liberalism's commanding influence with respect to the norms and institutions of the modern international system, I draw attention to the ways in which the theory articulated in this study offer an alternative perspective on certain commonly held international values and intuitions. Of these, the most significant is the doctrine of universal human rights. From Nietzsche's vantage point, such a doctrine is an unhealthy one, estranged as it is from the hierarchical character of life, and the conditionality of all duties and obligations. Consistent with his teachings on will-to-power, Nietzsche traces universal rights to physiological weakness in a certain type of man, namely, herd man. Moved by a corresponding herd instinct, this human type seeks to protect itself from the perils and pains of will-to-power's dangerous struggles through a universal pacification: equal rights for all hinder the emergence of exceptional individuals, who, by being such, necessarily pose a threat to herd man's sense of security. Concerned with increasing

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man's health through the cultivation of a more invigorating relationship with will-to-power, Nietzsche opposes universal human rights, favoring instead a system in which rights are accorded to those of equal creative vitality. Furthermore, as his advocacy for aristocratic forms of organization makes clear, Nietzsche understands social and political exploitation to be not only natural, but necessary. Consequently, the universal rights of freedom and equality, insofar as they entail the elimination of exploitation, make impossible the establishment of those political institutions most responsive to will-to-power's dynamics.

Moved by what he takes to be invaluable insights gained from a singular perspective, Nietzsche seeks to shed light on those corners of the human world and experience he perceives as having been for too long left in the shadows. Subsequent study of these insights has, and continues to, inspire excellent and intriguing works of scholarship on the part of theorists and students alike. Continuing this tradition, the present work has labored to unearth, and subsequently piece together, from Nietzsche's varied writings a working theory of international politics. My hope is that such efforts will enrich our understanding and study of both Nietzsche and international politics.

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