

*Nietzsche
and the
Critique of
Revolution*

Antonio Fontana

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CHAPTER ONE

NIETZSCHE, DELEUZE, AND THE ETERNAL RECURRENCE OF THE SAME

Judged from the point of view of our reason, unsuccessful attempts are by all odds the rule, the exceptions are not the secret aim, and the whole musical box repeats eternally its tune which may never be called a melody and ultimately even the phrase “unsuccessful attempt” is too anthropomorphic and reproachful. But how could we reproach or praise the universe? Let us beware of attributing to it heartlessness and unreason or their opposites: it is neither perfect nor beautiful, nor noble, nor does it wish to become any of these things; it does not by any means strive to imitate man.

Let us beware of thinking that the world eternally creates new things. There are no eternally enduring substances; matter is as much an error as the God of the Eleatics. But when shall we ever be done with our caution and care? When will all these shadows of God cease to darken our minds? When may we begin to “*naturalize*” humanity in terms of a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature?

Friedrich Nietzsche, 1887

There is no possible compromise between Hegel and Nietzsche.
Gilles Deleuze, 1962

That most nineteenth-century European thinkers believed in notions of inevitable human progress is a truism. Nietzsche was one of the few philosophers of his time who did not subscribe to this idea. His conception of history is encapsulated within his theory of the eternal recurrence of the same. According to this notion, the history of humanity, and, indeed, of the entire universe, never changes. It merely repeats itself, unfolding itself within the infinitude of time. According to him, “If the motion of the world aimed at a final state, that state would have been reached.” (Nietzsche, 708 n.) Nietzsche first enunciated the idea of the eternal recurrence towards the end of the fourth book of his work *The Gay Science* (1882). The passage in

which he first describes the concept deserves to be quoted at length; nowhere else did Nietzsche describe it so succinctly and so beautifully:

What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you in your loneliest loneliness and say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing

new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence—even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust! (Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 273)

Time has borne out Nietzsche's idea. Who can mouth ideas of inevitable historical progress after Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki? The horrors of the twentieth century have put to rest, once and for all, the delusions of the nineteenth. Nietzsche's conception of the eternal recurrence of history is (potentially) revolutionary, for it helps us to see the futility of placing our faith in any so-called "laws" and forces of history, à la Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.¹ If one believes in the possibility, or necessity, of emancipation, one can achieve emancipation by means of voluntary struggle. We do not have to wait for the laws of history to bail us out.

Gilles Deleuze, in his *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962), delineates the emancipative potential of Nietzsche's battle against the dialectic (147-195). For Deleuze, the historicist, Hegelian, and dialectical traditions are not the only ways to achieve emancipation (197). For the French philosopher, that is the supreme significance of Nietzsche's antipathy toward the idea of the possibility of progress. Nietzsche sees that "multiplicity, becoming, and chance are objects of pure affirmation" (197).

However, the historical immanence of Nietzsche's anti-dialectical philosophy is lost on Deleuze. Deleuze is correct when he notes that "There is no possible compromise between Hegel and Nietzsche" (195).² The German philosopher's anti-dialectical stance cannot be abstracted from his

¹ The pathos of affirming the eternal recurrence, which Nietzsche saw as the mark of a truly noble individual, will be discussed here only insofar as it helps to illustrate the politico-philosophical connotations and underpinnings of Nietzsche's thought.

² This is something that was completely lost on Walter A. Kaufmann, the famous German-American scholar and translator of Nietzsche's works. In his *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (1950), Nietzsche appears as an emasculated, milquetoast-y Hegelian, in love with dialectics. Kaufmann was himself a Hegelian.

consistent struggle with egalitarianism. The potentially radical implications of the dialectic have often been noted. The struggle between thesis and antithesis produces a synthesis; the synthesis (now a thesis) goes on to struggle with a new antithesis, to produce a new synthesis, and so on. Hegel famously applied the dialectic to different historical phases and attempted to prove that history was a rational, meaningful, ever-changing development of one unchanging being, the idea (or god) (Hegel, 9).

Karl Marx sums up the revolutionary implications of Hegel's dialectic in the preface to the second edition of the first volume of *Das Kapital*. He writes:

In its rational form it (the dialectic) is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension an affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in essence critical and revolutionary (Marx, 25-26).

It is this revolutionary and disintegrating aspect of the dialectic that Nietzsche loathes and attempts to combat. The idea of historical change inevitably leads to the idea of sociopolitical change. The dissolution of historical categories and epochs becomes the dissolution of entire social structures and social formations. What is the result? A final stage is reached, the "end of history." What is the final stage? Is the final stage a liberal, bourgeois, democratic, or communist society? These questions are irrelevant for Nietzsche. For him, what matters is that, in the dialectical scheme of things, human history is ultimately reduced to a final stage of rest, of eternal Being.

It is significant that the personification of the dialectic in Nietzsche's works is not Hegel, but rather Socrates. From his first book to his last, Nietzsche sees the Greek philosopher as the embodiment of the disintegrating, corrosive dialectic. In one of his last works, *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), Nietzsche writes, "Is the irony of Socrates an expression of revolt? Of plebeian *ressentiment*?" (476) And in his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* (1872), he describes Socrates as "the prototype of the theoretical optimist who... ascribes to knowledge and insight the power of a panacea..." (97). The Athenian philosopher believed that man commits evil out of ignorance. If man enlightens himself as to his own true nature, and the nature of his fellows, he will cease to commit evil

acts. Socrates believed that man can use his reason to free himself from the baseness and irrationality of his lower nature.

He believed that man, when confronted with the choice of good or evil, will always choose the former. For how can he, the most rational of all creatures, not see that choosing to do evil leads to disharmony, with himself and others? Socrates (or at least, the Socrates found in Plato's dialogues) had an unyielding, almost naïve faith in man's reason. And it was this ability to have and use reason that, for Socrates, constitutes man's greatest virtue. He sees the instincts and emotions as being last on the order of man's attributes. Indeed, he ascribes vice to the instincts. Not even art, which in the Periclean Age of Greece, was viewed as being the product of "the emotions and the intellect" working "together," can be attributed to the emotions (Hamilton and Cairns, 215).

In the *Ion*, for example, the Platonic Socrates describes art as "not (being) dependent upon the emotions; it belongs to the realm of knowledge" (Hamilton and Cairns, 215). The same naïve, smug faith in reason and progress held by Socrates is the same faith in progress held by the democrats, socialists, and liberal utilitarians of Nietzsche's time. In the German philosopher's works, Socrates assumes the mantle of the revolutionary, as the disintegrator of the holy myths and traditions of the Athenian aristocracy. Socrates accomplishes this, according to Nietzsche, by means of the dialectic, of reason, and of arid logic.³ Socrates, not Hegel, personifies the dialectic because he was the first to use it as a weapon in his struggle against the established order. Hegel is one of the heirs of Socrates, and one of the most dangerously effective. The Greek philosopher is seen as "a symptom of a radical and momentous cultural transformation that had carried over into his [Nietzsche's] own era" (Rudiger Safranski, *Nietzsche, A Philosophical Biography*, 64).

The late Italian Marxist philosopher and political theorist Domenico Losurdo, in his *Nietzsche, il ribelle aristocratico; Biografia intellettuale e bilancio critico* (2002), notes that Nietzsche's Socrates is really an ideal type. The Socrates of *The Birth of Tragedy*, according to Losurdo, is the prototype of the revolutionary intellectual of the nineteenth century (Losurdo, 5-78, 104-136). Certainly, Nietzsche attributes revolutionary and seditious implications to Socrates' teachings. Yet Socrates is not just a

³ In *The Philosophy of History*, Hegel writes, "The only Thought which Philosophy brings with it to the contemplation of History, is the simple conception of *Reason*; that Reason is the Sovereign of the World; that the history of the world, therefore, presents us with a rational process" (Hegel, 9). Hegel therefore equates the constant flux of the historical process with the dictates of Reason. Nietzsche's views on Socrates, the Greeks, and science, will be further discussed in the next section.

representative of revolutionary thought in general. He is also the representative of a particular mode of revolutionary thinking, of a particular method of viewing history: the dialectic. Deleuze sees Nietzsche as encountering “his own Socrates” in the positivist and socialist thinkers of his time (Deleuze, 58-59, Safranski, 64).

These, according to Deleuze, are “freethinkers” who “claim to carry out the critique of values; they claim to refuse all appeals to transcendental values...” (Deleuze, 59) The atheist, the socialist, and the anarchist might reject the existence of the Judeo-Christian God. Nevertheless, they still accept the fundamental premises upon which Judaism and Christianity are built. These premises are the complex syntheses of moral valuations that are subsumed under the category of “Judeo-Christian morality.” This morality is above all a morality of compassion, of sympathy for the weak, the suffering, and the defenseless, a sympathy for what Nietzsche elsewhere calls “the bungled and the botched.” The outraged indignation the socialist feels at seeing the exploitation of the workers by their employers, of the many by the few, is the same indignation the Christian feels in contemplating the injustices of life. The modern freethinker does not reject the idea of justice, an idea first found, clothed in theological garb, in Christianity. On the contrary; he enlarges on the theme of justice, and proclaims himself the champion of suffering, degraded humanity. According to Deleuze, “This is why we can have no confidence in the freethinker’s atheism.” (Deleuze, 60)

This embrace of ever-returning diversity within the cycle of the eternal recurrence can certainly be utilized as a tool of (non-historicist, non-structuralist) emancipation. One can now celebrate the diversity of human identity, of sexuality, of sexual orientation, of race and ethnicity. The diverse cycles of the eternal return are a reproach to the naïve, positivistic, and determinist hopes of the nineteenth century. The belief in inevitable progress, so dear to the hearts of Darwinians, utilitarians, and (vulgar) Marxists, is now made unnecessary. One can now be comforted by the fact that one will always experience different, random, and unexpected events, forever and ever. We can now revel in the very uncertainty and unexpectedness of life. Deleuze sees the nature of the emancipative aspect of Nietzsche’s opposition to the dialectic. However, he does not see the immediate implications of Nietzsche’s cosmology, implications that are extremely reactionary.

After having resolved all contradictions, the dialectic leaves us with man as he has always been (Deleuze, 163). The dialectic enables man to exist continually, after having incorporated and subsumed all of pre-existing reality (Deleuze, 163). According to Deleuze, “the dialectical man is the most wretched because he is no longer anything but a man, having

annihilated everything which was not himself" (Deleuze, 163). Whereas the dialectic "reverses" values, the truly noble man, the Overman, creates values. The dialectic cannot create anything; it is impotent.

Nietzsche's Overman "has nothing in common with the species, being of the dialecticians" (Deleuze, 163). The Nietzschean Overman's goal is to institute "a new way of thinking [that] predicates other than divine ones; for the divine is still a way of preserving man and of preserving the essential characteristic of God as attribute" (Deleuze, 163). The dialectic enables man to become God, to subsume His qualities within himself. That is what the death of God means for Hegel (Deleuze, 156). The overcoming of contradiction and alienation that the dialectic carries within itself is essentially a plebeian struggle. This is because the struggle does not take into account "far more subtle and subterranean differential mechanisms: topological displacements, typological variations" (Deleuze, 157). There is no attempt to analyze the value of the forces in contradiction. The nobility or baseness of opposing forces is not seen; they are not even presumed to be in existence. The dialectic is an essentially democratic methodology; it does not recognize privilege.

This inability-or unwillingness- of the dialectical process, to see the pedigree of the contending forces that lie within it, leads to the question of difference. That is, Nietzsche's conception of the "pathos of distance" is intimately tied to his critique of the dialectic (Nietzsche, 391). Before touching upon this, however, it is appropriate to further analyze Deleuze's ideas on the selectivity of the will to power.

Deleuze does not believe the eternal recurrence is a recurrence of the same exact events that have occurred within the space of time (Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche contra Rousseau, 1991*, 120, 194-195; Deleuze, 48, 68). According to him, "It is not some one thing which returns but rather returning itself that constitutes being insofar as it is affirmed of becoming and of that which passes" (Deleuze, 48). It is the process of returning that always recurs, not the actual train of events that have already taken place. In fact, according to Deleuze, this is the closest approximation toward the possibility—and desirability—of Being, that Nietzsche ever achieves. The always-recurring process of returning *is* the state of Being. Being *is* recurrence (Deleuze, 47-48). The conscious and willing acceptance of this eternal process—though it occurs irrespective of our willingness—is the mark of a noble human being who affirms life.

This constant return of the process of returning is linked to the idea of the will to power. For Deleuze, the will to power is not equivalent to mere, empirical, and brute, force. It is not even the act of willing as such. Rather, it is the act of willing *selectively*.

One should will in a way that is selective, so that the events and aspects of our lives that have been the most pleasing, or the most life-affirming, return to us.⁴ Those events that have been the most useless, or even harmful, from the standpoint of the affirmation of life, should not be willed to return.⁵ It is this selective willing that, for Deleuze, constitutes one of the fundamental traits of the Overman. This ability to will what one wants, to will back the forces that are noble, active, creative, and life-affirming, is notably contrasted with the plebeian impotence of the dialectic. The dialectical process of contradiction, which arises out of alienation, is resolved by ending that alienation. How is alienation ended? It is ended by taking into oneself, by subsuming, all of the forces that have previously struggled with each other. The dialectic is opposed to “the spirit of interpretation itself which judges forces from the standpoint of their origin and quality” (Deleuze, 60).

The eternal return of the process of recurrence does not even recur in a single cycle; rather, it recurs in numerous series of cycles. Deleuze writes that “we can only understand the eternal return as the expression of a principle which serves as an explanation of *diversity and its reproduction, of difference and its repetition* (Deleuze, 49)⁶. In one of his notes from the 1880s, which was subsequently included in the posthumous collection entitled *The Will to Power* (1901), Nietzsche wrote that the eternal recurrence consists of a diverse series of cycles, and that these cycles

⁴ In *Nietzsche contra Rousseau*, Ansell-Pearson succinctly summarizes Deleuze’s interpretation of the eternal recurrence as follows: “Deleuze construes the eternal return as a selective kind of categorical imperative which breeds strength and nobility. Eternal return is a selective ethical principle; that which returns is not the ‘same,’ that is the actual content of one’s willing, but only the form of willing (the returning). In this way the will selects that which it wishes to return and that which it does not. What does not return, Deleuze argues, are the reactive forces, namely, all that is sick, base, weak, and lowly” (194-195).

⁵ Like Heidegger, Deleuze establishes a conceptual relation between the eternal recurrence and the will to power. For a further comparison, see the second volume of Heidegger’s *Nietzsche: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same* (1954). See also Karl Löwith’s long neglected *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same* (1935). Löwith was the first to note the centrality the idea of the eternal recurrence had for Nietzsche’s philosophy as a whole. He was also the first to recognize the contradictions in the theory. For if the process of recurrence constantly returns, irrespective of one’s will, what, then, is the point of willing at all? Löwith, unlike Deleuze, interprets the process of recurrence as a return of the same exact events. He also does not equate the act of willing the eternal return with the will to power, as Heidegger and Deleuze do.

⁶ Emphasis added.

contain differently recurring events within themselves (Nietzsche, 325, 334, 374, 634; Deleuze, 49). Deleuze was one of the first interpreters of the eternal recurrence to pick up on the implications of diversity within the cosmological theory. It is not every single little thing that has occurred since time began that occurs and recurs; rather, it is the cycle itself which recurs. The possibility, the chance, of existence beginning anew, *ad infinitum*, is the central core of the theory of the eternal recurrence of the same. Within an unlimited amount of cosmic space, with a delimited amount of energy and force, existence will recur, over and over again.

One always has the chance to relive one's life. With every new cycle of recurring existence, one can always recreate and reform one's destiny, as one wills. Existence then becomes like clay in the hands of a potter, like marble in the hands of a sculptor. The ever-recurring diverse cycles of diverse recurrence enable us to become artists in respect to our lives; we shape and transform them however we like. We *will* our lives, our existences (Nietzsche, 374, 634; Deleuze, 49). Far from being the worst form of determinism imaginable, the eternal recurrence is the best guarantor imaginable of freedom, of free will (Deleuze, 49).

Nietzsche's equation of the recognition and affirmation of difference as symbol of the will to power is a result of his philosophical nominalism (Losurdo, 92-95). His conception of the "pathos of distance" was noted above. What does this idea have to do with the recognition of differences within the cosmology of the eternal recurrence? If Nietzsche saw the willing recognition of differences within the recurring cycle as an affirmation of life in its totality, does it not follow, then, that this applies in political life as well? This is my contention, that this phrase—"the pathos of distance"—is both a political and philosophical term. Let us look at the matter more closely.

Nietzsche first introduces the concept of the pathos of distance in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), a work that he describes as "a critique of modernity, not excluding the modern sciences, the modern arts, even modern politics" (77). In his sociological and historiographical description of the formation of aristocratic societies, he writes,

Every *enhancement*⁷ of the type "man" has so far been the work of an aristocratic society....a society that believes in the long ladder of the *order of rank and differences* slavery in some sense or other. Without that *pathos of distance* which grows out of the ingrained difference between strata—when the ruling caste constantly looks afar and looks down upon subjects and instruments and

⁷ Emphasis in this paragraph added.

just as constantly practices obedience and command, keeping down and keeping at a distance...the craving for an ever new widening of distances *within the soul itself*, the development of ever higher, rarer, more remote, further-stretching, more comprehensive states-in brief, simply the enhancement of the type "man," the continual "self-overcoming of man," to use a moral formula in a supra-moral sense (Nietzsche, 391).

It is significant that Nietzsche equates political inequality with the *enhancement*⁸ of man and his spiritual sensibilities, of the enlargement of his inner being ("the soul," etc.). For the German philosopher, the greatest crime perpetrated by modern man against life and nature, is the creation of the idea of equal rights. Ever since the French Revolution, the ideas of political and socioeconomic equality have been drummed into men's heads. The continuous "leveling" of Europe by the modern democratic movement, which Nietzsche constantly derides, is destroying the noble qualities of European man. As we have seen, part of what constitutes nobility, for Nietzsche, is the recognition of, and the understanding of, the importance of difference. The concepts of difference and diversity are not mere philosophical and ontological metaphors for Nietzsche. They are above all sociopolitical categories. The utter lack of respect for status, hierarchy, and social rank, is the mark of a base, vulgar, and ignoble mind. What is the ultimate cause of this baseness?

For Nietzsche, the cause lies in the universal nature of the ideals of the French Revolution (Losurdo, 25, 50). In this respect, Nietzsche is following in the footsteps of others. Joseph de Maistre, in his *Considerations on France*, mocks the inherently abstract and universal nature of the idea of the "rights of man."⁹ He contemptuously notes that, "The 1795 constitution [of the revolutionary French republic] like its predecessors, was made for *man*¹⁰. But there is no such thing as *man* in the world. During my life, I have seen Frenchman, Italians, Russians, and so on; thanks to Montesquieu, I even know that one can be *Persian*;¹¹ but I must say, as for *man*, I have

⁸ Emphasis added.

⁹ Nietzsche's nominalism, his philosophical relations with de Maistre and Burke, and his critique of the French Revolution, are touched upon here only insofar as they have a relationship with the theory of the eternal recurrence and with the political implications of the theory. For a more detailed exposition of the relations between Nietzsche, Burke, and de Maistre, see the next sections. Also see Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin* (2011), 48-49, 223-224, 232-233, 103.

¹⁰ Emphasis in this paragraph added.

¹¹ De Maistre is referring to Montesquieu's racy eighteenth-century novel *The Persian Letters*.

never come across him anywhere; if he exists, he is completely unknown to me.” (de Maistre, 80)

For de Maistre, the abstract and sweeping universalism of the ideas of 1789 are untenable, for the simple reason that they disregard the concrete differences that exist between different groups of people within society.¹² The French reactionary’s pronounced cultural relativism and multiculturalism is the outcome of a profound antipathy toward the abstract and utopian ideas of the French revolutionaries (Losurdo, 79-103). Their desire to grant man—man in general as well as man in the abstract, completely divorced from any concrete class, culture, or status—his rights constitutes an attack upon hierarchy. De Maistre is opposed to recognizing the possible existence of universal values and ethics. We use the rhetoric of the rights of man to this day. What is the doctrine of human rights, if not the ideological descendent of the 1789 battle cry, “Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality?” In an unpublished fragment from the early 1870’s, Nietzsche articulates his rejection of the abstract notion of the rights of man; he writes, “Humanity is a concept that is absolutely non-Greek.” (Nietzsche, VII, 127, Losurdo, 92) That is to say, the idea of the rights of man delegitimizes the necessity of servitude, oppression, and even slavery, which are necessary as bases for high culture and civilization. The Greeks knew this: The notions of freedom and equal rights for all, which have permeated the consciousness of modern men, oppose the dominance of higher men, rich in creative and artistic powers (Nietzsche, CV, 3; I, 765-66; Losurdo, 92).

By stressing the necessity of having hierarchy between groups, Nietzsche places himself within the counter-revolutionary, reactionary tradition (Losurdo, 230). Only the plebeian, the man of *ressentiment*,¹³ refuses to accept the necessity of hierarchy (Deleuze, 111-145). Those who are different from the man of *ressentiment* are blamed for all his sufferings (Nietzsche, 475).¹⁴

The man of *ressentiment* does not recognize difference—he does not see difference. He *refuses* (emphasis added.) to see diversity. Everything that is different from him, that is not of his kind, that is above him, he looks upon with bitter hatred and envy. He wants to destroy those that are different

¹² Burke also noted, and decried, the disintegrating abstractness of the language of the rights of man (Burke, 110, 118; Losurdo, 72, 293, 79-84). See next section.

¹³ See *The Genealogy of Morals*, 472-273, and Deleuze, 45, 111-146

¹⁴ In his book on Rousseau and the Romantic movement, Irving Babbitt sums up his dislike of “Rousseauism” in a quintessentially Nietzschean statement: “One of my chief objections, indeed, to Rousseauism...is that it encourages the *making of scapegoats*” (11). (Emphasis added.) Nietzsche’s man of *ressentiment* also makes scapegoats out of those who differ from him in rank, power, etc.

from him, and he sometimes succeeds in doing so (Nietzsche, 470-474). Deleuze¹⁵ notes that the man of *ressentiment* is a man who is incapable of having respect for the noble and beautiful. The man of *ressentiment* “takes his misfortune seriously” and “shows a difficult digestion and a base way of thinking which is incapable of feeling respect” (Deleuze, 117). On the other hand, what distinguishes the “aristocratic man” is the profound sense of respect he has for his misfortunes. He takes pride, and even pleasure, in his misfortune. This is because the misfortune he experiences is an outcome of the particular enemy that he has, and that he faces.

Manifestly, it also follows that the aristocratic man does not bow before accomplished fact. Nietzsche’s distaste for Hegelian historicism also stems from historicism’s tendency to accept historical flux and change as progress in itself. The conception of human history as a linear process of inevitable becoming, of inevitable flux, is inextricably linked to the notion of inevitable stasis, of Being: In the historicist schema of things, particularly in Hegelian instantiation, the ultimate stage of human history, whether it be a socialist utopia or a bourgeois liberal society, is the acme of all human progress and capability, simply because it is the last stage of human history. Progress is embodied in the historical event, in the accomplished historical act. Nietzsche sees the dialectic as a plebeian mode of viewing history; the worship of concrete historical reality, the acceptance of the accomplished historical fact, of concrete socio-political as it is currently constituted, indicates an anti-aristocratic, ignoble conception of history and of historical change. Acceptance of history, of present sociopolitical conditions as they currently exist, is in actuality mere groveling before what is. In their early works, particularly in *The German Ideology* (1845) and in *The Communist Manifesto* (1847) Marx and Engels critique the idealist and reactionary interpretation of Hegelian philosophy then current in the European (specifically German) bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. These classes viewed the feudal-monarchical and (burgeoning) capitalist market as

¹⁵ Deleuze sees the significance that the man of *ressentiment*, the “Judaic priest”, the Christian, the socialist, and the democrat, have in Nietzsche’s thought. However, he fails to see the historical and sociological importance these types have for Nietzsche. Whereas Deleuze sees them as categories that can be applied to anyone, Nietzsche sees them as ideal types that are describing real, politico-historical personalities and groups. Walter Kaufmann, however, in his *Nietzsche*, correctly states that “what Nietzsche is concerned with [in the application of these categories] is the contrast of those who have power and those lack it...and he investigates it by contrasting not individuals but groups of people.” The “distinction(s)” are “sociological” in nature (Kaufmann, 297). Of course, that does not necessarily mean that they always have to be used to describe political and sociological groups.

embodiments of historical progress, as embodiments of Hegel's conception of absolute reason and of the *Geist* (the world spirit) on earth. For the founders of historical materialism, however, the acceptance, by both the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, of the concrete contemporaneous sociopolitical reality was a mere ideological outgrowth of their class interests. It provided an ideological justification for social and economic dominance over the ever-growing industrial proletariat, just as the ancient slave-owning and feudal landholding classes saw, naively, their exploitation of the surplus labor of the subaltern classes as the normal development and embodiment of humanity's social, political, economic, cultural, and artistic, capabilities.

Nietzsche also sees a self-serving, almost mercenary element in historicism and Hegelianism. To him, the profound plebeian and anti-aristocratic nature of historicism results from its proponents' conflation of progress with the accomplished fact and historical reality. For example, historicism interprets the French Revolution as one of the greatest events in modern political history—indeed, as ushering in a new age for of European and even all non-European humanity; this is one of the dominant tropes found in the works of nearly all mid-to-late nineteenth century European historians and historiographers, including those who opposed the ideals of the Revolution. For example, in his autobiographical work *Ecce Homo* (1888), which he wrote a year before his mental collapse, Nietzsche criticizes the anti-democratic French historian Hippolyte Taine for succumbing to the historicist notions of Hegel (Nietzsche, 91). And in the *Genealogy of Morals* (1886), he has a fictional and figurative representative of the modern democratic movement say the following:

But why are you still talking about *more noble* ideals! Let us acquiesce to the facts: The common people have won — or “the slaves,” or “the rabble,” or “the herd,” or whatever you prefer to call it — if this happened through the Jews, so be it! Then never has a people had a more world-historic mission. “The masters” have been dismissed; the morality of the common man has been victorious. One might at the same time take this victory as a blood-poisoning (it has mixed the races together¹⁶). I do not contradict; but without a doubt this intoxication has *succeeded*. The “redemption” of the human race (namely from “the masters”) is well on its way; everything is noticeably becoming jewified or christianized or rabbleized (what do words matter!). The progress of this poisoning throughout the entire body of humankind seems unstoppable, its tempo and pace from now on can be ever

¹⁶ Nietzsche's conception of race will be further discussed in the third section.

slower, more subtle, less audible, more thoughtful ● one has time after all...
(Nietzsche: 227-228). (Emphasis added.)

The slavish acceptance of the victory of “the common people,” and of the democratic and egalitarian values and mores of modernity, constitutes, for the German philosopher, the very essence of historicism. Such a slavish acceptance of social and political reality, as it now exists and is constituted, implies an acceptance of the development of the modern democratic movement and its equation with progress as such.

That is, for Nietzsche, the acceptance of the accomplished historical act, which, by means of its actuality and its being brought into being through the passage of time, and its thus *becoming* history as such, is problematic because within this notion is implied the *acceptance of modernity*. To accept modernity is to imply that the existence of the modern European democratic and socialist movement, and indeed, all European and non-European emancipatory movements and ideologies, is progressive, and actually constitutes the height of human progress. The leveling and gradual weakening, effeminization, and rendering mediocre of the modern human is, in fact, an instance of *regression* (Nietzsche: 220). To accept existing reality as it is currently constituted, to bow before European modernity as if it represented the acme of all human potential and capability, is not only absurd; it represents the plebeian, anti-bellucose, and anti-aristocratic ethos of the utilitarian bourgeois, of the socialist and anarchist “herd animal” (Nietzsche: 119). To change, to utterly and ruthlessly destroy modern social and political relations in order to construct, not a socialist society, but rather an aristocratic society, a society where slavery for the masses is a necessary prerequisite for the artistic and cultural flowering of a new ruling class, a class that has and recognizes its right to dominate and command, a society that combines elements of classical antiquity and of the Renaissance, yet also includes and goes beyond the technological and educational developments and accomplishments of modernity—this is what the German philosopher sees as representing the “self-overcoming of man,” as the “bridge to the Overman,” and thus a surpassing of modernity (Nietzsche: 330). Yet such an overcoming of modernity is not synonymous with the supersession (*Aufhebung*) of the Hegelian and historicist dialectic. Rather, the surpassing of modernity is a simultaneous destruction of modernity and all its constitutive elements, as well as the escape from any linear notions of historical progress and time, of change, of becoming, and of being. The overcoming of modernity is predicated upon the creation of a mode of sociopolitical, cultural, and aesthetic existence that is based on the simultaneous destruction of (democratic) modernity, with its dissolving egalitarian and democratic notions and value judgments, the retention of

elements inherited from antiquity and the Renaissance, and the simultaneous creation of a completely new social and political order, an order that still retains the educational and technological methods and habits of modernity and that will be used to “breed” a new “domestic slave” and “herd animal,” a new *instrumentum vocale* for the new master caste. Thus, the break with modernity, which represents the regression of humanity, can only be accomplished by breaking with all linear notions of history, of becoming and of being, and thus, with Hegelianism and historicism. It is in this sense, in breaking with Hegelianism and historicism and in destroying the political and ideological constitutive elements of modernity, that Nietzsche, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, writes of the philosophical and ideological (Hegelian) “morass of the fifties” of the nineteenth century and writes, “We cannot help but be revolutionaries!” (Nietzsche, 238) That is, those who, like the German philosopher, oppose notions of inevitable historical progress, who refuse to accept European modernity as embodying humanity’s capability for progress, and who oppose the leveling and mediocritizing influence of the modern democratic movement, cannot help but want to overthrow and destroy, ruthlessly, all the elements of the modern European social and political order, as well as all the elements of the old regime that can no longer be resurrected (but which many European conservatives are still fighting to bring back)¹⁷. This conception of history

¹⁷Throughout this thesis, I have invariably used the terms “conservative” and “reaction” almost interchangeably. In an email communication to me, Domenico Losurdo, whose intellectual biography of Nietzsche I have found to be invaluable, pointed out that there is a subtle distinction between someone who is “conservative” and someone who is a “reactionary.” According to him, conservatives are usually defined by a wish to restore or reinstate the old institutions, values, norms, and practices that have been overthrown by a revolutionary movement. Reactionaries are usually defined by a desire to overthrow a particular revolutionary or radical regime and replace it by a regime that is hierarchical in nature, but do not necessarily favor the restoration of old, long-overthrown institutions (the Church, the aristocracy, etc.) because they see their restoration as quixotic and impractical. According to Losurdo, “We can only speak of Nietzsche as a conservative during his early period,” that is, during his association with Wagner. During his later intellectual development, Nietzsche can only be categorized as a “reactionary” since he opposes modernity but opposes the European conservatives’ attempts to restore the old, pre-1789 regime. Though there is a great deal of intellectual and methodological value in Prof. Losurdo’s distinction, I have decided to refer to the great German thinker throughout this thesis as being simultaneously a conservative and a reactionary, since, as mentioned above, within his opposition to modernity and his project to replace it with a more aristocratic, anti-egalitarian order is the implication that elements of antiquity, of the Renaissance, and even of modern

and of historical change is thus opposed to the conception of history found in Marx and Engels, who, while also calling for a “radical overthrow” of modern social and political relations, also subscribe to the notion of the necessity and possibility of a linear and progressive development and transcendence of human history, which, for the founders of scientific socialism, through its various and manifold stages, has always had one thing in common: class division and exploitation (Marx and Engels, 50).¹⁸

Moreover, the aristocratic man, unlike the base man, the man of *ressentiment*, takes pride in his enemies. The particularity of his adversaries—their intelligence, their rank and status, their courage—all these individual characteristics of the author of his troubles give the aristocratic man a sense of pride (Deleuze, 117). The man of *ressentiment* has no feeling of appreciation for the greatness of his adversary and author

democratic society will be restored and retained *within* that order. I therefore use the terms “conservative” and “reactionary” interchangeably, as signifying any thorough and radical theoretical critique and opposition to, modernity, and the attempt to radically and thoroughly change it.

¹⁸ It should, however, be noted that there is one significant aspect in which Nietzsche and the founders of modern scientific socialism agree. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels, while critical of their narrow, positivist, and economic preconceptions, praise the English historians and political economists of the early twentieth century for nevertheless providing a materialist and nonidealist presentation of human and “civil” history and civil society (Marx and Engels: 225). It must be admitted, however, that in this early stage of their intellectual development, at least, Marx and Engels’ first systematic presentation of the materialist conception of history contains some elements of this vulgar economism and positivism, which Nietzsche would later categorize as characteristically English. They contrast this favorably with the methodologies of German historians of the time, who not only subscribe to the idealist and Hegelian view of history, which sees history as the gradual unfolding of the world spirit in concrete form on earth, but even subscribe to Romantic notions of history as a long epic of war and adventure, of highway robbery and of plunder, and attempts to reduce “history into world history” by means of “a mere abstract act on the part of ‘self-consciousness,’ the world spirit, or of any other metaphysical spectre.” (Marx and Engels: 59) Marx and Engels then famously give the example of the Wars of Liberation, which, contrary to the idealist and Romantic speculations of the German historians, did not occur as a consequence of nationalist idealism or the unfolding of the world spirit, but rather to the more prosaic yet all the more real economic exigencies of the Napoleonic blockade and continental system, and which caused a shortage of sugar and coffee. (Marx and Engels: 58-59) Similarly, in *The Genealogy*, Nietzsche, though also extremely critical of the vulgar positivism and “unhistorical method(s)” of the “English genealogists of morals,” also credits them with at least being the first to present us with a secular, nontheological “history of morality.” (Nietzsche: 217-218)

of his misfortunes—if he should ever be so fortunate as to have such a noble enemy and adversary. He does not appreciate the beauty of particularity. He has no reverence.

How can one love, respect, and even fear, what one has robbed of its distinction? It is this that connects Nietzsche's cosmology of the eternal recurrence with his loathing and horror of radical social change. If willing the eternal recurrence is equated with the affirmation of life, and all of its manifold diversity, then it follows, logically, that one must affirm even what is often deemed as "objections" to life (Nietzsche, 464 n., 91; Deleuze, 15-16; Losurdo, 34-39). Does not life include within its compass pain, oppression, injustice, submission, and cruelty? Does it not include within its compass slavery, dominion, hierarchy, rank, and status? This is the significance that distinction and difference have within Nietzsche's theory of the eternal recurrence of the same.

Peter Berkowitz, in his *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist* (1995), states that, for Nietzsche, "Socrates' theoretical interpretation of reality," was the forbear of the Christian "religious interpretation of the world" (Berkowitz, 243). With its overemphasis on reason and virtue, Socratic philosophy stifles the emotional, instinctual vitalism of the great man, thereby dampening his creative genius (Berkowitz, 243). Socratic philosophy does more than this. Through its emphasis on the corrective powers of the intellect, Socratic philosophy instilled in man the belief in the possibility, the necessity, and the desirability of correcting what are seen as the cruel necessities of life. The harsh realities of existence demand the subordination and enslavement of some and the domination of others. The "Socratic man," with his self-satisfied faith in reason, while possibly recognizing the existence of this necessity of domination and subordination in nature, does not see this necessity as an immutable fact. With a little tinkering, and armed with the powers of reason, the Socratic man corrects the amoral "errors" of existence. The Socratic man wants to eliminate the "cruelties" and "injustices" of life, of nature.

What the Socratic man, the theoretical forbear of the man of *ressentiment*, does not realize is that, "Nature is not immoral when it has no pity for the degenerate: on the contrary, the growth of physiological and moral ills among mankind is the consequence of ... an unnatural morality," i.e., of Judeo-Christian morality (Nietzsche, 32, 52 n.). The "unnatural morality" decried by Nietzsche, is really the attempt to eradicate the cruelties and seeming injustices of life, by means of a preconceived schema drawn by the intellect. The horrible necessities of life, which are taken to be objections to existence, are to be eradicated. Together with his modern descendants, the socialists and the democrats, the Socratic man cries out,

“No more slavery! No more domination! No more subordination to any kind of rule whatsoever!” In the socialists of the nineteenth century, with their preconceived, abstract notions on how to rebuild society anew, Nietzsche saw the visage of Socrates, the believer in reason. What of the noble man, the “aristocratic man?”

The noble human being is he who joyfully accepts the unfairness and injustice of life, and who does not want to correct this injustice with abstract notions of universal equality. Nietzsche’s willingness to accept life in its totality, including the aspects that are deemed as “objections” to it, is in complete opposition to the views taken by the revolutionary thinkers and writers of his time. The German-Jewish poet Heinrich Heine, admired and loved by both Nietzsche and Marx, wrote, “because I believe in progress... I cultivate a conception of the divine higher than that held by those pious people who believe in the eternal unhappiness of man” (Heine: 519; Losurdo: 51).¹⁹ And Marx, in an 1844 letter addressed to Ludwig Feuerbach, praises the famed philosopher-humanist for having “provided... a philosophical basis for socialism.” (Wheen, 55) The German revolutionary and materialist then goes on to say, in surprisingly religious accents, “...The unity of man with man, *which is based on the real differences between men*, the concept of the human species brought down from the heaven of abstraction *to the real earth*, what is this but the concept of society! (Emphases added.)

Heine and Marx believed in the desirability and the possibility of creating a better life for man on earth, by means of the revolutionary reconstruction of society. The elimination of the “objections” to life—such as suffering, oppression, and domination—could be achieved. What Nietzsche saw as the mark of nobility, in the acceptance of ever-recurring life in its totality, Marx and Heine saw as the mark of the oppressed slave, still unable to see the possibilities of emancipation (Losurdo, 34-39). In his letter to Feuerbach, cited above, Marx establishes a link between the concrete differences that exist between individuals, and the abstract concept of humanity. Only by means of a social revolution, a revolution carried out in the here and now, can the abstract notions of the rights of man be realized while still preserving the concreteness of difference and diversity (Losurdo, 34-39). Marx, unlike Nietzsche, Burke, and de Maistre, did not see the impossibility of preserving difference within egalitarianism. For Nietzsche, however, thanks to his philosophical nominalism, the recognition of difference distinguishes the noble man precisely because he recognizes the impossibility of reconciling difference with equality. It is the plebeian who

¹⁹ I have translated this from the original Italian.

either refuses to recognize difference and diversity, or who naively believes one can reconcile difference with the notion of equality. The eschatological connotations found in Marx and Heine of building a just society on earth also help confirm Nietzsche's suspicion of the revolutionary implications of Christianity.

The diversity within the various cycles of constantly returning recurrence will always contain, according to Nietzsche, the "objectionable" aspects of life. The truly noble human being, the aristocrat, the Übermensch, knows this—and therefore wills it, over and over again. Only a man with an aristocratic nature can feel that pathos, that spiritual "enhancement," that "widening" of the "soul", while contemplating that amoral demand for domination and submission, which life constantly requires and displays (Nietzsche, 391). Not so the vulgar man, the man of *ressentiment*. The man of *ressentiment* refuses to accept the necessity of rank, of hierarchy. This is the main reason for Nietzsche's rejection of egalitarian democracy and socialism. As Keith Ansell-Pearson notes in his *Nietzsche contra Rousseau*, Nietzsche viewed the issue of the revolutionary transformation of society "in terms of a problem of an ascetic education" (Ansell-Pearson, 35). This "problem of an aesthetic education" described by Ansell-Pearson is actually the pathos of distance and domination described by the German philosopher in *Beyond Good and Evil*. The great human being looks out over the horizon, and sees the numerous patterns of dominion, of hierarchy, even of enslavement. Instead of being moved with compassion, with a sense of the injustice and cruelty of life, the great human being is awed; he sees this cruel necessity as an affirmation of life, an affirmation that is political and aesthetic, particularly aesthetic. The man of *ressentiment* is blind to all aesthetic sensibilities and considerations. For him, the order of rank is a glaring injustice, a living condemnation of the whole social order, and indeed, of life itself. He does not understand the necessity of the order of rank. Nietzsche believed that culture "can only be conceived along the lines of a pyramid in which society is divided into a noble elite and a mediocre majority... Nietzsche concludes this discussion of the ancient natural law-giving moralities (in *Beyond Good and Evil* and *The Antichrist*) by criticizing the 'socialist rabble' for undermining the worker's instinct and feeling of contentment with himself. Socialism is based on the fundamental delusion that justice is to be reached by equality and the establishment of equal rights....such a demand for equality by the socialists is merely the expression of the envy and vengefulness they share with Christians and anarchists." (Ansell-Pearson, 209)

The imminent reactionary implications of Nietzsche's theory of the eternal recurrence place his thought within the conservative political

tradition. The next section offers a comparison and contrast of Nietzsche's political thought with that of Burke and de Tocqueville. It will be shown that Nietzsche's distrust of all notions of historical progress, as well as his antipathy towards theories of radical social change, have a very distinguished historical pedigree.

CHAPTER TWO

NIETZSCHE, BURKE, DE TOCQUEVILLE, AND THE LEGACY OF 1789

In an even more decisive and profound sense than before, Judea once gain achieved victory over the classical ideal with the French Revolution: the last political nobleness that existed in Europe, that of the seventeenth and eighteenth *French* centuries, collapsed under the popular instincts of *ressentiment*—never on earth had a greater jubilation, a noisier enthusiasm been heard!

Friedrich Nietzsche, 1885

By adhering in this manner and on those principles to our forefathers, we are guided not by the superstition of antiquarians, but by the spirit of philosophic analogy. In this choice of inheritance we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood; binding up the constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties; adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections; keeping inseparable and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities, our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars.

Edmund Burke, 1790

It would therefore be quite wrong to believe that the *Ancien Régime* was a time of servility and dependence. Liberty was far more prevalent then than it is today, but it was a kind of irregular and intermittent liberty, always limited by class distinctions, always bound up with the idea of exception and privilege, which allowed people to defy the law almost as much as the exercise of arbitrary power and seldom went so far as to guarantee to all citizens the most natural and necessary rights. Though limited and twisted in this way, liberty remained fruitful.

Alexis de Tocqueville, 1856

Edmund Burke is the father of political conservatism. His writings on the French Revolution are the fountainhead from which conservatives and reactionaries over the past three centuries have drawn inspiration. Those who have combated the very idea of radical societal transformation have ultimately turned to Burke and his opposition to the French Revolution as a

model on which to base their efforts. In this section, we will attempt to place Nietzsche's critique of modernity within the antirevolutionary intellectual tradition. It will be shown how influential Burke's opposition to the 1789 revolution was on Nietzsche's own intellectual struggle against the modern democratic movement in Europe.

Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* was written in 1790, a year after the revolution broke out in Paris. Some scholars and historians see the *Reflections* as an impassioned warning against the possibilities of revolutionary terror. According to this view, Burke's work was a preemptive attack against the 1794 Reign of Terror, which he somehow foresaw. However, this argument simply does not stand the test of historical criticism, for the simple fact that there are very few references to revolutionary terror in the *Reflections*. The very fact that Burke wrote his book four years before the Terror is itself highly significant. For Burke, the self-emancipation of the French masses was the real original sin of the revolution, not the possible occurrence of violent excesses. The very notion of the emancipation of the subordinate classes was anathema to Burke. It is this that makes Burke, in many respects, the intellectual forbear of Nietzsche.

There is no evidence that Nietzsche was familiar with Burke's writings. However, the general tenor of Nietzsche's writings on the French Revolution is strikingly similar to Burke's. In any case, any evidence of direct influence is not needed. By being the originator of antirevolutionary critique and opposition, Burke created an atmosphere within the intellectual elites of Europe through which opposition to the rise of egalitarian ideologies could percolate. When Nietzsche sat down at his desk and wrote against the "slave revolt" in morals, he was partaking of that intellectual stock of criticism first formulated by Burke. Nietzsche, Constant, Taine, de Tocqueville: They were all, in many respects, the politico-philosophical heirs of the English Whig. Let us look at the matter more closely.

In a striking passage in the *Reflections*, Burke describes how the "mechanical" philosophy of the French *philosophes* destroyed the grandeur and beauty of the Old Regime.

... the age of chivalry is gone that of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever. Never, nevermore, shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The un-bought grace of life, the cheap defense of the nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled

whatever it touched, and under which life itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness. (Burke, 170)

The greatest crime the French revolutionaries committed, in Burke's eyes, was their destruction of the glittering façade of the French monarchy. The enraged mobs, the gibbet, the scaffold, the revolutionary committees—all these things were irrelevant for Burke. The greatness of the *Ancien Régime* lay in its ability to “soften” the necessity of obedience and subjection in the manor and in the royal palace, with the features of friendship and camaraderie (Burke, 171). There was already equality within domination, within the Estate. That “spirit of an exalted freedom,” which abided “even within servitude itself,” was a sense of camaraderie within the relationship of lord and serf, of king and subject. The equality that existed between the monarch and, say, his favorite cup bearer was greater than the abstract equality of man and citizen touted by the revolutionaries. There was almost a kind of patronizing benevolence that the lord and the monarch had for his social inferiors. It was repaid, on the part of the subaltern, with a loving pride, which they had precisely because of their submission to power.

Then along came the revolutionaries, armed with the abstract theories of Voltaire and Rousseau. With these “mechanical” theories, the revolutionaries tore away the glittering pomp and circumstance of the monarchy. The revolutionaries saw the old society as a decaying cadaver, upon which they could conduct any and every social experiment. By cutting up and dissecting the body politic, the revolutionary “calculators” destroyed the romantic coverings hiding the ugliness and decay of the Old Regime. Through the application of their theories, they have created disenchantment with the world, as it once was (Burke, 170-171). The Jacobins wanted to strip the Old Regime down to its bare nuts and bolts; they wanted to rip away the “decent drapery of life” in order to uncover “the defects of our naked, shivering nature....” According to Burke, “now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle and obedience liberal....all the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off” (Burke, 171). Burke was essentially a political Romantic at heart.

The eminent Burke scholar and biographer Conor Cruise O'Brien notes how instrumental the revolution was in delineating Burke's suspicion of abstract intellectualism. According to him, what characterized the French Revolution's English sympathizers, against whom Burke polemicized, was their “rational rejection of superstition” (O'Brien, 55). Rejection of faith and “superstition” in the name of reason and progress was a common feature of the European Enlightenment tradition. Faith in reason was of ten, though not always, yoked to faith in inevitable historical progress. Burke was one of the first leading intellectuals of his time to question this faith. Burke's

critique of faith in reason and progress was tied, however, to his critique of the disintegrating influence reason has on society. Reason, in its very nature, is abstract. It has no immediate relation with the concreteness and particularity of reality. Most importantly, reason does not *recognize* particularity. It tries to overcome and equalize these particularities, these differences.

In the first section, we discussed the importance the acceptance and affirmation of difference plays in Nietzsche's theory of the eternal recurrence. This affirmation cannot be carried out by the base man, the plebeian, the man of *ressentiment*. We also explored how reason and the intellect are the primary weapons used by the man of *ressentiment* in his attempt to correct the injustices and "objections" to life. Burke was the first to recognize the egalitarian implications of the systematic use of reason by the European intellectual to reconstitute society. Nietzsche also recognized these implications—and strove to combat them.

In *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, for example, he provides a similar critique of theoretical abstractness. In his discussion of the decline of Greek tragedy, he first presents us with the instinctual love the Greeks had for beauty and grandeur.²⁰ He writes, "(The) Greeks were superficial—out of profundity" (Nietzsche, 681-683). In noting the acidic corrosiveness that Socratic philosophy had on Dionysian tragedy, Nietzsche writes, "Whenever the truth is uncovered, the artist will always cling with rapt gaze to what still remains covering even after such uncovering..." (Nietzsche, 94) The "profundity" of the ancient Greeks lay in their recognition of the dangers of disenchantment with the world. They saw the importance, the necessity, of myth. Without myth, without a mythical tragedy, the Greeks would have suffered from the same ailment affecting modern European man. That is, they would have suffered from the drab, dull, and monotonous boredom that is the natural concomitant of bourgeois society. We see then, that Nietzsche was just as much influenced by political Romanticism as Burke was.²¹

²⁰ Domenico Losurdo is one of the few scholars, I believe, who has noted the central importance of this work for the development of Nietzsche's politico-philosophical thought. For Losurdo, *The Birth* is not just a work on aesthetics and philosophy; nor is it merely the result of Nietzsche's association with Wagner. Rather, it is an attack on the (dangerously) revolutionary implications that Socratism, modern science, and abstract revolutionary theories have, for the status quo. The main dichotomy of *The Birth* is not, according to Losurdo, the Apollonian versus the Dionysian, but rather, the Socratic versus the Dionysian (Losurdo, 5-103).

²¹ On the relation Nietzsche's thought has with Romanticism, see Peter Viereck, *Metapolitics: The Roots of the Nazi Mind* (1941), and Fritz Stern, *The Politics of*

The myths of the Dionysian tragedies served as a religious justification for aristocratic rule in the polis, as well as an aesthetic embellishment of the ugly necessities of political dominance, such as slavery (Nietzsche, 18; Safranski, 71-73; Losurdo, 55-58). Compare the above quoted statements by Nietzsche, with Burke's horrified and contemptuous remarks on the demystifying nature of French revolutionary doctrines:

In this scheme of things (of revolutionary transparency), a king is but a man; a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal; and an animal not of the highest order. All homage paid to the sex in general as such, and without distinct views, is to be regarded as romance and folly. Regicide, and parricide, and sacrilege, are but fictions of superstition, corrupting jurisprudence by destroying its simplicity. The murder of a king, or a queen, or a bishop, or a father, are only common homicide; and if the people are by any chance, or in any way gainers by it, a sort of homicide much the most pardonable, and into which we ought not to make too severe a scrutiny (Burke, 171).

Regicide and parricide do not occur as a result of political fanaticism and extremism. This is the explanation which is often given by most conservative theorists and philosophers. For Burke, however, regicide and parricide are the logical and inevitable outcomes of disillusionment and disenchantment. Where there is no sense of respect and veneration, there is no fear. Bloody chaos—or unbearable boredom—is the only outcome of the loss of fear and respect. This disillusionment with the political world is mirrored by Nietzsche's man of *ressentiment*, who lacks the ability to distinguish, to see and acknowledge difference, and is therefore enraged at the seeming injustice of life (Nietzsche, 464 n., 91, 391; Deleuze, 15-16; Ansell-Pearson, 35).

The man of *ressentiment* is willing to be bored and disenchanted with life, so long as he establishes “justice” on earth. That is, so long as he gains his mess of pottage—and so long as his mess of pottage is of the same kind and amount as that of others. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche writes that the “theoretical man” of science, of which Socrates was the prototype, has “the unshakeable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of correcting it” (Nietzsche, 15; Berkowitz, 62). The abstractness of theory, (of scientific and positivistic theory in Nietzsche's case, and of revolutionary theory in Burke's,) is sharply

Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology (1961). These two works will be further discussed in the next section, as will the various interpretations of Romanticism.

opposed to the vitalism of life, embodied in the *status quo*, in “being” (Berkowitz, 62).

I have already noted the importance Nietzsche placed on the role of Socrates as the first avatar of the dialectic. Dialectical notions of human history, for Nietzsche, were falsely optimistic, as well as dangerous, in their ability to inspire attempts at radical societal transformation. If Burke saw the French Jacobins and their theories as embodiments of evil, Nietzsche saw Socrates as the prototype of the revolutionary intellectual (Losurdo, 5-103).²² Socrates’ almost pathological emphasis on reason, as well as the arid abstractness of his notions on virtue, are opposed to the healthy, instinctual vitalism of the Athenian aristocracy. Losurdo and Safranski have both emphasized the importance the Paris Commune of 1871 had on Nietzsche’s contraposition of Socratism to the Dionysian tragedies. For example, he believed the reports that the Parisian workers had ransacked and burned down the Louvre.²³ The German philosopher described the day on which he learned of the workers’ seizure of Paris as “the worst day of my life” (Nietzsche, 195; Safranski, 72). According to Safranski, Nietzsche, around this time, “accused ‘democrats’ of wanting to emancipate the masses and leading them to believe in the ‘dignity of labor’ and the ‘dignity of man’” (Safranski, 72). The “sophistically” abstract theories of the revolutionaries, described in the *Reflections*, find their counterpart in the arid dialectics of Nietzsche’s Socrates (Losurdo, 79-84).

Alberto Toscano, in his work on the historico-philosophical connotations of the concept of fanaticism, notes the central importance Nietzsche’s critique of abstraction has in his politico-philosophical *Weltanschauung*. For Toscano, “The raising of universal standards is ‘mortally dangerous’” for the German philosopher, because it can lead “to an exhaustion of life, a quashing of that instinctual and natural joy which is the precondition for any affirmation.” (Toscano, 135) By imposing on himself the constraints of a systematic philosophy of moral valuations, the individual restrains and limits himself. Existence requires and even *demand*s the necessity of domination and subordination. Life needs the “order of rank between men.” The attainment of a high level of culture and civilization on the part of man requires the subordination of the many by the few. That is why the Greeks created a form of cultural life that still arouses the wonder and admiration of many. Morality, whether in its Christian or revolutionary guise, forces the noble and aristocratic individual to see all men as his “brothers.” It

²² See Chapter One.

²³ This was later proved to have been a rumor purposefully spread by the French Republican government, headed by Adolph Thiers.

forbids slavery and the existence of rank and hierarchy and therefore precludes the existence of any development of culture.

Nietzsche saw the philosophical and theoretical antecedents of abstract “French fanaticism” in the dialectic, particularly in its Hegelian and Socratic forms (Losurdo, 5-103; Nietzsche, 176-79). In fact, Nietzsche takes his critique of abstraction one step further than Burke. Whereas Burke (and de Maistre) blamed the Enlightenment *philosophes* for planting the seeds of revolution and revolt, Nietzsche attacks the entire Western philosophical and intellectual tradition, going back to Plato and Socrates, as the true originators of modernity. In *The Dawn of Day* (1881), which Nietzsche describes in *Ecce Homo* as being his first “campaign against morality” (Nietzsche, 746), he writes, “Morality has shown to be the greatest mistress of seduction ever since men began to discourse and persuade on earth. ... She is the veritable *Circe of philosophers* (Nietzsche, 3-4; Toscano, 135). The originators of corrosive, abstract morality, that seditious morality from which the theory of “the rights of man” sprang, were the Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophers, not Voltaire and Rousseau. In one of his last works, the German philosopher remarks that “the moralism of the Greek philosophers from Plato on is pathologically conditioned; so is their esteem of dialectics. Reason, virtue, happiness, that means merely that one must imitate Socrates and counter the dark appetites with a permanent daylight—the daylight of reason” (Nietzsche, 478). And again, in the same work, the German philosopher acerbically sums up the world view of Socrates and Plato: “One must be clever, clear, bright at any price: any concession to the instincts, to the unconscious, leads *downward* (Nietzsche, 478).

Of course, it would be simplistic to make a causal, mechanistic connection between Nietzsche’s views on Greek tragedy and the Paris Commune. The events in Paris merely helped crystallize Nietzsche’s conservative and reactionary views and enabled him to see the supposed implications of Socratism in their historical immediacy. Just as the events of 1789 helped Burke crystallize his antirevolutionary theories, so the Commune and the rise of the modern democratic movement helped clarify Nietzsche’s conservative viewpoint. Burke’s *Reflections* were not written in a historical vacuum; they were written as a response to the conflagration taking place across the Channel. Similarly, Nietzsche’s sustained philosophical attack against egalitarianism was the result of what was going on in the wider world. The abolition of American slavery, the rise of the labor and socialist movements, the anti-colonial movements in India and

China²⁴—these were what Nietzsche had in his mind when he sat down to write *Beyond Good and Evil* and *The Antichrist* (Losurdo, 508-509; Wolf, 358; Hobsbawm, 76).

Nietzsche's admiration of aristocratic societies for recognizing the importance of "the order of rank between men," is strongly similar to the views offered by Burke in the *Reflections*. There, Burke laments the demise of the communitarianism of the former French Estates, a communitarianism that had been swallowed up by the cold, heartless, mechanical, and bureaucratic centralization of the revolutionary State. Burke takes the organicism of French feudalism and pushes it one step further, into an eternal contract made between the living and the dead, a contract forged in the deceased members of the Estates. He writes, "The institutions of policy... are handed down, to us and from us, in the same course and order" (Burke, 120). Burke viewed society through the lens of social contract theory. Yet this theory of the social contract differs significantly from the social contract theory of the English Utilitarians and the French Romantics.

The English Whig viewed society as a living, breathing organism of flesh and blood. The individuals composing this peculiar organism were inheritors of the rights, duties, and privileges ascribed to the originators of the social contract. They were also the transmitters of these rights and duties to their future descendants, just as they themselves had inherited their rights and privileges from their ancestors (Losurdo, 292-304). Burke saw the rights of the individual members of society as an entailment, akin to the property of landowners of the Old Regime. Burke's theory of the social contract was essentially aristocratic. Rights, like privileges, are not given, and they certainly are not taken. They are inherited and passed down, just as the estate of a noble lord is passed down to his descendants. It is not man in the abstract who inherits these privileges, but rather, the member of the English commonwealth (Burke, 120). The concreteness of the English conception of member of society is favorably contrasted to the abstract and universalist nature of the French "rights of man" (Burke, 120, 123; Losurdo, 301).

Nietzsche's stress on the importance of aristocratic societies for cultivating the higher man has its antecedents, then, in the work of the English Whig.²⁵ The very concept of aristocracy, of hierarchy (or, as

²⁴ Losurdo, for example, points out the influence that Christian-messianic ideas had on the leaders of the Chinese Taiping Rebellion in the late nineteenth century, and what this did in confirming Nietzsche's views on the inherently revolutionary nature of Judeo-Christian morality. (Losurdo, 508-509)

²⁵ In a very Burkean passage in *The Dawn of Day*, Nietzsche describes tradition as the result and embodiment of the collective unconscious of society: "What is

Nietzsche describes it in *The Will to Power* and *Beyond Good and Evil*, the “order of rank between men”) is indicative of Nietzsche’s conception of individualism. Far from being the prophet of an extreme, atomistic individualism, which is how thinkers from Emma Goldman to Ayn Rand have seen him, Nietzsche saw the importance of community. This is shown by his preference for aristocratic societies. Aristocratic societies, by their very nature, are the complete antithesis of atomistic societies. The individual aristocrat or nobleman rules over the members of the lower Estates, but he does not do so individually; his political domination and leadership is predicated on his membership in a caste, an Estate. The ruler, the ruling classes, and the “subaltern classes,” to use a Gramscian phrase, are embedded within a particular group, a particular community.

The very idea of hierarchy implies the existence of groups that are ordered on a principle of hierarchy, of domination, regardless as to whether that principle is based on blood, rank, status, or all three. And if the individual aristocrat has attained a level of power that exceeds the customary amount, then he becomes, to use one of Nietzsche’s favorite Latin phrases, *primus inter pares* (first among equals). Nevertheless, his exercise of power still takes place, and can only be exercised within, his Estate (Nietzsche, 391; de Tocqueville, 177; 62, Losurdo, 123).

This dialectical conception of an individualism that is tethered by the constraints of the aristocratic community and Estate is not only the antithesis of bourgeois individualism. It is also the antithesis of any conception of communitarianism that is predicated on the central importance of the state in political life. Nietzsche’s anti-statism, which has been discussed *ad infinitum* and which will be further analyzed in the next section of this thesis, is the direct corollary of his aristocratic conception of individualism. While the feudal or neo-feudal estate restrains the potential destructiveness the individual might have on the existence of the hierarchical community, the centralized, modern state suffocates the creative capacities of the individual. The modern bureaucratic state, with its centralizing tendencies, crushes the spirit, initiative, and above all, creative genius, of aristocratic individuals.

Nietzsche saw the gradual loss of rights by the French aristocracy in the sixteenth century as a politico-cultural loss of the highest order. He writes:

tradition? A higher authority, which is obeyed not because it commands what is useful to us, but merely because it commands. And in what way can this feeling for tradition be distinguished from a general feeling of fear? It is the fear of a higher intelligence which commands, the fear of an incomprehensible power, of something that is more than personal there is *superstition* in this fear.” (Nietzsche, 150)

When... an aristocracy, like that of France at the beginning of the Revolution, throws away its privileges with a sublime disgust and sacrifices itself to an extravagance of its own moral feelings, that is corruption; it was really only the last act of that centuries-old corruption which had led them to surrender, step by step, their governmental prerogatives, demoting themselves to a mere *function* of the monarchy (finally even to a mere ornament and showpiece). The essential characteristic of a good and healthy aristocracy, however, is that it experiences itself *not* as a function (whether of the monarchy or the commonwealth) but as their meaning and highest justification that it therefore accepts with a good conscience the sacrifice of untold human beings who, *for its sake*, must be reduced and lowered to incomplete human beings, to slaves, to instruments. Their fundamental faith simply has to be that society must *not* exist for society's sake but only as the foundation and scaffolding on which a choice type of being is able to raise itself up to its higher task and to a higher state of *being*... (Nietzsche, 392).

In this passage, we see that Nietzsche is going even further than Burke. Whereas Burke saw the unplanned spontaneity of existence with admiration, and saw this very spontaneity its greatest strength, Nietzsche is calling for something completely different. The German philosopher is calling for a *planned* society of aristocratic noblemen whose creation of intellectual and artistic works of genius are made possible by the drudgery of the many, of the *instrumentum vocale* (Burke, 383; Losurdo, 92).

How could anyone describe as “individualistic” a society that is predicated on the “sacrifice of untold human beings” for the sake of a small ruling elite? Certainly, there is an individualistic element in this ideal scheme of Nietzsche's. The “sacrifice of untold human beings” is enacted for a select group of individuals who command these poor drudges at will, and use them and mold them for their political, intellectual, and artistic plans.

Yet this individualism has nothing in common, either with the atomistic individualism of bourgeois liberalism, or with the self-edifying individualism of the existentialists and post-modernists. Nietzsche's extreme anti-statism is the logical result of the necessity of having “slaves” and “instruments.” For if the aristocracy of the future will require slaves for the carrying out of their cultural mission, then any enlargement of the state, and of its centralizing tendencies, will threaten the hegemony of the aristocrats' power. Nietzsche's anti-statism has more in common with the anti-statism of the American anti-abolitionists, the landlords and nobles of aristocratic Poland and France, and the European capitalist magnates, than it has with that of Thoreau and Mencken. (Toscano, 2; Safranski, 76; Losurdo, 125, 131-132, 302-303; Spini, 272, 276-277) The granting of political and

economic rights to marginalized social groups by the modern state—which has been at the core of the modern democratic movement—is looked at askance by Nietzsche as a curtailment of the rights the higher man has over his slaves. The German philosopher’s individualist anti-statism is a result of his reactionary “aristocratic radicalism.” That is not to say that Nietzsche’s philosophical struggle against the state, as the “new idol,” as “the coldest of all cold monsters,” cannot be used as an inspiration for emancipation (Nietzsche, 82-83, 160). Indeed, many prominent figures within the left-anarchist tradition, such as Emma Goldman, utilized Nietzsche’s war against the modern bureaucratic state as a symbol of defiance against conformity. Indeed, Goldman, in her collection *Anarchism and Other Essays* (1910), writes fulsomely of the German philosopher and of his views on the individual and her role in society and the state. Goldman sees Nietzsche as a prophet of radical individualism and anti-statism, in the tradition of Mikhail Bakunin, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, and Max Stirner. In a passage which foreshadows the “hermeneutics of innocence” mentioned by Losurdo (and which will be further discussed below) she writes, “The most disheartening tendency common among readers is to tear out one sentence of a work, as a criterion of the writer’s ideas or personality. Friedrich Nietzsche, for instance, is decried as a hater of the weak because he believed in the *Übermensch*. It does not occur to the shallow interpreters of that giant mind that this vision of the *Übermensch* also called for a state of society which will not give birth to a race of weaklings and slaves” (Goldman, 44). In the essay *Minorities versus Majorities*, she describes the willingness of the masses to submit to their capitalist (and reformist Social Democratic) exploiters and deceivers in lyrical, almost Nietzschean terms. She writes, “The mass itself is responsible for this horrible state of affairs. It clings to its masters, loves the whip, and is the first to cry ‘Crucify!’ the moment a protesting voice is raised against the sacredness of capitalistic authority or any other decayed institution. Yet how long would authority and private property exist, if not for the willingness of the mass to become soldiers, policemen, jailors, and hangmen. The Socialist demagogues know that as well as I, but they maintain the myth of the virtues of the majority, because their very scheme of life means the perpetuation of power... Authority, coercion, and dependence rest on the mass, but never the birth of a free society” (Goldman, 77-78). In the few years preceding his mental collapse, Nietzsche was surprised and pleasantly amused to discover that his ideas were being widely accepted and debated by German and French anarchists and feminists—that is, by those against whose very ideas he had been carrying on a systematic and sustained philosophical and ideological attack for two decades (Cate, 502; Aschheim, 305). In fact, as we shall

discuss further, it was the German anarchists and Social Democrats—not the reactionary *Junker* landowning nobility and the Prussian military caste—who, in the late 1880s and 1890s, were the first in Wilhelmine Germany to propagate Nietzsche's ideas—so much so that the German conservative and militarist ruling elites associated anarchism and socialism, in the 1890s, with Nietzscheanism! (Aschheim, 305)

The pathos of aristocratic individualism found in Nietzsche is also found in Burke, in his pathos of the “dear domestic ties” and the “warmth” of the “hearths” of an England co-ruled by monarch and nobility (Burke, 120). It is also found in another conservative²⁶ political philosopher, Alexis de Tocqueville.

In his 1856 work *The Ancien Régime and the French Revolution*,²⁷ De Tocqueville shows us that he too belongs, in many respects, to the conservative-Romantic intellectual tradition founded by Burke. He also saw the revolution as destroying the hierarchical organicism of the premodern era. His admiration, for example, of the decentralized independence of the provinces of feudal France is unbounded.²⁸ With the exceptions of England and Germany, nowhere does one find, according to de Tocqueville, that

²⁶ De Tocqueville is often seen and described as a classical liberal. Certainly, his sympathy for liberal theories and practices, as well as his anti-statism, would place him within the liberal tradition. However, insofar as de Tocqueville opposed radical social change, and attributed the rise of the modern European democratic movement to the supposedly pernicious influences of the ideals of 1789, I view him as a conservative. I will describe him as such throughout this thesis. Indeed, the opposition to any kind of radical societal transformation, either by means of a revolution, or by reformist means, is the definition of conservatism that has been utilized throughout this study.

²⁷ Though *Democracy in America* is de Tocqueville's most famous work, we will largely focus on *The Ancien Régime and the French Revolution*, because it presents a systematic *précis* of his views on radical social change.

²⁸ In his monumental study of the origins and history of the Russian Revolution, titled *Lenin and the Bolsheviks* (1965), the anti-Communist Polish-American historian Adam B. Ulam notes the long-established (liberal, conservative, and anti-radical) intellectual tradition of explaining the emergence of movements for radical social change from the national and ethnic character of various peoples. In discussing Bakunin's anti-Semitism and Teutonophobia, he writes, “The study of the national character can produce almost any conclusion. It was fashionable among certain English historians of the nineteenth century to attribute constitutionalism to the ‘Germanic spirit’ and to contrast with it the instinctive penchant toward despotism found among the Latin nations and the Slavs.” (Ulam, 42 *f*) That de Tocqueville and Nietzsche subscribe to such a tradition will be soon shown.

fierce passion for liberty, freedom, and self-governance found it in feudal France.²⁹ For example, he writes that

“Courts of justice (in France) wielded legislative power indirectly. They had the right to issue administrative regulations enforceable within the limits of their jurisdiction. At times they challenged the administration, forthrightly denounced its policies, and arrested its agents. Local judges issued police regulations in the cities and towns in which they resided” (de Tocqueville, 40).

And further on he writes, “The old administration of the kingdom strikes one as thoroughly diverse; diverse in its rules, diverse in authority, a true hodgepodge of powers. France was replete with administrative bodies and isolated officials, with none subordinate to any other and all participating in government by virtue of some right they had purchased, which could not be reclaimed. Often their functions overlapped or impinged on one another to such a degree that they dealt with very closely related matters, resulting in frequent frictions and clashes” (de Tocqueville, 40).

That, of course, began to change with the rise of the absolute monarchy, which, as de Tocqueville never tired of pointing out, *preceded* the revolution by a few hundred years (de Tocqueville, 40-41).

But de Tocqueville, like Burke and Nietzsche, also saw the dialectical relationship between individualism and collectivism that existed in these local institutions. Though they certainly exhibited a fierce independence toward the governing authorities in Paris, these institutions were also models of communal and communitarian self-governance. The courts and provincial and regional governorships were closely modeled on the feudal Estates. Therefore, the leaders of these institutions were able to closely connect with those over whom they governed, without interference from the center (de Tocqueville, 53).

²⁹ That there is an inherent racialism in de Tocqueville’s admiration of these institutions (as mentioned above) is a foregone conclusion. In his observations on Roman law versus Germanic law in the Notes of *The Ancien Régime and the French Revolution*, there is an implicit supposition that the Germanic peoples have an inherently racial love of liberty and independence, whereas the more authoritarian Roman Latins are incapable of having a love of freedom and liberty. (Losurdo, 203, 266-267) These ideas are also found in the works of de Tocqueville’s friend, Count Arthur de Gobineau, and later, in the works of H. R. Chamberlain. They are also found in the first essay of Nietzsche’s *The Genealogy of Morals*, where he describes communal forms of living as physiological and atavistic expressions of a pre-Aryan, “essentially dark-haired people” (Nietzsche, 466-467). This theme will be taken up at greater length below.

Losurdo, in his book *Liberalism: A Counter-History* (2011), notes this dialectical interdependence between the principles of collectivism and the principles of individualism found in de Tocqueville's work. He writes that when de Tocqueville "paid homage to the individualism of the Middle Ages" he "did not take into consideration the fate of the serfs." (Losurdo, 202) He also notes that the French aristocrat believed that it...

... was necessary to distinguish between "two different forms of liberty." One should not confuse "the democratic and, dare I say it, correct conception of "liberty," understood not as "common right" but as "privilege." The latter prevailed in England, as in "aristocratic societies" in general, with the result that there was no place for "general liberty.... It can happen that the love of liberty is all the more alive among some the less one encounters guarantees of liberty for all. The rarer it is, the exception in such cases is all the more precious." The aristocratic conception of liberty produces, among those who have been thus educated, an exalted sense of their individual value and a passionate taste for independence (Losurdo, 123).

The above cited remark by Losurdo about the "aristocratic conception of liberty" is significant, for it delineates a conception of individualism held by Burke, Nietzsche, and de Tocqueville. This conception of individualism is not dichotomous; rather, it provides space for a socio-political arena in which the "aristocratic" individual can exist. This socio-political space is the feudal caste or estate, discussed above. The aristocratic individual can only know liberty among his own equals. While experiencing liberty in this fashion, the aristocratic individual simultaneously experiences absolute power over the dominated ranks below.

There is a Romantic admiration for the collective organicism of feudalism that one finds in de Tocqueville (de Tocqueville, 53-54). He is not, as neoliberals such as Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich von Hayek later believed, the prophet of an unrestrained, atomistic individualism. We have seen this admiring stance taken by Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*, where he praises the fierce independence of the French aristocracy, and laments its transformation into "a mere function of" the absolute monarchy (Nietzsche, 392).

De Tocqueville was in many respects the intellectual heir of Burke. He too, was troubled by the bureaucratic centralization of local, self-governing institutions by the modern state. He too, lamented the disappearance of all those decentralized units of private power (lords, governors, clerics, etc.), which he saw as models of representative self-government. And, like Burke, he also lamented the loss of power by some of the greatest specimens of the proud, independent nobility (de Tocqueville, 42; Burke, 170).

The “oeconomists” mentioned by Burke, in the passage cited above, reappear in de Tocqueville’s *Ancien Régime*. A true child of Romanticism, de Tocqueville saw the Third Republic of Napoleon III as a republic of, for lack of a better word, mammon. (Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin*, 234-237) He was alienated by the materialistic mores of his society and the avidity for wealth and riches that so many of his fellow Frenchmen displayed. And it was this passion for riches that was one of the ultimate causes, in the French theorist’s view, of the decline of the passion for freedom and liberty.³⁰ For “those who prize liberty only for the material benefits it offers have never kept it for long” (de Tocqueville, 151). Furthermore, for de Tocqueville, as well as for Burke, money was an abstraction that was in turn a symbol of the abstract revolutionary ideas that overturned French society.

This Romantic distaste of materialism is found in de Tocqueville’s account of the intellectual influences of the revolutionaries. One of these influences was the economic ideas of the physiocrats. The abstract economic and political theories of the French physiocrats were a reflection of their abstract worship of capital. The revolutionaries’ attempt to destroy the mystique of the *Ancien Régime*, to strip French society to its bare nuts and bolts, mirrored the physiocrats’ attempts to make the processes of economic life transparent. He writes:

This particular form of tyranny, known as democratic despotism, of which the Middle Ages had no idea, was already familiar to the Economists: no more social hierarchy, no more well-demarkated classes, no more fixed ranks; a people composed of almost identical and entirely equal individuals, an indistinct mass recognized as the only legitimate sovereign but carefully deprived of all the faculties that might allow it to rule or even oversee its government by itself (de Tocqueville, 147).

Money was the great destroyer of rank, personality, and individuality; it was the leveler *par excellence*. Again, one finds in de Tocqueville themes that are found in Burke and Nietzsche.

In the first section,³¹ we noted the difference between Deleuze and Kaufmann’s views on Nietzsche’s critique of Christianity. Deleuze sees the “man of *ressentiment*,” the concept of “slave morality,” and “Judaic priest,” as designating individual types, completely abstracted from any kind of

³⁰ De Tocqueville’s scathing critiques of the materialism of the Third Republic are reminiscent of Marx’s critiques of the rampant financial speculation that took place under the rule of King Louis Phillipe, in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

³¹ See Note 26, above.

socio-historical context. Kaufmann, on the other hand, sees these types as describing certain kinds of sociological and historical groups, what Max Weber calls “ideal types” (Kaufmann, 297). Though Nietzsche’s conceptions of the “Judaic priest,” etc., can certainly be used to describe a wide variety of individuals, we believe that Kaufmann was fundamentally correct when he sees the types as delineating concrete political, social, and historical entities. This is all the more ironic since Kaufmann (as well as Deleuze) does not attribute any kind of political implications or motives behind Nietzsche’s attacks against Christianity. The attacks are supposedly motivated by a liberal, existential humanism that combines the healthy rationalism of the Renaissance and the eighteenth century with the angst and anomie of modernity. This interpretation is, we believe, fundamentally incorrect.

Nietzsche’s critique of Christianity is deeply, if not solely, motivated by his anti-radicalism. The German philosopher saw Christianity, and Judeo-Christian morality, as being the originator of the concept of equality, of political egalitarianism (Robin, 94-96). For Nietzsche, the ideas of political and economic and social equality, which define liberalism and socialism respectively, could not have existed without the prior existence of equality before God. Perhaps his entire philosophical struggle against Christianity, “the calamity of millennia,” can be summed up in a note of his in *The Will to Power*:

Another Christian concept, no less crazy, has passed even more deeply into the tissue of modernity: the concept of the “equality of souls before God.” This concept furnishes the prototype of all theories of equal rights: Mankind was first taught to stammer the proposition of equality in a religious context, and only later was it made into morality. No wonder that man ended by taking it seriously, practically! That is to say, politically, democratically, socialistically (Nietzsche, 401; Robin, 93).

The godless, atheistic doctrines of socialism and anarchism, so prevalent in Europe in the late nineteenth century, were the inheritors, not the destroyers, of the Christian religion. Christ’s dictum “the first shall be last, and the last first” was being realized in secularized Europe, by means of the modern democratic movement. (Nietzsche, 593)

In his *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze sees an understanding of the man of *ressentiment* as the key to understanding Nietzsche’s anti-Christianity (Deleuze, 115). The man of *ressentiment* cannot forget, he cannot forgive; he constantly harps and picks on, every (real or supposed) injustice. He “cannot ‘have done’ with anything” (Nietzsche, 58, Deleuze, 114). We have already seen, in the first section, how the man of *ressentiment* sees the world. The harsh necessities of life, which require

domination, slavery, and obedience, are seen by him as a grave injustice. This injustice can, and *must*, be rectified.

The memory of the man of *ressentiment* is venomous and depreciative because it blames the object of his hatred in order to compensate “its own inability to escape” from his own powerlessness (Deleuze, 116). By proclaiming the strong, noble, and powerful of this world as “evil” and “godless,” the Christian then poses himself as the “good” and the “truthful” (Nietzsche, 36-37; Deleuze, 119). The slave, consumed by hatred, of himself and of others, wallows in the subliminal pleasure of condemning the powerful, who he *cannot harm in reality*. The Sermon on the Mount becomes the manifesto of unfulfilled, rankling revenge. For Nietzsche,

...what they (the oppressed) desire they call, not retaliation, but “the triumph of justice;” what they hate is not their enemy, no! they hate “injustice,” they hate “godlessness;” what they believe in and hope for is not hope of revenge, the intoxication of sweet revenge...but the victory of God, of the just God, over the godless; what there is left for them to love on earth is not their brothers in hatred but their “brothers in love,” as they put it, all the good and just on earth (Nietzsche, 484).

The unfulfilled wish to gratify one’s hatred and revenge against the powerful is sublimated further in the abstruse doctrines of liberalism and socialism. In short, Nietzsche’s anti-Christianity was motivated, as Kaufman (and Deleuze) point out, by his larger struggle against *ressentiment*; for Nietzsche, being weak, and making a virtue of one’s weakness, is the cardinal “sin” in established Christianity. When the Christian says, in his smug, self-satisfied way, “I am forgiving you—not because I am weak, but because I am a moral person and a Christian,” he is displaying an unmatched cowardice and dishonesty (Nietzsche, 482-484). The truly “moral” thing to do, for Nietzsche, would be to say, “I forgive you—not because I am weak and I have to, but rather, because I am strong enough for it.” Therein lies the essence of Nietzsche’s opposition to Christianity. The error in Kaufman and Deleuze’s interpretations lie in their failing to see the inherent connection between Nietzsche’s antipathy towards *ressentiment* and his struggle against political and social equality.

Kaufmann, the pioneer in creating the widely held image of an apolitical Nietzsche, describes Nietzsche’s anti-Christianity in sociological terms. For example, when Nietzsche describes, in *The Antichrist*, Jesus and Saul as “the two most Jewish Jews perhaps who ever lived,” (Nietzsche, 566), he was not being anti-Semitic. What he meant was that all of the supposed negative aspects of Judaism (of championing “the people at the bottom”) which the German anti-Semites loathed, were precisely present and magnified in Christianity (Kaufmann, 566-567, 21-23). This is certainly

true. Yet it is precisely this that loads Nietzsche's distaste for Christianity (as well as his admiration of Judaism as it was before the Babylonian exile) with political, reactionary implications. Nietzsche describes pre-exilic Judea as "the time of the kings," (Losurdo, 893; Deleuze, 191), when...

...Israel stood on the right, that is, the natural relationship to all things. Its Yahweh was the expression of a consciousness of power, of joy in oneself, of hope in oneself, of hope for oneself.... Yahweh is the god of Israel and therefore the god of justice: the logic of every people that is in power and has a good conscience. In the festival cult these two sides of the self-affirmation of a people find expression: They are grateful for the great destinies which raised them to the top; they are grateful in relation to the annual cycle of the seasons and to all good fortune which come from stock farming and agriculture (Nietzsche, 594).

Notice the Burkeian overtones of this description of pre-exilic Judea. The organic community, cemented by rituals, traditions, and daily habits, the existence of a national religion that reinforces, and is in turn reinforced by, custom; all this is found in Burke's description of the *Ancien Régime* in the *Reflections*. The exile into Babylon, and the subsequent return to the homeland, is overseen by a new figure, the priest, the "Judaic priest" of Deleuze. This priest "falsifies" the history of Israel, which until then had been a history of its noble kings. The way for Christianity, for slave morality, is paved (Nietzsche, 594-598). Christianity "was a rebellion against... caste, privilege, order, and formula" (Nietzsche, 599). If Christianity, in its earliest beginnings, arose as a social protest against the political, social, and religious authority of Pharisaism, then Nietzsche's opposition to it is a foregone conclusion.

● Opposition to the Jewish (and Roman) rulers of its time is what characterizes primitive Christianity; and it is this opposition against authority, against rank and hierarchy, which it has retained and carried into the modern European democratic movement. The man of *ressentiment* is a descendent of the first Christian communities, hiding in the Roman catacombs. Christianity, the first organizer of slaves, women, and paupers against Roman imperialism and Jewish theocracy, is seditious; it is subversive. The German nationalists and anti-Semites of Nietzsche's time, in opposing a populist, *völkisch* nationalism against the supposed Jewish dominators of Europe, were themselves the heirs of Judeo-Christian *ressentiment*.

The possibility of attempting to realize the egalitarian ideals of Christianity by political means was feared by de Tocqueville, as much as by Nietzsche. The third chapter of the first part of *The Ancien Régime* is

titled “How the French Revolution was a Political Revolution that Proceeded in the Manner of Religious Revolutions, and Why.”

In it, de Tocqueville touches upon the relation the principles of 1789 had with religious values, particularly those of Christianity. De Tocqueville saw the French revolutionaries’ fervor as being semi-religious; their passion for liberty, equality, and fraternity matched the passion of the religious enthusiasts of the Middle Ages. In fact, he saw the events of 1789-1794 as being a continuation of the great chiliastic and eschatological movements of the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century. (de Tocqueville, 21; Nietzsche, 490) The ideals of 1789, “like Islam, inundated the earth with its soldiers, apostles, and martyrs.” (de Tocqueville, 21) The French aristocrat had a grudging admiration for the revolutionaries’ passion, for their willingness to make sacrifices for their ideals.

According to him, “Since it (the revolution) appeared to aim at a regeneration of the human race even more than at the reform of France, it kindled a passion that not even the most violent political revolutions had ever aroused before. It inspired proselytism and propaganda, and therefore came to resemble a religious revolution, which was what contemporaries found so frightening about it. Or, rather, it itself became a new kind of religion—an imperfect religion, to be sure, without God, cult, or afterlife—yet a religion that, like Islam, inundated the earth with its soldiers, apostles, and martyrs (de Tocqueville, 21).

But there was also a recognition that the inherent dogmas of Christianity—equality, humility, love of the neighbor—not only mirrored these revolutionary ideals, but may even have created them. That is, de Tocqueville saw the abstractness of the ideals of equality and universal justice as being the inheritors of the principles of Christianity, which make no distinctions based on race, class, sex, or rank. The French aristocrat’s views on religion are astonishingly similar to Nietzsche’s, the greatest critic of Christianity Europe ever produced. Christ, according to Nietzsche in *The Antichrist*, “made no distinction between foreigner and native, between Jew and non-Jew....” (Nietzsche, 606). For “culture is not known to him (Christ)...the same applies to the state, to the whole civic order and society, to work, to war...the ecclesiastical concept of ‘world’ never occurred to him.” (Nietzsche, 606) Consider, for example, the abstractness of the principles of Christianity:

Religions typically consider man in himself, ignoring what the laws, customs, and traditions of a particular country may have added to the common fund of humankind. Their principal aim is to regulate man’s relationship with God in general and to specify his rights and duties in relation to other men, *independent of the form of society*. (Emphasis added).

The rules of conduct that religions lay down pertain not so much to man in a particular country or period as to the son, the father, the servant, the master, the neighbor. Because religions are thus rooted in human nature, they can be accepted equally by all men and applied everywhere. (de Tocqueville, 20)

De Tocqueville was one of the first political theorists of the early nineteenth century to see the intimate connection between Christianity and radical social change. He shrewdly recognized that the egalitarian tendencies of Christian theology could serve as catalysts for attempts to realize social justice. And, as Nietzsche would realize half a century later, de Tocqueville saw the implicit revolutionary potential of Christian dogmas. He saw that the concept of political and economic and social equality cannot have existed without the prior existence of the concept of equality before God. (Robin, 94-96) Surely, the French aristocrat would have sympathized with Nietzsche's formulation in *The Genealogy of Morals*, where he describes the French Revolution as the culmination of the ideals of Judeo-Christian morality. According to the German philosopher, "With the French Revolution, Judea once again triumphed over the classical ideal..." (Nietzsche, 490)

De Tocqueville's simultaneous distrust of and admiration for religious fanaticism was echoed by Joseph de Maistre. As mentioned above, de Maistre was deeply hostile to the abstract, egalitarian tendencies of revealed religion.³² Like de Tocqueville and Nietzsche, he also held religious egalitarianism responsible for the events of 1789-1794. For him, though, it was Christianity in its Protestant form that was responsible for the disasters besetting France (Robin, 94-96). De Maistre writes, "It is from the shadow of a cloister that there emerges one of mankind's very greatest scourges. Luther appears; Calvin follows him. The Peasant's Revolt; the Thirty Years' War; the civil war in France... the murders of Henry II, Henry IV, Mary Stuart, and Charles I; and finally, in our day, from the same source, the French Revolution (de Maistre, 27; Robin, 92).

De Maistre's passionate disparagement of the Reformation is echoed by Nietzsche (particularly in his later works). For racialist authors such as H. R. Chamberlain, the Reformation was "the shaking off of that 'dead hand' of the extinct Roman Empire" (Chamberlain, 512). Nietzsche, on the other hand, like de Maistre, saw it as nothing short of a political and cultural disaster. He writes, "What happened? A German monk, Luther, came to Rome. This monk, with all the vengeful instincts of a shipwrecked priest in his system, was outraged in Rome—*against* the Renaissance.... Luther saw

³² See page 12 of the first section.

the *corruption* of the papacy when precisely the opposite was more obvious: the old corruption, the *peccatum originale*, Christianity no longer sat on the papal throne. But life! But the triumph of life! But the great Yes to all high, beautiful audacious things! And Luther *restored the church*: he attacked it (Nietzsche, 654).

Nietzsche's plaintive, ecstatic cries about the "triumph of life" within the context of the Renaissance are significant. The affirmation of life, the "saying Yes to life," consists of accepting existence in its entirety. Existence includes pain, oppression, suffering, and domination, as well as freedom, joy, and pleasure. Life—at least a higher form of life—requires domination, drudgery, and servitude for some, just as much as it requires leisure, pleasure, and joy, for others. Only the oppressed, the dominated, the men of *ressentiment* themselves refuse to accept this necessity; only they attempt to overturn the world in an effort to realize their abstract, abstruse notions of justice and equality.³³ Luther's dirty, unwashed peasants refused to accept the necessity of hierarchy within the Catholic Church, just as the French *sans-culottes*, two centuries later, refused to recognize the necessity of hierarchy within the Old Regime. The great *condottieri* of the Renaissance, with their violent, proud, cynical temperament, did not balk at using violence, at using force to subjugate their enemies and inferiors. They accepted life, in all of its cruel and harsh necessities. The Machiavellian prince said "Yes!" to life.

For Nietzsche, the Reformation halted the dissolution of the Church, and thus the seat of egalitarian Judeo-Christian morality, at its very center. It halted the gradual throwback to the values and mores of ancient Greece and Rome, which, for Nietzsche, was the single most important aspect of what we now call the Renaissance. Like de Maistre, he saw the Reformation as being a forerunner of the French Revolution and of the "plebeianism" of the modern age. (Nietzsche, 489-490) Of course, the German philosopher always carried a grudging admiration for Luther, the ex-Augustinian monk who was courageous enough to accept his sexuality and marry an ex-nun. For example, in his later works, he always favorably contrasts Luther with Richard Wagner, who had abandoned the "healthy sensuality" of his earlier years. (Nietzsche, 535-536, 615-616) Indeed, Nietzsche's writings on the Reformation constitute some of his best work.

On the whole, however, the religious revolution launched by Luther symbolized, for Nietzsche, the decline of aristocratic Europe.

A century later, the Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci would also note the socio-political importance of the Reformation for the

³³ See the first section.

political landscape of Europe. Whereas Nietzsche thought the Reformation was disastrous, Gramsci lamented the fact that Italy had not experienced the cultural and political equivalent of Luther's rebellion (Gramsci, 98, 132-133, 393-394; Losurdo, 449, 536, 952 n., 990-991). Indeed, the greatest omission of the Italian Renaissance intellectuals, in Gramsci's eyes, was that their "philosophical crisis did not extend to the people, because it did not originate from the people and there did not exist a 'national-popular bloc' in the religious field" (Gramsci, 33-34, 393-394). This failure on the part of the Renaissance intellectuals to establish organic links with the people was, in Nietzsche's eyes, their greatest merit—and strength.

The respective views of German philosopher and Italian Marxist theorist on the role literature written in the national vulgate plays in the development of nationalism and national consciousness, or, to use Gramsci's term, "national-popular" consciousness, delineate the anti-democratic motivations behind Nietzsche's hostility to the values and ideals of the Reformation. Indeed, the German philosopher's ideas on modern literature are astonishingly similar to Gramsci's—though of course, they are loaded with reverse value judgments. In note 434 of *The Will to Power*, while commenting on the smugness and pompousness of the self-righteous, Nietzsche writes, "Result: little people are superior to them (great men) in their way of living, in patience, in goodness, in mutual assistance—approximately the claim made by Dostoyevsky or Tolstoy for his muzhiks: they are more philosophical in practice, they meet the exigencies of life more courageously—" (Nietzsche, 239). For Nietzsche, the Christian anarchism of Tolstoy, with its base found in the Russian peasant commune, or *mir*, was not the negation of either Christianity or socialism. Rather, it was the logical and inevitable result of Christianity itself. To be more precise, it was the inevitable result of that primitive, egalitarian Christianity that destroyed Rome, and which Nietzsche thought was still possible to have in our modern world (Nietzsche, 607, 610, 39, Kaufmann, 37). For Nietzsche, Tolstoy was just one example among many of the infection of modern European literature by the values of Christianity, of socialism, and of "the morality of pity." Gramsci, in the *Prison Notebooks*, after noting the role Christianity played in the fall of Rome, writes, "Tolstoyism had the same origins in czarist Russia" and compares Tolstoy's agrarian Christian-socialism with "Gandhism" (Gramsci, 61). According to Gramsci, "Through Tolstoy, Gandhi, too, is connected to primitive Christianity; throughout India, a form of primitive Christianity is being revived that the Catholic and Protestant world cannot even comprehend" (Gramsci, 61). It is perhaps one of the greatest and most disappointing ironies in intellectual history that a great figure like Gramsci, whose ideas regarding the

Reformation, the French Revolution, modern literature, and early Christianity were heralded by Nietzsche, regarded the German philosopher as a minor thinker whose conception of the Übermensch was a mere romantic intellectualization of Dumas' *Count of Monte Cristo!* (Gramsci, 548)

By not having a Reformation, according to Gramsci, Italy deprived herself of having a popular, nationally-minded bourgeoisie, a bourgeoisie that would have been willing and able to lead the various classes in a popular, revolutionary upheaval. While being imprisoned by the man who felt "a spiritual eroticism" every time he read Nietzsche (Smith, 54), Gramsci noted the aristocratic, anti-national, and hence anti-popular nature, of the Italian Renaissance:

In reality, the national bourgeoisie (of the Renaissance) imposed its own dialects, but it failed to create a national language. If a national language did indeed come into existence, it was limited to the literati, and they were assimilated by the reactionary classes, by the courts... (The Renaissance was) a cultural compromise, not a revolution. (Gramsci, 98).

For Gramsci, the immortal legacy of the Reformation is that it created "a vast national-popular movement" in the German states, a movement which eventually helped create "the German nation as one of the most vigorous in modern Europe" (Gramsci, 394, Croce, 11). In France, the equivalent of the German Protestant Reformation was the Enlightenment, which of course was monumentally instrumental in causing the Great Revolution of 1789-1794 (Gramsci, 394). Whereas de Maistre and Nietzsche believed the Reformation should be viewed with suspicion, because of its populist origins and undertones, Gramsci believed that these very underpinnings of the Reformation should be celebrated and enhanced. If Gramsci, a Marxist, looked favorably upon the "national-popular" underpinnings of German Protestantism (as well as the "national-popular" literature produced in Germany since the Reformation)³⁴, precisely because

³⁴ Nietzsche's outcry against modern European literature's infection with the "modern democratic prejudice," as well as with the anti-Classical style and taste of realism ("Zola or the art of stinking") is echoed by one of the leading neoliberal and anti-radical thinkers of the twentieth century: Ludwig von Mises. In his classic 1922 work, *Socialism, An Economic and Sociological Analysis*, the Austrian neoclassical economist and theorist accuses Dickens and other nineteenth-century English Victorian authors of subscribing to anti-capitalist and socialist ideas. Thus, we are in the presence of an intellectual and ideological tradition that, while seemingly critiquing the fanatical and intolerant nature of radical democratic and socialist thought, is opposed to the free and unregulated circulation of literary,

of their nation-building tendencies, can Nietzsche's antipathy towards Protestantism and German nationalism be attributed to the same reasons? Can Nietzsche's anti-nationalism be attributed, not to his supposed liberal humanism, but rather, to his fear of the masses, of their participation in the political realm? We will address this in the next section.

Nietzsche's critique of Christianity (particularly in its Protestant form) and of Judeo-Christian morality, is based on a profound distaste of political egalitarianism. This deep distrust of the egalitarian and revolutionary implications of Christian dogma did not originate with him. The German philosopher was partaking of a well-established intellectual tradition within the reactionary, conservative tradition (Robin, 92-94). The American conservative Peter Viereck, in his work on German Romanticism, writes that "ideas do not 'cause' history; but they do shape the particular form which history, however caused, will take" (Viereck, xxvi). For Nietzsche, the penetration of the dogmas of Christianity into the decaying Roman Empire gave history a new, insidious "form." This new "form" was the ever-increasing liberation from domination of all the "subaltern classes" of antiquity and the modern world: slaves, women, industrial workers, etc.

In their respective writings on the French Revolution, Alexis de Tocqueville and Joseph de Maistre, who were leading lights of the conservative tradition, also noted the fanatical, semi-religious aura of the revolution. They too, attributed the rise of egalitarianism in Europe, of which the revolution opened the floodgates, to the spiritual heritage of Christianity (though in de Maistre's case, it was Christianity in its Protestant form that was the real culprit). Nietzsche, in works such as *The Genealogy of Morals* and *The Antichrist*, proudly proclaims himself the heir, and continuator, of this anti-Christian, anti-revolutionary tradition.

intellectual, and artistic works because of their possible contamination with populist and anti-capitalist sentiments.

CHAPTER THREE

NIETZSCHE, ROMANTICISM, AND NATIONAL SOCIALISM

In Germany and Austria, the Jew had come to be regarded as the representative of capitalism, because a traditional dislike of large classes of the population for commercial pursuits had left these more readily accessible to a group that was practically excluded from the more highly esteemed occupations. It is the old story of the alien race's being admitted only to the less respected trades and then being hated still more for practicing them. The fact that German anti-Semitism and anti-capitalism spring from the same root is of great importance for the understanding of what happened there, but this is rarely grasped by foreign observers.

Friedrich A. von Hayek, 1944

Anti-Semitism is the socialism of fools.

August Bebel, 1895

The history of Israel is invaluable as the typical history of all *denaturing* of natural values... Originally, especially at the time of the kings, Israel also stood in the right, that is, the natural, relationship to all things. Its Yahweh was the expression of a consciousness of power, of joy in itself, of hope for oneself: Through him victory and welfare were expected; through him nature was trusted to give what the people needed above all, rain. Yahweh is the god of Israel and therefore the god of justice: the logic of every people that is in power and has a good conscience.

Friedrich Nietzsche, 1888

Did Israel not achieve the final goal of its sublime revenge using this very detour of the "redeemer," this apparent adversary and disintegrator of Israel? Is it not part of the secret black art of a truly *grand* politics of revenge, a farsighted, subterranean, slow-working and pre-calculating revenge that in front of the whole world Israel itself had to repudiate as its mortal enemy and nail to the cross the actual instrument of its revenge, so that the "whole world," namely all opponents of Israel, could unhesitatingly bite into this very bait?

Friedrich Nietzsche, 1886

...I am necessarily also the man of impending disaster. For when the truth squares up to the lies of millennia, we will have upheavals, a spasm of earthquakes, a removal of mountain and valley such as have never been dreamed of. The notion of politics will then completely dissolve into a spiritual war, and all configurations of power from the old society will be exploded—they are all based on a lie; there will be wars such as have never yet been on earth. Only since I came on the scene has there been *great politics* on earth

-Have I been understood?

Dionysius against the crucified one... Friedrich Nietzsche, 1888

Nietzsche's friendship and subsequent break with Wagner is one of the most interesting and controversial aspects of the German philosopher's life. His first book, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, was written under the German composer's aegis. From the late 1860s until the mid 1870s, Nietzsche's greatest wish was to be Wagner's intellectual armor-bearer. His dream was to help lay the intellectual groundwork for Wagner's cultural and artistic reception by the German people. In 1876, however, shortly after Wagner's triumph in Bayreuth, Nietzsche broke with his revered master, and attempted to tread his own individual intellectual path. What were the causes of this break, immortal in the annals of music and philosophy?

Before Walter Kaufmann's *Nietzsche* was published in 1950, the common explanation given, in Europe and the United States, was that Nietzsche broke with Wagner over the issue of Christianity. According to this explanation, Wagner had become more and more religious and devout, after aimlessly wandering around in the intellectual "schools" of Feuerbach, Schopenhauer, and de Gobineau. Nietzsche, the greatest European critic of Christianity since Voltaire, was disgusted by this religious conversion, and thus severed relations with the genius of Bayreuth.

Kaufmann, in his book, attempted to disprove this theory. According to him, Nietzsche broke with Wagner not because of the composer's religious transformation, but rather because of his rabid nationalism and anti-Semitism (Kaufmann, 36-37). This is the explanation that has been the widely accepted one for the past fifty years. Which explanation is correct?

It is certainly true that Wagner was influenced by the racist ideas of Count Arthur de Gobineau. De Gobineau, a close friend of de Tocqueville, was the author of *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*, (1855), which is still considered to be the "Bible" of modern racism. Wagner's infatuation with de Gobineau's ideas, however, lasted only for a brief period, roughly from the late 1860s to the early 1870s (Robb, xxix). From

the mid 1870s until his death in 1882, Wagner became more and more Christian, even Catholic (Robb, xxxix). He began espousing ideas on religion and Christian dogma that seem to be the very antithesis of Nietzsche's. Before extensively discussing these ideas, a few selections from Wagner's essays on religion, history, politics, and aesthetics will show us the way. These writings deserve to be quoted at length, for they offer an excellent summation of the German composer's late thought, and illustrate the radical dissimilarity between his notions on morality, politics, and history with those of Nietzsche's.

In his yearning after 'German glory' the German, as a rule, can dream of nothing but a sort of resurrection of the Roman Empire, and the thought inspires the most good-tempered German with an unmistakable lust for mastery, a longing for the upper hand over the other nations. He forgets how detrimental to the welfare of the German peoples that notion of the Roman State has been already.

Source

The blood of suffering mankind, as sublimated in that wondrous birth (of Christ), could never flow in the interest of howsoever favored a single race; no, it sheds itself on all the human family, for noblest cleansing of man's blood from every stain. Hence the sublime simplicity of the pure Christian religion, whereas the Brahminic, for instance, applying its knowledge of the world to the insurance of supremacy for one advantaged race, became lost... and sank to the extreme of the absurd. Thus, notwithstanding that we have seen the blood of noblest races vitiated by admixture, the partaking of the blood of Jesus, as symbolized in the only genuine sacrament of the Christian religion, might raise the very lowest races to the purity of gods. This would have been the antidote to the decline of races through comingling, and perhaps our earth ball brought forth breathing life for no other purpose than that ministrance of healing.

Source

The Greek Apollo was the god of beautiful men; Jesus the God of all men; let us make all men beautiful through freedom.

Source

Through its measureless value to the individual does the Christian religion prove its lofty mission, and that through its dogma.

Source

We await the fulfillment of Christ's pure teaching... the son of the Galilean carpenter, who preached the reign of universal human love thus would Jesus have shown us that we all alike are men and brothers.

Source

The very shape of the Divine had presented itself in anthropomorphic guise:
it was the body of the quintessence of all pitying Love.

Source

It was the spirit of Christianity that rewoke to life the soul of Music.

Source

The monstrous guilt of all this life a divine and sinless being took upon himself, and expiated with his agony and death. Through this atonement all that breathes and lives should know itself redeemed.

Source

Christianity's founder was not wise, but divine... To believe in him, meant to emulate him: to hope for redemption, to strive for union with him.

Source

...a hunbering philology, which fawns upon the guardians of the ancient law
of the Right of the Stronger

cited from Robb: xxviii-xxix, xxxiii-xxxiv.

We see then that toward the end of his life, Wagner had formulated a systematic religio-political and aesthetic worldview. This worldview, this *Weltanschauung*, included within its compass the fundamental tenets of Judeo-Christian morality, and was thus the radical antipode to the call by Nietzsche, his former pupil, for a new ethical system, "beyond good and evil," based on the aristocratic and bellicose values and mores of classical antiquity.

In an 1880 essay, for example, entitled "Religion and Art," (already quoted above) in which he attempted to recapture the true message of Christ from the obfuscations of official Christianity, the German composer writes that "Christianity's founder was not wise, but divine; his teaching was the deed of free-willed suffering. To believe in him meant to emulate him; to hope for redemption, to strive for union with him. To the 'poor in spirit' no metaphysical explanation of the world was necessary; the knowledge of its suffering lay open to their feeling; and not to shut the doors of that was the sole divine injunction to believers (Wagner, 214-215).

If Nietzsche titled his final written attack against Christianity *The Antichrist*, then the above cited passage from Wagner's essay deserves to be labeled *The Anti-Nietzsche*. The very reasons Nietzsche gives as to why he despises Christianity—the cult of equality, pity, self-denial, and long-suffering—are used by Wagner as a defense of Christianity. Take, for example, Wagner's denigration of Hinduism in favor of Christianity.

In “Religion and Art,” Wagner writes of “the sublime simplicity of Christianity” as opposed to the Brahminic, which, through application of “its knowledge of the world to the insurance of supremacy for one advantaged race, became lost... and sank to the extremes of the absurd” (Wagner, 225; Robb, xxx). The composer, who still counted himself as a disciple of Schopenhauer and his philosophy of pity, found himself moved by the sublimity and grandeur of the crucified Christ. He writes of the “extremes of the absurd” that Hinduism, the (supposedly) racist and Aryan religion *par excellence*, sank to, in its attempt to organize Indian society into different castes (Robb, xxix-xxx). In the nineteenth century, Hinduism was seen by many German nationalists and racists as the greatest spiritual creation and emanation of the Aryan “soul.” It was living proof of the aristocratic, anti-egalitarian character of the Aryan peoples, just as Christianity was seen as proof of the egalitarian, anti-hierarchic nature of the Semitic peoples.

Whereas Nietzsche admired the Greeks for their recognition of the cruel necessity of slavery for the existence of culture, Wagner scathingly condemns the enthusiasts of classical antiquity, and of “a lumbering philology” (Robb, xxiv). He condemns them for advocating “the ancient law of the Right of the Stronger,” which found its greatest realization in Sparta (Robb, xxiv). This negative attitude towards the caste system of Hinduism, which Wagner so passionately expressed, is the very antithesis of Nietzsche’s views on hierarchy. In the late 1880s, Nietzsche became acquainted with Hinduism by reading a translation of the Lawbook of Manu. In one of his works, Nietzsche writes of the Laws of Manu, “perhaps there is nothing that outrages our feelings more” (Nietzsche, 3; Kaufmann, 225). Kaufmann takes this comment to mean that Nietzsche was opposed to the hierarchical organization and remodeling of society.

We believe he was mistaken. When Nietzsche writes that “perhaps there is nothing that outrages our feelings more” than the Laws of Manu, he is critiquing the sensibilities of modern man. Modern man has imbibed the language, thought, and sensibilities of egalitarianism. The very idea of a conscious and planned enslavement or subjugation of entire populations, all for the benefit of a select few, shocks us. It disgusts us. This idea goes against our moral and ethical sensibilities. This is what Nietzsche means when he says that “perhaps there is nothing that outrages our feelings more” than the Indian caste system. He is giving a sarcastic jab in the ribs of moral, modern “free thinkers,” whose ideal is the creation of a society free of domination, submission, and slavery. Indeed, Nietzsche never recanted his views on the necessity for slavery, which he first put forth in “The Greek State” (1872). The German philosopher is the quintessential embodiment of

those devotees of “a lumbering philology” that Wagner condemned for wanting to reconstruct the world of classical antiquity (Ellis, xiii-xxvii).

Wagner’s worshipful love of Christ, his admiration for the “pitying love” of Jesus, disgusted his former disciple. Indeed, the German composer’s reaffirmation of his Christian faith sheds new light on his politico-philosophical differences with Nietzsche. In his *Metapolitics: The Roots of the Nazi Mind*, Peter Viereck writes that the three pillars of Western culture and civilization are the classical heritage of Greece and Rome and the universalist teachings of Christianity (Viereck, 179-180, 181). No argument there. Yet Viereck, who accuses Wagner and Wagnerian Romanticism of paving the way for the Nazi catastrophe, fails to recognize an important distinction. Wagner ultimately accepted Christianity and its emphasis on the importance “of a common humanity” (Viereck, 181).

Nietzsche, whom Viereck exculpates of any moral responsibility for the rise of Hitler, did not. Yet it was Wagner, not Nietzsche, who accepted, and joyfully affirmed, the idea of humanity. It was Wagner, not Nietzsche, who decried the pagan religions and cultures of antiquity (as well as Hinduism), for their toleration of slavery and inequality. According to Viereck, “Christian equality...outlawed morally that blemish of classical culture, slavery” (Viereck, 180). It was precisely the moral condemnation of slavery on the part of Christianity that led Wagner to contrast it favorably with the “more warlike classic heritage of Hellas and Rome” (Viereck, 180; Robb, xxix-xxx). Nietzsche, on the other hand, as a result of his philosophical nominalism, rejects the concept of humanity. He accuses the advocates of humanitarianism and universalism as being “un-Greek” (Nietzsche, VII, 127). He constantly writes approvingly of the Greeks, who recognized the necessity of slavery as a prerequisite of culture and civilization.

This recognition of the necessity of slavery on the part of the Greeks is condemned by us moderns as immoral and inhumane, and as going against the principle of the equality of all men. For Nietzsche, the moral condemnation of slavery and domination by democrats and socialists is the greatest—and most insidious—heritage of Christianity. For Viereck, refusal to accept the universalistic principles of Christianity in favor of a concrete nominalism is the mark of German conservative Romanticism. By Viereck’s method of reasoning, then, Nietzsche, and not Wagner, deserves the title of German Romantic and proto-fascist. Before delving even further into the topic, it would be pertinent to discuss at some length the various interpretations of Romanticism, as well as the interpretation we deploy when utilizing the term “Romanticism.”

Political and intellectual Romanticism played a huge role in German cultural life in the nineteenth century. Romanticism, particularly in its German embodiment, has even been “placed in the dock and found guilty” for the crimes committed in Auschwitz and Buchenwald (Curtis Cate, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, xix). There is no doubt that Nietzsche opposed the fundamental preconceptions of Romanticism in his works (Viereck, xviii-xxii; Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, 124). The philosophical and political underpinnings of his opposition, however, have almost never been fully analyzed. Irving Babbitt, in his *Rousseau and Romanticism*, writes that, “in general a thing is romantic when... it is wonderful rather than probable; in other words, when it violates the normal sequence of cause and effect in favor of adventure” (Babbitt, 18). This “violation” of a supposed “normal sequence” for the sake of “adventure” is perhaps the key to understanding Nietzsche’s anti-Romanticism.

In the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution, the ideas and ideals of Romanticism spread like wildfire throughout the European continent. Some Romantic thinkers, such as Immanuel Kant, Hegel, and Johann Gottlieb Fichte, were supporters of the ideals of the Enlightenment and French Revolution. Others, such as Adam Müller and Heinrich von Kleist, opposed the ideals of “Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality” with the more reactionary, conservative “Blood and Soil” Romanticism à la Burke. In a private email communication, Domenico Losurdo notes that, “...we are not allowed to lose sight of the differences between American and European culture. Within European culture it would be more difficult to speak of ‘the Romantic antecedents of German fascism.’ Fichte, who celebrates the French Revolution and the endless capacity of the subject to carry out a revolutionary transformation of the political reality has to be located within Romanticism, but within a Romanticism that is far from being conservative!” (Losurdo, private email communication)

It is this radical, egalitarian wing of European Romanticism that Nietzsche opposes. (Left-wing) Romanticism, for Nietzsche, symbolized not only the disintegrative ideology of the French revolutionaries; it also symbolized the destruction of all sense of taste, style, and class, in favor of the new and the untried, of “adventure.” This “adventure” can be either a euphemism used to describe the breaking of all classical restraints in matters of aesthetic taste, or a euphemism for the breaking of all social and political restraints, in short, for revolution. This is all the more significant if we take into consideration certain elements of Wagner’s biography, specifically the early years of his musical, aesthetic, and political development, years which Nietzsche believed were significant enough to touch upon in his later writings, such as *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (1888), *The Case of Wagner*

(1888), and *Ecce Homo* (1888). The young Wagner's association with the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, his adoption of the "grotesque and grandiose musical style of the Parisian Romantic composers of the early 1840s (who had socialist and populist sympathies) accompanied his enthusiasm for the republican and even proto-socialist ideals of the revolutions of 1848-1849. Of even more importance for the later Nietzsche were the populist and socialistic overtones of the *Ring*, which were indicative of egalitarian strain in the German composer's worldview (Nietzsche, 56). In section 8 of *The Case of Wagner*, the German philosopher discusses Wagner's abandonment of all musical stylistic restraint and order and compares it to the literary anti-classicism of Victor Hugo and the French Romantic novelists. He writes, "Wagner was *not* a musician by instinct. He showed this by abandoning all lawfulness and, more precisely, all style in music in order to turn it into what he required, theatrical rhetoric, a means of expression, of underscoring gestures, of suggestion, of the psychologically picturesque (Nietzsche, 628-629). And further on, he writes:

Here we may consider Wagner an inventor and innovator of the first rank *he has increased music's capacity for language to the point of making it immeasurable*: He is the Victor Hugo of music as language. Always presupposing that one first allows that under certain circumstances music may be not music but language, instrument, *ancilla dramaturgica*. Wagner's music, if not shielded by theater taste, which is a very tolerant taste, is simply bad music, perhaps the worst ever made. When a musician can no longer count up to three he becomes "dramatic," he becomes "Wagnerian" (Nietzsche: 629).

Romanticism, for the German philosopher, was egalitarian and revolutionary; therefore, it was dangerous and must be combated. Throughout his works, from *Human, All Too Human* (1878) to *Ecce Homo* (1888), Nietzsche favorably contrasts classicism to Romanticism. For the German philosopher, classism represented the recognition of discipline, of control over others as well as over oneself. Classism is the acknowledging of class, rank, status, and taste; it is essentially aristocratic in nature. Romanticism, on the other hand, was one of the major intellectual strands of thought coming out of the French Revolution and the brainchild of the "moral tarantula" Rousseau (Nietzsche, 5).

Beginning with *Human, All Too Human*, which he wrote after his break with Wagner, Nietzsche begins to oppose Rousseau and Romanticism with the enlightened, aristocratic skepticism of Voltaire (Nietzsche, 220-221, 133, 552-553; Kaufmann, 354 n.). Voltaire "restricted with Greek moderation his polymorphic soul." Rousseau, on the other hand, with his

“passionate idiocies and half-truths... called awake the optimistic spirit of revolution....” (Nietzsche, 221). For the German philosopher, Voltaire was the embodiment of aristocratic skepticism and artistic taste, of classical self-discipline and self-control. The proponent of enlightened absolutism, Voltaire was the primary exemplar of political elitism and cultural taste (Losurdo, 247-249, Israel, 123, 157, 658, 220-221). Rousseau, on the other hand, was the founder of political and philosophical Romanticism, and hence the plebeian antithesis of the French *philosophe*. Rousseau was the “first modern man, idealist and rabble in one person” (Nietzsche, 552-554). He was the very embodiment of laxity and lack of taste and self-control.

Nietzsche’s distinction between Rousseau and Voltaire has been confirmed by modern-day historians of the European Enlightenment, most notably by Jonathan Israel. In his *Democratic Enlightenment; Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750-1790*, Israel notes that the intellectual movement that has been subsumed under the title “The Enlightenment” was not as homogeneous as once thought. According to him, there was a conservative and elitist wing of Enlightenment thought, headed by Voltaire (and Hume), which opposed democratic government and the emancipation of the masses in favor of an enlightened absolutism. Another intellectual tradition within the Enlightenment, according to Israel, which favored popular government and the participation of the masses in political life, was primarily influenced by Rousseau (Israel, 17-19). According to Israel, “Throughout the history of the Enlightenment... this fundamental and irreversible duality (between “radicals” and “conservatives”) was so important that it generally remained the chief factor shaping the Enlightenment’s course” (Israel, 17). By placing himself within the conservative Enlightenment tradition established by Voltaire, Nietzsche was opposing the radical Enlightenment antecedents of the French Revolution and its egalitarian Romantic heritage (Losurdo, 247-249).

It is this opposition toward political Romanticism and its radical, egalitarian roots in the ideals of 1789—specifically, all forms of political and ideological fanaticism—that leads Nietzsche to favor the aristocratic and noble principle of *skepsis*, of skepticism as embodied in the anti-obscurantism of Voltaire. For the German philosopher, the absolute certainty in truth, in one’s own truth, smacks of plebeian absolutism (Losurdo, 235; Nietzsche, 544). Only the “rabble” have an absolute faith in truth, in the certainty of their moral and ethical codes. What is problematic about this, for Nietzsche, is that moral and ethical fanaticism, founded on moral and even epistemological certitude, almost always leads to political fanaticism. It is this notion that lies at the very core of the post-Wagner period of Nietzsche’s intellectual and political development, his

“Enlightenment” phase, as it were; indeed, from the “Enlightenment” phase all the way to his last period of intellectual development, Nietzsche’s thought would include a great deal of positivist elements and aspects, particularly in his epistemological writings.

By positivist, we do not mean an empirical, supra-rational, mechanistic, and hence superficial interpretation of the world and its phenomena, though there certainly are elements of this to be found in his writings. By positivist, we mean rather an anti-ideological, skeptical approach towards political, moral, ethical, and epistemological certitude, an approach that, in the twentieth century found its most well-formulated theoretical and methodological expression in Karl Popper’s theory of falsifiability. For Nietzsche, certainty smacks of ideology and moral fanaticism and, as we have already seen, moral fanaticism as a consequence of ideological certainty is almost always a plebeian phenomenon. Thus, we see that the German philosopher’s anti-plebeianism and hostility towards egalitarianism and political fanaticism is at the core of his positivism and pro-Enlightenment stance (Losurdo, 233). In fact, as we shall see, this elitist and conservative interpretation of the Enlightenment would even be subscribed to by Hitler and other leading Nazi ideologists in the twentieth century. The hostility toward political fanaticism as an instantiation of radical plebeian resentment against hierarchy, and the reinterpretation of elements of the Enlightenment tradition as embodying a more healthy and thus more noble (in the political, moral, and social sense) interpretation of social and material reality, is thus unique to Nietzsche (Losurdo, 233).

The German Marxist theorists and sociologists Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, in their work *Dialektik der Aufklärung (Dialectic of Enlightenment)*, originally published in 1947, first set out the central and fundamental tenets of twentieth century critical theory. Their main thesis is that Western civilization and culture’s attempt to dominate the forces of nature by means of technology, science, and rationality, an idea which they believe is the central tenet of all Enlightenment thought, has led to the domination of man by man, to the creation of techniques useful in the oppression and instrumentalization of human beings. Though their argument and their reasoning is at times tortuous, Horkheimer and Adorno, in their conceptual linkage between Enlightenment rationality and the justification for human domination, have successfully captured, however unwittingly, the associational linkage in the anti-revolutionary political tradition between reason and *skepsis*, on one hand, and political aristocracy and opposition to political egalitarianism, on the other. This ideational and theoretical association is to be found in Nietzsche, in de Sade, and in National Socialist thought (Horkheimer and Adorno, 233). According to

them, Enlightenment rationality consigns the “irrational”, the theological, the moral and ethical, to the realm of the subhuman. They write:

Civilization replaced the organic adaptation to otherness, mimetic behavior proper, firstly, in the magical phase, with the organized manipulation of mimesis, and finally, in the historical phase, with rational praxis, work. Uncontrolled mimesis is proscribed.... The severity with which, over the centuries, the rulers have prevented both their own successors and the subjugated masses from relapsing into mimetic behavior from the religious ban on graven images through the social ostracizing of actors and gypsies to the education which “cures” children of childishness is the condition of civilization. Social and individual education reinforces the objectifying work and behavior required by work and prevents people from submerging themselves once more in the ebb and flow of surrounding nature. All distraction, indeed, all devotion has an element of mimicry. The ego has been forged by hardening itself against such behavior. The transition from reflecting mimesis to controlled reflection completes its formation. Bodily adaptation to nature is replaced by “recognition in a concept, *the subsuming of difference under sameness*. (Emphasis added). (Horkheimer and Adorno, 148).

And further on, they write:

Society perpetuates the threat from nature as the permanent, organized compulsion which, reproducing itself in individuals as systematic self-preservation, rebounds against nature as society’s control over it. Science is repetition, refined to observed regularity and preserved in stereotypes. The mathematical formula is consciously manipulated regression, just as the magic ritual was; it is the most sublimated form of mimicry. In technology the adaption to lifelessness in the service of self-preservation is no longer accomplished, as in magic, by bodily imitation of external nature, but by automating mental processes, turning them into blind sequences. With its triumph of human expressions become both controllable and compulsive. All that remains of the adaptation to nature is *the hardening against it*. The camouflage used to protect and strike terror today is the blind mastery of nature, which is identical to farsighted instrumentality (Emphasis added). (Horkheimer and Adorno: 149)

The two German social theorists correctly see the Western Enlightenment tradition as containing within itself the theoretical and ideational binary opposition between reason, under which is subsumed the categories of development and civilization and culture, on one hand, and primitive irrationality and fanaticism, on the other, represented by the “magic ritual” of the primitive, pre-industrial community, on the other.

What is problematic about their interpretation of the Enlightenment, specifically, in relation to an understanding of Nietzsche's reactionary positivism and pro-Enlightenment stance, is that they do not see this theoretical binary as constituting only one, though very important, strand of Enlightenment thought, an anti-egalitarian, aristocratic strand of thought which opposes the perceived ideological fanaticism and moral absolutism of radical emancipative thought, one based on *skepsis*. However, Horkheimer and Adorno correctly grasp the schematic opposition between science and rationality as representative of aristocratic *skepsis* and ideological and moral and ethical plebeian fanaticism and certitude, which is in turn based on a supposedly logical, rationalist, and abstract epistemological certainty, an opposition that is certainly present in Enlightenment thought. Manifestly, it also follows that the "subsuming of difference under sameness," is not, as the German social theorists incorrectly postulate, representative of pre-scientific and non-European peoples and communities. Rather, in Nietzsche's historical and ideational schema, and in the ideological content of the value judgments with which he invests the Enlightenment (Horkheimer and Adorno's "hardening against" Nature), we see pre-scientific thought as subsumed under the category of the ethical-moral. Thus, pre-Enlightenment and pre-scientific thought and values are constituted as representative of the abstract, universalist, and plebeian, and thus fundamentally anti-hierarchical, tendencies of moral absolutism, which of course found its most cogent and sophisticated expression in Socratic dialectics, the moral and ethical metaphysical thought of Plato, and in Judeo-Christian morality. Thus, for Nietzsche (and hence in fundamental opposition to one of the main tenets of Horkheimer and Adorno), Enlightenment thought is an instantiation of particularity, of concreteness and intellectual and ethico-cultural diversity, since it embodies the skepticism and noble anti-fanaticism of the anti-egalitarian and anti-ideological tradition of classical and aristocratic Greece, a tradition which the German philosopher believed Voltaire and the anti-Rousseauist French and English Enlightenment *philosophes* inherited.

It is this opposition to the egalitarian implications of (egalitarian) Romanticism and the upholding of the perceived anti-egalitarian and noble skepticism of Voltaire and the Enlightenment that colored Nietzsche's distaste of Wagnerism as a political, ideological, and aesthetic movement and phenomenon. In calling Wagner "decadent," Nietzsche points us in a certain direction. Wagner's "decadence" lies in his acceptance of the mores of modernity. His conversion to Christianity, his understanding of the pathos of beauty and virtue of suffering, as well as the lack of structure in his musical style... Are not all these indications of decadence? (Nietzsche,

642, 644, 646-648) Wagner represents the man of modernity, “who represents a *contradiction of values*;...he says Yes and No in the same breath” (Nietzsche, 648). Therein lays the essence of Romanticism for Nietzsche.

Romanticism, whether in its French Rousseauist form or in its German nationalist garb, is a systematized inability to discriminate. Romanticism does not see any distinction, any difference, between men or different moral evaluations. Romanticism is the philosophy of the man of *ressentiment* (Nietzsche, 646). The moralistic overtones of Romanticism were also viewed by Nietzsche with suspicion. Nowhere can one see this more clearly than in his numerous attacks on Thomas Carlyle, the English Romantic philosopher. Carlyle’s depiction of the great figures of history as “Heroes,” men whose greatness lay in their beneficence towards their fellow men, disgusted Nietzsche. Seeing the great individual through the lens of morality and Utilitarianism, as Carlyle did, was for Nietzsche a sign of anti-aristocratic plebeianism (Carlyle, 238; Nietzsche, 521; Losurdo, 665-667).

It is this opposition to political and cultural Romanticism in all its forms that explains the implacable opposition to nationalism in all its forms, which Nietzsche begins to display in *Human, All Too Human* and after the break with Wagner. This anti-nationalism would later transmute into a fanatical Teutonophobia and Germanophobia in the philosopher’s later years, particularly in the last two years immediately preceding his mental collapse in 1889. What is the relation between Nietzsche’s anti-Romanticism and his anti-nationalism? Is there a relation? And what are the fundamental ideological and philosophical motivations and implications of his anti-nationalism and Teutonophobia?

Perhaps one of the keys to understanding Nietzsche’s anti-nationalism and Teutonophobia was the association, in mid to late nineteenth century English and German historiography, of Teutonic cultural, military, and political hegemony in the post-Roman Western world, with the rise of Christianity. According to this notion, the destroyers of Roman imperial absolutism, the Germanic tribes and their descendants, constituted a progressive force in modern history by introducing the notions of liberal democracy, representative self-government, and a humane, spiritualized Christianity completely divorced of its Jewish origins, a Christianity that was spiritualized and democratized even more with the Reformation. This notion is not only found in the works of minor *völkisch* historians and ideologists like Chamberlain and Heinrich von Treitschke. It is also found in the work of the great liberal philosopher and political theorist John Stuart Mill, whom Nietzsche despised for his superficial empiricism and for his views on the emancipation of women. In his essay *On the Subjection of*

Women (1869), Mill writes of the linkage between the rise of Christianity and the rise of Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, and Germanic cultural and political hegemony in the West. Specifically, he writes on the role of women in the conversion of the ancient Gothic and Celtic princes and kings to Christianity, and of their role in the humanizing of the more bellicose values and norms of the ancient Germanic and Anglo-Saxon peoples. He writes, “Women were powerfully instrumental in inducing the northern conquerors (of the Roman empire) to adopt the creed of Christianity, a creed so much more favourable to women than any they preceded it. The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons and of the Franks may be said to have been begun by the wives of Ethelbert and Clovis.” (Mill, 563)

And further on, he writes how the influence of women over men in the Christian, post-classical era helped give rise to “the spirit of chivalry, the peculiarity of which is to aim at combining the highest standard of the warlike qualities with the cultivation of a totally different class of virtues—those of gentleness, generosity and self-abnegation—towards the non-military and defenceless classes generally, and a special submission and worship directed towards women; who were distinguished from the other defenceless classes by the high rewards which they had it in their power voluntarily to bestow on those who endeavored to earn their favour, instead of extorting their subjection.” (Mill, 564)

The spread of Christianity, of chivalry, and of the mores of humanitarianism throughout the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic world, which Mill attributes to the influence of women, is seen by him as “one of the most precious monuments in the moral history of our race.” (Mill: 564) We see, then, that for Nietzsche, the Germans, and indeed, the Teutonic peoples in general, “ruin culture” because they are they are the egalitarian and the effeminizing people *par excellence* (Nietzsche, 224). If the English liberal theorist praises the Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, and proto-Teutonic peoples for introducing Christianity into Northern Europe after the fall of Rome, and specifically credits the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon women for playing a far from insignificant role in that introduction (as well as in converting the Anglo-Saxon chieftains, their husbands) to the new religion of love, then Nietzsche, in his later Teutonophobic writings, also subscribes to this notion, but with a reverse value judgment; he condemns the peoples of Northern Europe for poisoning the noble and aristocratic conscience of the Roman and post-classical European ruling classes with the Christian notions of humility and mercy. Nietzsche’s profound hatred of the Northern European peoples, specifically the Germans, is not the theoretical and logical concomitant of a nebulous and anti-nationalist cosmopolitanism and incipient multiculturalism, as his interpreters, translators, and commentators,

from Kaufmann to Colli to Deleuze, have argued. It is, rather, the logical consequence of the philosopher's hostility to democracy and egalitarianism and his contempt for Christianity, in both its pre- and post-Reformation incarnations, and of the leading role the peoples of Northern Europe played (at least in Nietzsche's historical and ideational schema) in spreading Christianity, and which he sees as the prototype of all modern European and extra-European social and political and ideological movements for emancipation. Finally, this profound Germanophobia and Teutonophobia stems from his notion of the central role the Germans played in the rise of European nationalism in the early nineteenth century, and which Nietzsche sees as so disastrous for impeding and hindering the unification of Europe into one single "political, and above all, *economic bloc*," thus enabling the peoples of Europe to exercise their rightful political, military, economic, and even cultural, hegemony over all the other, non-European peoples (Nietzsche, 215).

Let us look at the matter more closely. In the previous section, we have already seen the astonishing similarity between Nietzsche and the eighteenth-century French conservative philosopher Joseph de Maistre's interpretation of the Reformation and of its significance for the political and ideological development of modern Europe. Both the French anti-Jacobin theorist and the German philosopher see the Enlightenment and the revolution of 1789 as the moral, intellectual, and political heirs of the Reformation and the logical consequences of "Luther's rebellion." It is certainly true that Nietzsche has a more nuanced interpretation of the Enlightenment (see above), and sympathizes with the healthy, aristocratic skepticism of the Enlightenment tradition, which he sees as represented by Voltaire. De Maistre, on the other hand, a pious and devout Roman Catholic, condemns the intellectual legacy of the Enlightenment *in toto*, as representing the intellectual hubris of a fallen, secularized, and de-Christianized European humanity. Yet both thinkers see the gradual despiritualization and desacralisation of politics, due to the leveling and egalitarian nature of the modern European democratic movement, as heirs to the Enlightenment and the ideals of 1789, which are in turn seen as the heirs of the Reformation, of a plebeian social and politico-theological irruption which endangered the hieratic and hierarchical principles of the Church, and which led to the further leveling and democratization of all political and cultural life as such.

In *Ecce Homo*, which contains what are perhaps his most violent diatribes against the Germans, Nietzsche writes of the deleterious and disastrous consequences of the Reformation, and of their relation to the

political and spiritual vulgarity of the Germans and their instincts. He writes:

The Germans robbed Europe of the last harvest, the meaning of the last great period, the Renaissance period, at the point when a higher order of values, when the noble, life-affirming, future-confirming values had achieved a victory at the seat of the opposing values, the values of decline and had reached right into the instincts of those sitting there! Luther, that disaster of a monk, restored the Church, and, what is a thousand times worse, Christianity, at the very point when it was succumbing... Christianity, this denial of the will to life made into a religion!... Luther, an impossible monk who, for reasons of his "impossibility," attacked the Church and consequently! restored it.. The Catholics would have good reason to celebrate Luther festivals, compose Luther plays... Luther and "ethical rebirth!" The devil take all psychology! Without a doubt, the German are idealists. (Nietzsche, 4).

The naïve and idealistic moral idealism of the Germans thus came to a boiling point in the sixteenth century with Luther's religious Reformation, a Reformation that found its focal point, its very *raison d'être*, in attacking and sweeping away both the moral corruption and the burgeoning healthy moral and scientific skepticism of the leaders of the Church during the Renaissance period. For Nietzsche, Luther's unpardonable crime lay in his attack against the noble and aristocratic skepticism of the Catholic Church (which, according to the German philosopher, Luther mistakenly and disastrously mistook as signs of moral decadence) and his attempt to replace it with a purer, more rigid, more intolerant and plebeian, and hence absolute, moral ethos. His attempt to revivify what he saw as the original moral purity of the teachings of Christ and of the early Christian church, was summed up in his famous saying, "Every man is his own priest." This led, whether or not it was his intention, to the social and political convulsions in sixteenth-century Germany and to the rebellion of the German peasants against the feudal princes, an event which, in the nineteenth century, Friedrich Engels would praise in his *The Peasant Wars in Germany* as one of the first modern and radical antifeudal insurrections in Europe (Nietzsche, 225, 227-228; Engels: 358-399).

What is significant about Nietzsche's interpretation of the Reformation, and of its egalitarian and leveling nature, is his attributing it above all to the plebeian and idealistic, hence plebeian and anti-aristocratic, nature of the Germans. Far from representing the triumph of a supposed moral and "ethical rebirth" over the decadence and moral corruption of the cosmopolitan hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church (a notion very common in mid to late nineteenth century German historiography,

specifically German nationalist historiography), Nietzsche sees the Reformation as an instantiation of the Germans' (and Northern European peoples') hostility to the remnants of the hierarchical and noble remnants of imperial Rome, which the Church inherited. It is in this sense, for example, that we can interpret his hostility to the chauvinist and anti-Semitic "court historian" Heinrich von Treitschke, whose works on nineteenth century German history (specifically on the German unification) were to inspire a host of proto-fascist politicians and intellectuals in imperial Germany, and who interpreted the Reformation as representing the triumph of the organic, "national" spirit of the Teuton triumphing over the decadent, multiethnic, multiracial, and hence cosmopolitan ethos of Rome (Nietzsche, 84; Kaufmann, 233; Treitschke, 33; Chamberlain, 255).

As we have seen, for the German philosopher, what characterizes the Enlightenment as a particular intellectual and historical period in modern European history is the focus on the value of *skepsis*, of skepticism, of the inability and unwillingness to have absolute faith in absolute values and in theological, ethical, and political dogmas, in the ability to question everything. Such a noble and healthy skepticism is diametrically opposed to the proneness for, indeed the need for, absolute faith, faith in a particular set of values and ethics, or faith in a particular world view that explains and encompasses everything in existence. Such a plebeian faith in ideals, in idealism as such, presupposes a refusal and an inability to see the world and nature as it is really constituted. And, as we have seen, for Nietzsche, one of the main requirements, preconditions, and elements of civilization and of nature, one of the basic foundations for the flowering of a high culture, is slavery, the subordination of the many to the few. Such a recognition, indeed, such noble skepticism, once again, according to Nietzsche, was reawakened in the Renaissance, that period of European history which tried to cut its ties to the monasticism and religious obscurantism of the medieval era, and which tried to reconnect with the scientific, philosophical, and artistic heritage of Hellas and Rome. Nietzsche's admiration for the cosmopolitanism, anti-medieval, and scientific spirit of the Renaissance and the great political, artistic, and intellectual figures it produced, is perhaps best described and summed up in a passage in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), written by the great Swiss classicist and historian Jacob Burckhardt, who was a close friend of the German philosopher. According to Burckhardt,

The cosmopolitanism which grew up in the most gifted circles is in itself a high stage of individualism. Dante... finds a new home in the language and culture of Italy, but goes beyond even this in the words, "My country is the whole world." And when his recall to Florence was offered him on

unworthy conditions, he wrote back, "Can I not everywhere meditate on the noblest truths, without appearing ingloriously and shamefully before the city and the people? Even my bread will not fail me." The artists exult no less defiantly in their freedom from the constraints of fixed residence. "Only he who has learned everything," said Ghiberti, "is nowhere a stranger; robbed of his fortune and without friends, he is yet the citizen of every country, and can fearlessly despise the changes of fortune." In the same strain, an exiled humanist writes, "Wherever a learned man fixes his seat, there is home." (Burkhardt, 96)

For the German philosopher, the erosion and dissolution of religious ideals and religious faith in the very seat of the Catholic hierarchy by the scientific, skeptical, and anti-Christian ethos of the Renaissance represented the final dissolution and extirpation of Christianity in Europe, a process which was halted by Luther's "rebellion."

It of course goes without saying that Roman civilization, indeed all of classical antiquity, was based on slavery and slave labor. The Protestant Reformation thus represents, in the German philosopher's historical and ideational schema, an ideal type that represents one of the many Christian and post-Christian attempts to destroy whatever is left of the cultural and political legacy and tradition of Rome. That legacy and tradition are fundamentally anti-egalitarian and recognizes the desirability, indeed, the necessity, of inequality for the flowering and development of culture and found its last refuge in the hierocratic organization of the Church. The significance of this interpretation, and its relation to the philosopher's famous Teutonophobia and Germanophobia, lie in his laying responsibility for such a monumental politico-religious and cultural "calamity" at the door of the Germans. Nietzsche's hatred of the Germans results from his hatred of their perceived plebeianism and egalitarianism; "the Germans are idealists"—that is, the Germans are idealistic democrats who cannot see the anti-egalitarian bases of life, nature, and society.

That a radical anti-Christian like Nietzsche has admiration for a universal and super-national organization like the Church may perhaps surprise some. Yet it is his opposition to small political and state entities, and their interactions, his opposition to so-called "petty politics," that can perhaps explain his admiration of the Church, and his disdain for the role of nationalism, particularly German nationalism, in modern Europe. In a passage in the section entitled "We Scholars" in *Beyond Good and Evil*, he discusses the various nationalities and nation-states. In this passage, which deserves to be quoted at length because it illumines the politico-theoretical motivations behind the philosopher's anti-nationalism and Germanophobia, he writes thus of tsarist Russia, that "vast empire in-between, where Europe flows back into Asia"

There (in the Russian Empire) the strength to will has long been set aside and stored up; there the will is waiting uncertain whether as the will of denial or affirmation poised menacingly to be discharged... It may require not only Indian wars and entanglements in Asia to relieve Europe of its greatest danger, but internal upheavals, the bursting of the empire into small bodies, and above all the introduction of parliamentary nonsense, including the obligation for everyone to read his newspaper at breakfast. I do not say this as someone who wishes it: the opposite would be more to my liking. I mean such an increase in the menace of Russia that Europe would have to resolve to become menacing to the same extent; that is, to acquire one will by means of a new caste that would rule over Europe, a long, terrible will of its own, which could establish goals for millennia. That way, finally, the drawn-out comedy of its small scattered states and likewise its dynastic as well as democratic practice of scattered willing would come to an end. The time for petty politics is over: already the next century will bring the struggle to rule the earth the *compulsion to grand politics* (Nietzsche, 110-111).

The tsarist Empire, which is invariably seen by Nietzsche as an extension of existing cultural heritage and tradition—sometimes of the European, sometimes of the “Asiatic”—is thus described as having a large, stored-up “will.” This will is the extension of its ruling elite, which rules over “small bodies” of conquered and annexed, non-Russian, non-European peoples, a ruling caste that has not yet been corrupted by the aforementioned liberal-bourgeois “parliamentary nonsense. Russia is thus an ideal type of what Europe once was under Roman hegemony, and what it could once more become if it learns to rid itself of its socialist and liberal-bourgeois “parliamentary nonsense,” the “petty politics” of internecine national and “dynastic” conflicts: a unified political, cultural, and military colossus, that will rule over the earth, over the “small bodies” of non-European peoples that would be subsumed into the orbit of European hegemony.

It is this recognition of the necessity of a unified, supranational (within the European context) Europe for exercising global hegemony, that leads Nietzsche, the self-styled anti-Christian and “anti-Christ,” to admire the organization of the Church. The allusion to tsarist Russia also illumines the significance of his antinationalism and hatred of the Germans. The Russian Orthodox Church was always an extension of the Russian state, and hence never achieved the universalist hegemony the Vatican had in Europe in the medieval era; thus, Russian Orthodoxy, though being imbued with the same hieratic principles as Roman Catholicism, was never “anti-national” and “anti-popular,” in the Gramscian sense; indeed, it had even been the theological-theoretical progenitor of several populist religious movements and peasant rebellions, à la Luther, in the seventeenth and eighteenth

century (Gramsci, 358; Ulam, 128). Still, the Russian state had, since the sixteenth century, succeeded in expanding as far as the Black Sea, and had managed to conquer several non-Russian, non-European peoples and subsuming them into its gigantic orbit. The supranationalist nature of the Russian Empire, ruled and directed by a ruling caste (a ruling caste that, let us not forget, is of Slavic, Scandinavian, and Germanic, hence European, origin) is thus the model Nietzsche has in mind in his conception of Europe's political and military role in the world in the late nineteenth century.

The Germans hindered this development by practically inventing European nationalism. The Napoleonic Wars, the invasion and dismemberment of Prussia and the other German principedoms and states in the early eighteenth century, were the catalyst for a massive national, artistic, and cultural awakening in the German world, a flowering of national consciousness that gave the world a Beethoven, a Kant, a Schiller, and a Fichte. Yet this awakening of nationalism, in Germany and in other European societies affected by the Napoleonic conquests, would, in the case of Germany, at least, run into chauvinistic and revanchist channels, and would play a major role in the development of hostilities between the European capitalist and imperialist Great Powers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The great German philosopher was a witness to the beginnings of these inter-European state conflicts (such as Wilhelmine Germany's entrance, in competition with Britain, France, and Italy, in the mid-1880s, in the "scramble for Africa"), which he decried as "petty politics" and denounced as a stumbling block, preventing Europe from achieving her proper role as "mistress of the earth" (Nietzsche, 225). The significance of Napoleon, for Nietzsche, was in his crushing of Jacobinism within France and his attempt to unify Europe into one "political and above all *economic* bloc," an effort that was halted by the rise of German nationalism. In *Ecce Homo*, he writes,

Finally, when a *force majeure* of genius and will came into view on the bridge between two centuries of *decadence*, strong enough to forge Europe into a unity, a political *and economic* unity, for the purpose of ruling the world, the Germans with their "Wars of Liberation" robbed Europe of the meaning, the miracle of meaning in the existence of Napoleon, so they have on their consciences everything that came about and exists today: nationalism, the *most anti-cultural* illness and unreason there is, the *névrose nationale* that ails Europe, the perpetuation of Europe's petty stater, of *petty politics*: they have even robbed Europe of its meaning, its *reason*. They have led it up a blind alley. Does anyone beside me know a *way* out of this blind alley? ...A task great enough to *bind together* the nations again? (Nietzsche, 84)

Thus, the Germans, by their nationalist opposition against Napoleon, prevented the French conqueror from unifying Europe, a Europe which would have then been perfectly poised to conquer and subjugate the non-European peoples of the world, and become, as Nietzsche phrases it in *The Gay Science*, the “mistress of the world” (Nietzsche, 244). The populist elements of nationalism are, for Nietzsche, also problematic.

Anyone familiar with the history of Italian, German, Hungarian, and Polish nationalism in the nineteenth century, and who thus knows of the populist and even quasi- (non-Marxian) socialist elements of these various forms of European nationalism, can have no difficulty in understanding the hostility with which Nietzsche condemns nationalism in all its forms, particularly in its German form. Nationalism, like socialism, politicizes the masses. It brings the masses out into the political arena and into the street. It provides, as Marx and Engels, in *The Communist Manifesto*, describe the bourgeoisie’s nationalization of the proletariat in its struggles against the bourgeoisie of other nations, “the elements of its own political education.” (Marx and Engels, 15) The populist sympathies of such leading figures of the European nationalist movement as Giuseppe Garibaldi and Giuseppe Mazzini (as well as the sympathy voiced by Marx and Engels for the national struggles of the Irish and the Poles against English and Russian imperialism, respectively) are illustrative examples of the populist nature of nationalism, which repelled the aristocratic sensibilities of the German philosopher (Losurdo, 25; Marx, 35; Engels, 25). Indeed, the conflation of socialism with nationalism and all other forms of political populism, and its logical consequence, the ideological and moral condemnation of all notions of a radical politics of emancipation, has a long and well-respected intellectual pedigree in the West (Losurdo, 444). We see examples of this tradition in the twentieth century, as well. The noted neoliberal economist, historian, and philosopher Friedrich August von Hayek, who subscribes to a stringent, antiradical, and antirevolutionary interpretation of liberalism and who simplistically describes Nietzsche as an advocate of “collectivism,” writes in his essay *Individualism, True and False* (1948),

The attitude of individualism to nationalism, which *intellectually is but a twin brother of socialism*, would deserve special discussion. Here I can only point out that the fundamental difference between what in the nineteenth century was regarded as liberalism in the English-speaking world and what was so called on the Continent is closely connected with their descent from true individualism and the false rationalistic individualism, respectively. It was only liberalism in the English sense that was generally opposed to centralization, to nationalism and to socialism, while the liberalism on the Continent favored all three. I should add, however, that in this as in so many other respects, John Stewart Mill, and the later English liberalism derived

from him, belong at least as much to the Continental as to the English tradition; and I know no discussion more illuminating of these basic differences than Lord Acton's criticism of the concessions Mill had made to the *nationalistic tendencies of Continental liberalism* (von Hayek, 150-151). (Emphases added)

Leaving aside the simplistic and historicist distinction and juxtaposition made between a genuine and authentic liberalism "in the English sense" and a false, inauthentic "Continental" liberalism, von Hayek succinctly summarizes and delineates the antiradical tradition of equating nationalism with socialism, and opposing both for their supposed centralizing, jingoist, and above all populist elements and tendencies. Nietzsche partakes in this intellectual tradition by simultaneously condemning and opposing both socialism and nationalism.³⁵

We see, then, that the leading role, attributed to them by Nietzsche, that both nationalism and socialism played in the Reformation and in the rise of European nationalism in the nineteenth century was a phenomenon that hindered the politico-cultural unification of Europe and the expansion of its political hegemony over the non-European world. This unification and expansion, together with the populist, quasi-socialist elements of nationalism, were the underlying factors motivating Nietzsche's hostility towards Germans, as well as his Germanophobia and his antinationalism. Certainly, the German philosopher's vehement anti-chauvinist and antinationalist discourse can be potentially deployed for an antinationalist, cosmopolitan discourse of political emancipation—specifically, a politics aimed at deconstructing Eurocentric, ethnocentric, and neocolonialist policies and views (Kaufmann, 358; Fanon, 225). However, the primary and underlying theoretical, political, and ideological reasons motivating

³⁵ Indeed, contrary to what von Hayek states in *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), it is opponents (such as Nietzsche) of socialism and nationalism, and those who conflate the two, who advocate imperialist and colonialist policies and the favoring of large state formations in opposition to "petty states." Von Hayek writes, "So far as the rights of small nations are concerned, Marx and Engels were consistent collectivists, and the views occasionally expressed about Czechs or Poles resemble those of contemporary National Socialists" (von Hayek, 158-159, 164). In fact, Marx and Engels were passionate and vocal defenders of struggles by small states like Poland and Ireland for national independence in the nineteenth century. Nietzsche, who vehemently condemns nationalism and equates it with socialism, opposes the independence of small states and nations as a chief obstacle in the birth of a "grand politics," the unification of Europe, and its consequent domination and subjugation of the non-European world (Nietzsche, 89, 95; Losurdo, 25-35; Marx and Engels, 174-181).

Nietzsche's antinationalism and Teutonophobia are eminently reactionary and conservative in nature; they are the result of his profound hatred of the modern European democratic movement and of his vision for Europe in the nineteenth century as the ruler and colonizer of all the non-European peoples in the colonized and semi-colonized countries.

In his *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology*, Fritz Stern attempts to analyze the Romantic antecedents of German fascism. Stern discusses at particularly great length the ideas of one of nineteenth century Germany's greatest cultural critics, Paul de Lagarde. De Lagarde was (with the exception of Houston Stewart Chamberlain) the Second Reich's foremost theorist of Romanticism as regards racism and German nationalism. Like Nietzsche, he was the descendant of a long line of Protestant ministers from Saxony, and, like Nietzsche, he was fascinated with the discipline of philology. Unlike Chamberlain, who was a complete dilettante, de Lagarde was a brilliant scholar, who, strangely enough, dedicated all of his intellectual powers to being Germany's chief prophet of doom, long before Oswald Spengler made that position popular (Stern, 3).

De Lagarde's ideas were extremely influential in the intellectual development of Hitler, Alfred Rosenberg, and other future leaders of the Third Reich (Stern, 82-94). Perhaps no other critic of Bismarck's Germany resembled Nietzsche in scholarly erudition and literary brilliance as de Lagarde. He began his career as cultural critic, appraising the educational system of the Second Reich (1871-1918). According to Stern, de Lagarde, a former academic, "spent his life close to the schools and universities of Germany" (Stern, 71). He believed "that German academic life had been so corrupted by the liberal spirit of the new Reich" (Stern, 71, 78). As a result of the decadence and moral corruption he found in the German university system, "...Lagarde wrote off the last hope for the spontaneous regeneration of Germany." (Stern, 71, 78). The ultimate sin committed by the new German university system, in de Lagarde's eyes, was its standardization of education, its transformation of education into rote learning. By focusing on providing as much knowledge for everyone as possible, the German university system became soulless and lifeless. It was incapable of turning out sensitive, idealistic students who were ready and willing to die for their ideals (Stern, 71).

De Lagarde's vehement literary attacks against the German university and educational system are eerily similar to Nietzsche's. During his successful stint as a philology professor at the University of Basel, Nietzsche gave a series of lectures entitled "On the Future of our Educational Institutions" (1872). In these lectures, Nietzsche, like de

Lagarde, also denounces “the pressures of Germany’s commercial mores against her humanistic education,” as well as the “Philistinism” of “the German professor” (Stern, 72; Losurdo, 201). According to Nietzsche, there are “two apparently hostile forces” influencing education in the modern German university. One of these tendencies “is the drive toward the greatest possible *extension of education* and the other the drive toward *minimizing and weakening it ...*” (Nietzsche, I, 277-278, Stern, 72-73). For the German philosopher, “the concentration of education for the few is in harmony with (Nature). . . .” (Nietzsche, I, 277-278, Stern, 72-73).

Nietzsche’s critique of modern university education, which was an important aspect of German cultural life in the nineteenth century, was not new. Though his analyses are brilliant, his hostility towards the mechanical lifelessness of modern education can be located within a larger context of social and cultural criticism directed towards the new German Reich by the new nationalist Right (Losurdo, 95, 145). De Lagarde was one of the pioneers of the cultural criticism of modernity (Stern, 71-74). Even Nietzsche’s contempt for Luther and the Reformation, and his denouncement of the crude materialism of Bismarck’s Reich, is similar to de Lagarde’s (Stern, 43-44, 56-57; de Lagarde, 293, 33; Schemann, 79).

De Lagarde was also a pioneer in the critique of Christianity. Like his contemporary, Nietzsche, de Lagarde “was a ruthless critic of the content and authenticity of Christian dogma” (Stern, 40). De Lagarde especially prided himself in having been one of the few academics in the Germany of his time to have made a distinction between the Christ of the Gospels and the historical Jesus. For him, the true founder of Christianity is St. Paul, not Christ. Stern writes, “Paul, the Jew, ‘the utterly unauthorized...who even after his conversion remained a Pharisee from head to toe,’ who had never known Jesus and who deliberately avoided the surviving disciples ... corrupted the Gospel of Jesus by admixing Jewish beliefs and customs with it.” (Stern, 41; De Lagarde, 67) In *The Dawn of Day*, Nietzsche describes St. Paul in almost identical terms. In this particular work, St. Paul, the former Saul of Tarsus, is described as opportunistically discarding the “Pharisaic” and “Jewish” elements of early Christianity, in an attempt to convert the Romans and other non-Jewish peoples. He writes, “That the ship of Christianity threw overboard a good deal of its Jewish ballast... and was able to go among the pagans—that was due to this one man...” (Nietzsche, 76-77; Stern, 42)

Stern remarks that whereas de Lagarde, a vehement anti-Semite, blasts Paul for having retained some of the dogmas of Judaism, Nietzsche excoriated Paul for having cast away the original “Jewish ballast” of Christianity (Stern, 42 n.). But Stern fails to see the distinction Nietzsche

makes (in *The Antichrist*, for example) between pre-exilic and Pharisaic Judaism, and the “anarchistic” Judaism of the historical Jesus. In the last section, I discussed the importance Nietzsche lays on the distinction between the “Israel of the kings” and the Israel of the exile (Losurdo, 893, Deleuze, 191). The “Jewish ballast” overthrown by St. Paul was the ballast of Pharisaism, the only kind of political leadership and hierarchy post-exilic Israel knew (Nietzsche, 566). In its place, Paul furthered and strengthened the anti-authoritarian and egalitarian values already present in the teachings of Jesus. (Nietzsche, 566, Kaufmann, 566-567, 21-23). According to Kaufmann, Nietzsche thought that...

...The New Testament, far from representing any progress over the Old, confronts us with ‘the people at the bottom, the outcasts and ‘sinners,’ the chandalas within Judaism.’ Where Nietzsche is saying to the Christian anti-Semites of his day...do you find all the qualities which you denounce as typically Jewish if not in the New Testament? Not Moses and the prophets, but Paul and the early Christians are ‘little superlative Jews’ (Kaufmann, 566-567).

The propagation of equality, of egalitarianism, which de Lagarde and other German critics associated with Jews and modernity, was for Nietzsche the antithesis of (Pharisaic, pre-exilic) Judaism. Paul, the supposed Jewish corrupter of the original message of Christ, was in fact the rightful inheritor of Jesus, the Jewish “holy anarchist” (Nietzsche, 599; Losurdo, 176-177).

The similarities of Nietzsche’s cultural criticisms with those of de Lagarde, a German nationalist, racist, and prophet of the Third Reich, raises an important issue. This issue is the supposed influence Nietzsche’s philosophy exerted on Hitler and National Socialism. It can be safe to say that this is one of the most controversial and fascinating debates in modern intellectual history. The foundations of National Socialist ideology were racism, Social Darwinism, and eugenics. Are these three elements present in any of Nietzsche’s writings? If they are, can they be solely attributed to his early intellectual dalliance with Wagner? Or are these elements, if present, part of Nietzsche’s intellectual corpus all the way from *The Birth to Ecce Homo*?

In *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, Nietzsche favorably opposes the tragic and “masculine” creation myths of the Aryan peoples to the “feminine” creation myths of the Semites (Nietzsche, 70-71). One can explain this by arguing that Nietzsche was still under the influence of Wagner at this time, and had not yet “emancipated” himself from the composer’s tutelage (Kaufmann, 70-71, 5 n.). Yet this argument simply does not stand. Throughout his later works, such as *Beyond Good and Evil*, *The Genealogy of Morals*, and *The Antichrist*, we see that the German

philosopher still utilizes racial concepts and ideal types, such as “Aryan” and “Semite.” In fact, he uses these concepts in an attempt to provide a racial interpretation of history, and of recent social and political developments in Europe. In the first essay of *The Genealogy of Morals*, written years after the break with Wagner, Nietzsche, who was supposedly contemptuous of racism, provides readers with a racialist interpretation of history. After describing the Celts as “definitely” belonging to a “blond race” (Nietzsche, 466), he writes:

...The suppressed race has gradually recovered the upper hand again, in coloring, shortness of skull, perhaps even in the intellectual and social instincts: Who can say whether modern democracy, even more modern anarchism and especially that inclination for “commune,” for the most primitive form of society, which is now shared by all the socialists of Europe, does not signify in the main a tremendous *counterattack*—and that the conqueror and *master race*, the Aryan, is not succumbing physiologically, too? (Nietzsche, 467)

In effect, what Nietzsche is saying in this passage is that “lower forms” of human life—in this case, communal forms of living—are atavistic leftovers of “an essentially dark-haired people” who were conquered by the blonde-haired Aryans, who were introducing a higher form of culture and civilization (Nietzsche, 466). Indeed, this was a common nursery tale in many nineteenth century racist narratives of history. And a few pages later, he describes the modern democratic movement as the leftover of “every kind of European and non-European slavery, and especially of the entire pre-Aryan populace—they represent the *regression* of mankind!” (Nietzsche, 479) It is significant that Kaufmann, who is always so eager to clear Nietzsche of any kind of racism, makes absolutely no attempt, in his running commentaries, to explain the meaning of this passage. Is this what Nietzsche means when, further on in the essay, he sarcastically notes that modern man is “getting “better” and “more Chinese?” (Nietzsche, 480)

The association of communal forms of living with the atavistic throwback to “inferior” cultures, was very common in late nineteenth century Europe (Losurdo, 330-334; De Tocqueville, 213, 147; Mill, 130-131). I have already shown, in the second section, how de Tocqueville, in *The Ancien Régime*, describes Roman law as an expression of the biological penchant for authoritarianism the Latin peoples have (De Tocqueville, 197-205).³⁶ And de Gobineau, de Tocqueville’s friend, believed that due to their “materialistic and utilitarian instincts,” the Chinese, or the “Yellows” favored “common ownership (of property), as well as despotism from

³⁶ See second section, note 20.

government and bureaucracy” (Biddiss, 142, de Gobineau, 95-97). For the French aristocrat and racial theorist, the possible victory of the European socialist movement “will create a form of society manifesting many similarities with that of China” (Biddiss, 142). We see then, that Nietzsche was not only susceptible to the racialist theories of his time. He also drew from a long-standing intellectual tradition. This tradition associated the emancipation of the lower classes in Europe from the dominant social groups, with the submersion of a higher race by the members of a lower one (Losurdo, 334-337; Poliakov, 237; de Gobineau, 870, 872).

Nietzsche’s advocacy of racial mixing has often been cited as proof of his antipathy towards racialism (Kaufmann, 293). It is a well-known fact, for example, that anti-Slavism, as well as anti-Semitism, played a central role in Nazi and even in Italian fascist ideology. And yet, Nietzsche loved the Poles and even liked to think that he was descended from Polish noblemen (his ancestors were, in fact, Saxon butchers and clergymen). He writes, “...The giftedness of the Slavs seemed greater to me than that of the Germans...” (Nietzsche, xi 300). Can this advocacy of racial mixing preclude any association of Nietzsche’s ideas with racialism, as well as any association with the German proto-fascist thinkers?

It would be useful at this point to compare Nietzsche’s favorable views on miscegenation with those held by one of the intellectual forebears of National Socialism. This is Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the English son-in-law of Richard Wagner and ideological incense burner of the Bayreuth festivals. His claim to fame was the publication, in 1899, of a two-volume work titled *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. The main thesis of the book was that Western civilization is based on three “foundations:” ancient Greek culture, Roman law and political organization, and the teachings of Christ. (This was what Viereck would argue, a century later, in his *Metapolitics*). Chamberlain’s interpretation of Western history, however, was strictly racialist. For him, the Greeks, the Romans, even Christ, were blonde-haired, blue-eyed Aryans, who lost their cultural, political, and spiritual heritage through racial mixing. The book was highly praised by Kaiser Wilhelm II, and ran through several editions during the Nazi period.

On the face of it, Chamberlain’s mode of interpreting history through the lens of racial purity seems to be the very antithesis of Nietzsche’s world outlook. The favorable comments about the Slavs cited above, as well as the favorable remarks on miscegenation that are scattered throughout his works, seem to preclude any relation between Nietzsche and Chamberlain. If one looks closely, however, one sees that there are, in fact, similarities. Take, for example, the issue of racial mixing. In the fourth chapter of the

first volume of the *Foundations*, Chamberlain enumerates five “cardinal laws” for the creation of a pure master race. One of the laws, the fourth one, is the importance of miscegenation. According to Chamberlain, “...The origin of extraordinary races is, without exception, preceded by a mixture of blood” (Chamberlain, 278; Heiden, 190). And in his disquisition on the “entrance of the Germanic people” into world history, Chamberlain praises the Slav as the “younger brother” of the Germanic peoples, and urges their comingling (Chamberlain, 505-506). Nietzsche, in his later works such as *Beyond Good and Evil*, also advocates the racial mixing of Germans, Jews, and Slavs, in order to create a new ruling caste, which will dominate all of Europe. Chamberlain even credits the political, military, and cultural hegemony of the Nordic, Germanic, and Anglo-Saxon peoples, which he traces to the collapse of the Roman empire onwards, for the dissolution of slavery in the Western world and for the rise of liberal, representative self-government. Chamberlain even pays homage to modernity as constituting “the era of Locke,” whom he praises as embodying the true Germanic ideals of liberty and representative self-government, something that Nietzsche, who loathes Locke, Hume, and the entire Anglo-Saxon political and theoretical-philosophical tradition as being too plebeian, democratic, and superficially empirical (Losurdo, 503). Chamberlain even sees Kant’s philosophy as the embodiment of the Christian-Germanic moralistic conception of life and of nature, which he favorably opposes to the supposedly amoral, immoral, authoritarian Greco-Roman and Jewish philosophical tradition (in which he places Nietzsche, whom he despised)! (Kaufmann, 225)³⁷. As we shall see below, Nietzsche’s philosophy includes elements of Social Darwinist ideology (though not the progressionist, mechanistic Social Darwinism à la Spencer, Huxley, and Galton). Though he attributes his knowledge regarding the laws of race, race purity, and racial mixing to Darwin, Chamberlain despises Social Darwinist ideologies in all their various forms as crude, amoral, materialist, and as ignoring the far more fundamental spiritual and ideational characteristics of race (Chamberlain: 225). Thus, Chamberlain, who far more than Nietzsche rightly deserves to be called one of the forefathers of National Socialist ideology, assumes certain positions regarding race, history, philosophy, and

³⁷ One of the unexpected pleasures that have arisen from conducting research for this thesis was accidentally stumbling upon a copy of an English translation of Chamberlain’s less famous (and now out of print) intellectual biography of Kant. Upon reading it, I can now safely say that it is one of the most scholarly and insightful expositions of the Kantian philosophy ever to appear in the early twentieth century.

morality that are less stringent and “extreme” than those assumed by the great German philosopher.

Even Chamberlain’s views on the Jews, though certainly harsher than Nietzsche’s, are not as dogmatic and extreme as those of the National Socialists (Chamberlain, xl, 304, 386; Losurdo, 805-806). In the introduction to his work, Chamberlain writes of “the perfectly ridiculous and revolting tendency to make the Jew the general scapegoat for all the vices of our time” (Chamberlain, xl). If Nietzsche cannot be viewed as a proto-fascist because of his advocacy of miscegenation and his favorable attitude towards Jews and Slavs, then neither should Chamberlain (Losurdo, 803-807).

Let us return to de Gobineau. The French aristocrat was not only a fanatical racist and anti-egalitarian. According to his biographer, “Gobineau himself came to see nationalism as a vulgar expression of mass arrogance” (Biddiss, 71). De Gobineau not only castigated nationalism for “politicizing” the masses, and hence being merely the right-wing equivalent of socialism, but also for neglecting the ideas of racial superiority (Biddiss, 171, de Gobineau, 488 n., 489). He writes, “...Each citizen was ordered ... to sacrifice to this abstraction (of the nation-state) his judgments, his ideas, his habits...” (de Gobineau, 488; Biddiss, 171; Losurdo, 855, 805; Castradori, 201). One sees this particular strain in Nietzsche’s condemnation of nationalism, as well. The German philosopher often lumps together the socialists and anarchists of his time with the German nationalists and anti-Semites. In *The Gay Science*, for example, Nietzsche decries the “national movement” of his time, and praises Napoleon for having nearly succeeded in unifying Europe, a Europe become “*mistress of the earth*” (Nietzsche, 318; Nietzsche’s emphasis). When Nietzsche wrote these words in the mid-1880s, Imperial Germany had already begun to participate in the “scramble for Africa,” that is, in the European Great Powers’ brutal imperialist and colonialist division of the African continent into spheres of influence. Nietzsche’s condemnation of European nationalism is thus predicated upon his desire to see Europe united into one single “political and above all *economic bloc*” (Nietzsche: 96). Only such a cultural, political, and economic unification could enable the various European peoples to secure their domination over the non-European, non-white peoples of Africa, whom he elsewhere describes as the “descendants of every European and non-European form of slavery.” (Nietzsche; 120) Thus, the German philosopher subscribes to an incipient version of the theory of the slow, but gradual, “Africanization” of Europe as a consequence of the growth of the modern socialist and democratic movement, a theory that would be deployed and subscribed to by revanchist and nationalist circles in Germany and other

European countries in the early twentieth century. We see then that the German thinker was in fact a supporter of (pan)European colonialism and imperialism.³⁸

Nietzsche's antinationalism and anti-jingoism, though certainly fervid, is not original; nor is it the result of any kind of liberal humanism. Rather, it is the result of his hostility towards the masses, of their being brought out into the political sphere, of their being emancipated and "politicized." This hostility towards the *gaucherie* of the nationalists of nineteenth century Europe, held by Nietzsche, was also held by de Gobineau and other racist, Social Darwinist theorists of the time.

The intellectual and historical genealogy of German National Socialism, and its relation to Nietzsche's thought, poses a theoretical, philosophical, and historical problem of great import. Not only is the real or perceived relation of Nietzsche's philosophy to the rise and development of Nazism in twentieth-century Germany central to understanding the intellectual origins of a political movement that would essentially determine the course of the twentieth century, or even to the understanding of modern German intellectual and philosophical history. It is also invaluable in facilitating an understanding of who and what Nietzsche was as a thinker, and the centrality the formation of a radical politics of dis-emancipation has in his thought. As we shall see (and as Kaufmann rightly points out in his book), Nietzsche's philosophy was not the most influential strand of thought influencing the development and formation of National Socialist ideology. Indeed, the racialist and nationalist writings of de Lagarde, Chamberlain, Georges de Vacher de Lapouge, and Julius Langbehn were of far more central relevance in the intellectual development of the leaders of German proto-Nazism and even Nazism itself. Yet the centrality of a radical politics of dis-emancipation in the German philosopher's thought, and the adoption of some strands of his intellectual *corpus*, however bowdlerized, by prominent Nazi ideologists and philosophers such as Rosenberg and Alfred Baumler, delineates the centrality of the reactionary and anti-revolutionary implications, and tendencies of his thought.

This leads us to ask a very profound question: Does the fact that a prominent philosopher or political theorist is an apologist for absolute

³⁸ Losurdo rightly states that Nietzsche's advocacy of European colonialism, as well as his advocacy of eugenics, must be viewed within the context of nineteenth century European imperialism, and that the "decadent races" often mentioned in his notes and in his published works refer, not to the Jews and the Slavs and the other peoples deemed subhuman and therefore fit for death or slavery by the Nazis in the twentieth century, but rather as references to the colonized peoples of Asia, Africa, and even the Near East in the nineteenth century (Losurdo, 235).

power, exploitation, and political dis-emancipation preclude her being considered a serious thinker? That is, does the adherence to a politics of dis-emancipation, as opposed to a politics of radical emancipation or even the adherence to a supposed apolitical objectivity, preclude inclusion in the ranks of great thinkers and philosophers? Certainly, if we look at the twentieth century, such a condition is not stringently observed. Carl Schmitt and Heidegger, for example, despite their open and vehemently pronounced conservative and antirevolutionary politics, are rightly considered legitimate philosophers in their own right, thinkers who have formulated consistent philosophical systems with their own metaphysical and epistemological system. This theoretical question—that is, the question of the very nature of Nietzsche's philosophy—the relation it has with the origins and development of Nazism, and the possible significance this has for Nietzsche's place in nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy, will be taken up later. For now, it is sufficient to state that the debate that has been raging in the philosophical, intellectual, and academic communities for more than half a century is not of interest merely for those interested in intellectual history. It is also of enormous consequence for understanding the very nature of Nietzsche's philosophy, and the nature and role of Nietzsche and his presence in modern European intellectual and philosophical history.

The notion that Nietzsche is one of the intellectual and philosophical forerunners of German National Socialism, indeed, the chief exponent of Nazi and proto-Nazi thought, was first consistently expounded by the great Hungarian Marxist philosopher and literary critic György Lukács. In his intellectual and political history of Germany, *The Destruction of Reason* (1956), Lukács provides readers with a veritable tour de force of intellectual history; he provides the reader with a summation of the thought of almost every major German philosopher, theorist, and sociologist of import, from Friedrich von Schelling, Kant, and Arthur Schopenhauer all the way to Max Weber and Wilhelm Dilthey. The fundamental significance of Lukács' work, however, lies in the fact that it is perhaps one of the first systematic and concise examples of the *Sonderweg* thesis. According to him, every German philosopher, with the exception of Hegel, from Kant to Schopenhauer and onwards, was a theoretical, ideological, and philosophical forbear of Nazism. For the Hungarian Marxist, Nietzsche especially represents a significant and important turning point in the development and crystallization of proto-Nazism.

The *Sonderweg* thesis, or the idea of the "special path," is essentially the notion that modern German political and intellectual history, at least since Luther and the Reformation, was an inevitable progression towards

Nazism. According to the principal adherents of this theory, the lack of a developed liberal, humanist, and democratic culture, together with the presence of a long and deeply entrenched authoritarian and militarist political tradition, was conducive to the rise in Germany of a nationalist and revanchist mass movement with expansionist and imperialist ambitions. This notion was quite pervasive among academic historians in the 1950s and 1960s. As Losurdo points out, however, the political, cultural, and intellectual development of Imperial Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was in fact very similar to the political and cultural development of England, the United States, and other Western liberal democracies. The tenets of Social Darwinist competition, imperialist expansionism, biological racism, and even anti-Semitism, which were admittedly very much part of the intellectual and political *Zeitgeist* of Wilhelmine Germany, were also in circulation in the political, economic, and military elites in the liberal West (Losurdo, 550-558). This was so to such an extent that in the early years of the twentieth century, in the years immediately preceding the First World War, the English and North American bourgeoisie and aristocracy considered Imperial Germany to be a classical embodiment of Northern European, Germanic, and Anglo-Saxon liberal and representative self-government. The *Sonderweg* thesis, which still has adherents within the liberal, neoliberal, and neoconservative tradition, and which, in Lukacs, found its chief Marxist adherent, simply does not stand up to rigorous historical analysis.

The underlying merit of Lukács' work lies in his incisive critique of the interpretation of Nietzsche as a fundamentally apolitical and antipolitical thinker, one who is opposed to any theoretical engagement with politics and who instead values aesthetics and the ethics of individual self-cultivation. Indeed, in *The Destruction of Reason*, the Hungarian Marxist philosopher explicitly mentions and critiques Kaufmann's interpretation of Nietzsche, which was just beginning to gain in popularity and support within the academic and nonacademic communities. Lukács' illuminating theoretical and historical grasp of the essential political and anti-revolutionary nature and implications of Nietzsche's thought reveals a perspicacity rare in interpreters of the German philosopher's work.

The fundamental flaw in his work, however, is his mechanistic and simplistic interpretation of Nietzsche's thought as the main progenitor of fascism. In his *The Historical Novel* (1937), Lukács writes of the development of European historicism along reactionary lines after the revolutions of 1848-1849. According to him, the great historical merit of the Enlightenment historians, despite their methodological abstractionism, was their opposition to religious obscurantism. After 1848, however,

philosophers and historians subscribed to a crude Darwinian interpretation of history and historical progress, which, whether wittingly or unwittingly, provided a theoretical, philosophical, and ideological justification of capitalist competition. He writes:

It was (now) quite different in the second half of the nineteenth century. If historians or sociologists now attempted to make Darwinism, for example, the immediate basis of an understanding of historical development, this could only lead to a perversion and distortion of historical connections. Darwinism becomes an abstract phrase and the old reactionary Malthus normally appears as its sociological "core." In the course of later development the rhetorical application of Darwinism to history becomes a straightforward apology for the brutal dominion of capital. Capitalist competition is swollen into a metaphysical, history-dissolving mystique by the "eternal law" of the struggle for existence. The most telling historical conception of this kind is the philosophy of Nietzsche, which makes a composite mythology out of Darwinism and the Greek contest, *Agon* (Lukács, 175).

Lukács thus correctly notes the central role Darwinism would play in late-nineteenth-century politico-theoretical justifications for the excesses of imperialism and late capitalism. Though he simplistically and erroneously imputes Social Darwinist notions to Nietzsche, as we shall see below, he correctly sees the amoral and agonistic conception and interpretation of life and social processes to be found in the philosopher's works (Lukács, 178, 235). Yet, as we shall also see, such an interpretation was common in the late nineteenth century, and was not the exclusive preserve of the conservative political Right. In the first section, we saw the emancipatory potential and implications of Nietzsche's anti-historicism and anti-Hegelianism. For the Hungarian Marxist philosopher, it is virtually impossible to tease out any emancipatory or progressive implications from Nietzsche's anti-historicism. Indeed, Nietzsche's anti-historicism is the logical and inevitable outcome of what Lukács sees as his romantic and reactionary glorification of the will and of the individual ego. He writes:

What is extremely characteristic for the ideological development of the whole period is the way Nietzsche presents this philosophical justification of the apologetic falsification of history. Hence we quote it here: "What such a nature does not master, it may soon forget; it is no longer there, the horizon is closed and whole, and there is nothing to recall that beyond there are still men, passions, doctrines and purposes. And this is an universal law; everything that lives can only become healthy, strong, and fruitful within a horizon; can it not draw a horizon round itself or, on the other hand, is it too

self-centred to enclose its own outlook within a foreign horizon, then it must sink wearily or over hastily towards a timely end.” (Lukács, 180).

According to Lukács, “The philosophy of historical solipsism is stated here, perhaps for the first time, in its most radical form. The theory itself is, admittedly, already present in the culture and race conception of earlier and contemporary sociology. But it is not until Nietzsche that it is generalized in such a cynical fashion. What it says in effect is that each unit, be it individual, race, or nation, can experience no more than itself. History exists only as a mirror of this ego, only as something to suit the special life needs of the latter. History is a chaos, in itself is of no concern to us, but to which everyone may attribute a ‘meaning’ which suits him, according to his needs.” (Lukács, 180)

Thus, the anti-historicism of the German philosopher, his rejection of the notion that history contains any objective meaning or is an inevitable progression towards political and social emancipation, is, for Lukács at least, symptomatic of an egoistic, reactionary vitalism that meshes with the mercenary egoism of bourgeois liberalism, and which sees history (much like Nietzsche’s former philosophical mentor, Schopenhauer, saw history) as a meaningless and chaotic jumble of violence, conquest, and oppression (Lukács, 174-175). For Lukács, the rejection of an implicit, self-sufficient, and self-subsisting meaning of history, and the consequent belief in the individual’s willing and positing a meaning *into* history, of creating for oneself a meaning in history, the emancipative potential of which we have already discussed in the first section, is not indicative of individual emancipation and self-affirmation. It is, rather, symptomatic of a kind of Romantic, anti-Enlightenment vitalism that prefigures the glorification of the egoistic Great Individual of Fascism and Fascist historiography. We shall presently see that, although Nietzsche opposes Hegelianism and other forms of historicism, his celebration of life as a continuous agonistic social struggle cannot be interpreted as crude Social Darwinism; Lukács, in this instance, at least, subscribes to the vulgar Marxian and economicist (and Stalinist) thesis that any consistent theoretical and philosophical opposition to historicism and notions of inevitable historical progress is an instantiation of proto-fascist and fascist thought. Moreover, though there are certainly elements of Nietzsche’s thought that are also found in National Socialist thought and ideology, it is problematic and inaccurate, to say the least, to equate Nietzscheanism as such with Nazism.

Another important element of German fascist ideology, mentioned above, is that of eugenics and Social Darwinism. In the early years of the twentieth century, Nietzsche’s ideas were often interpreted in a Darwinian fashion. With the predominance of the interpretations of Kaufmann and

Deleuze, in the 1950s and 1960s, interpretations of Nietzsche as a Darwinian have since become passé. That there is a strong eugenicist and Social Darwinist element in Nietzsche's writings, both in his unpublished notes and in his published works, cannot, however, be doubted. In a note in *The Will to Power*, the German philosopher writes that, "The great majority of men have no right to existence, but are a misfortune to higher men." (Nietzsche, 467, 872 n.) And in two sentences that have been omitted in most editions of *The Will to Power* (Kaufmann, 467, BK. 4, 4 n.), Nietzsche continues, "I do not yet grant the failures the right (to live). There are also peoples that are failures." (Nietzsche, 467, 873 n.)³⁹

Passages like these can be quoted from Nietzsche's notes and published works *ad infinitum*. According to Losurdo, the Darwinian theory of natural selection helped confirm Nietzsche's already held views on life, which he had received from his study of classical antiquity (Losurdo, 748; Nietzsche, IX, 487, IX, 558).

Nietzsche's opposition to the bowdlerized version of Darwinism peddled by the likes of Herbert Spencer is motivated, however, by the knee-jerk progressivism implicit in Spencer's conception of Social Darwinism (Spencer, 109). For the German philosopher, in almost "every case, contrary to what the most ingenious purveyors of this current of thought believe, natural selection does not allow the triumph of the best to occur."⁴⁰ (Losurdo, 749; Nietzsche, 522-523) Rather, what often happens is that the mediocre, and sometimes even the very worst, come out on top. The "best," on the other hand, either burn themselves out, (as Nietzsche describes Napoleon of having done, in *The Gay Science*), or they are overpowered by the mediocre majority. Nietzsche's opposition to the Spencerian brand of Social Darwinism is not motivated by any moral reservations. Rather, it is rooted in his disbelief in the naïve faith the English sociologist has in the superior man's ability to come out on top. This is of even greater significance when one notes that from the 1870s until the first decade of the twentieth century, the principal advocates and proselytizers of Social

³⁹ In a footnote to this note, Kaufmann rightly points out, "While these words in a note not intended for publication... sound ominous, it is clear from Nietzsche's books that he is not thinking of the Jews, the Poles, the Russians, or any other peoples whom the Nazis later decimated." (Kaufmann: 467, f). This is certainly true. Yet it does not follow from this that Nietzsche did not have certain social and ethnic groups in mind as fit for eugenicist policies of sterilization and even near-extirmination. As mentioned in the previous note, these groups consisted of the colonized peoples of the non-European world, as well as the physically and mentally "unfit" found in the laboring classes within the capitalist and imperial metropolis.

⁴⁰ Translated from the original Italian by A.A.F.

Darwinism in England and in Continental Europe (particularly in Imperial Germany) were the socialists and the leaders of the Fabian and Social Democratic (Marxist) labor movements. The notion that the human species (as well as other species of organisms) is the result of a progressive evolutionary process in the organic and natural world merely helped confirm the European political Left in the veracity of its positivist and historicist notions of inevitable historical change and progress. Indeed, the ruling classes, both the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, considered Social Darwinism as a socialist doctrine and philosophical aberration; they saw the perniciousness of Spencer's ideas precisely in the notion that only continuous change, continuous progression, is constant in nature, and that permanence is an illusion (much like Marx's notion of the bourgeoisie's hatred of the non-idealist conception of the dialectic in history). It was only in the first decades of the twentieth century that it became the exclusive preserve of the nationalist and anti-socialist political Right. It was thus the mechanical, optimistic, and progressionist elements that Nietzsche opposed in his stance against Social Darwinism, not the amorality of its logical theoretical and practical conclusions. Manifestly, it follows that the German philosopher was not opposed to state measures that were Social Darwinist in nature; nor was his much-touted anti-statism, already mentioned above, completely free of Darwinian motivations. As Rudiger Safranski notes in his intellectual biography of the German philosopher, Nietzsche, during his professorship at Basel, opposed the Swiss socialists' proposal for the introduction of laws prohibiting child labor and the mandatory provision of elementary education to children who were factory operatives (Safranski, 235). Such legislative action would, according to Nietzsche, hinder working-class children, the offspring of the modern laboring class, from becoming accustomed to their apportioned lot in life, and instill in them a false sense of importance and an expectation of improvement that could never be fulfilled, but that would also lead to future social and political cataclysms (Safranski, 238). Thus, we see that Nietzsche's belief in the necessity of slavery (no matter how disguised) as one of the main prerequisites of the development of human culture and civilization, indeed, as *the* basis and foundation for culture, leads him to oppose the expansion of the modern state in an attempt to alleviate the suffering and misery of the masses. What we see in Nietzsche is a naturalization of social misery. As a consequence, any attempt to alleviate social and economic exploitation and the deleterious consequences of social and economic inequality by the state and by legislative fiat is an interference in the natural processes of exploitation and domination. This conception of the naturalness of economic inequality, of the preservation and even "enhancement" and

“widening” of exploitation and inequality, would lead the German philosopher to also oppose the rudiments of the welfare state established by Bismarck in the 1880s, although the underlying motive of Bismarck’s actions was to prevent the radicalization of the German working class by the Social Democrats (Nietzsche, 233-237; Losurdo, 445-450). Thus, we see that Nietzsche opposed the simplistic, mechanistic, and progressionist assumptions of Social Darwinist ideologies, whilst simultaneously basing his opposition to the construction of the “social state” in Imperial Germany on an essentialist and naturalized conception of social inequality and exploitation that, at least in its broad outlines, is Darwinian, insofar as it is based on a secularized notion of struggle and “natural” selection.

This sympathetic predilection of Nietzsche’s for the tenets of Social Darwinism and eugenics ultimately leads us to an analysis of the immediate relationship (if any) Nietzsche’s philosophy has with the ideology of National Socialism. We have already seen how central Nietzsche’s critique of Christianity and its egalitarian implications was to his thought. Can one find something equally similar in National Socialist ideology, specifically in the writings of Hitler? In his *Table Talk*, Hitler describes Christianity as a Jewish creation, more specifically, as the creation of “the Jew, Saul of Tarsus.” By wresting Christianity away from its immediate Jewish origins and surroundings, Paul, according to the German dictator, made it acceptable to the Gentile peoples. The ethics of Christianity, an ethic of pity, love, and forgiveness, thereby sapped the strength and self-confidence of the non-Semitic master races (Hitler, 721-722; 60-61, Aschheim, 327; ●’ Brien, 59-57-59, 85). Just as Nietzsche saw socialism and bourgeois liberalism as the secularized heirs of Judeo-Christian morality, so Hitler saw “Judeo-Bolshevism” and Marxism as the heirs of Christianity (Hitler, 60).

Hitler’s conception of Saul of Tarsus as an opportunistic manipulator, pushing his new gospel of humility and self-abnegation upon the “elites” and “masters,” is very similar to Nietzsche’s (Hitler, 721-722, 60-61; Aschheim, 327; Losurdo, 875; Nietzsche, 68-71). In the *Dawn of Day*, the German philosopher describes the apostle as one whose “mind (was) full of superstition and cunning.” (Nietzsche, 67) Unable to obey the stringent commands of the Mosaic Law, Paul took the teachings of Jesus and used them as a weapon in his struggle against organized Judaism and the imperial power of Rome. In *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche also descends into this kind of vulgar conspiracy theory. Here, the German philosopher writes:

Did Israel not attain the ultimate goal of its sublime vengefulness precisely through the bypath of this “Redeemer,” this ostensible opponent and disintegrator of Israel? Was it not part of the secret black art of truly grand politics of revenge... that Israel must itself deny the real instrument of its

revenge before all the world as a mortal enemy and nail it to the cross, so that “all the world,” namely all the opponents of Israel, could unhesitatingly swallow just this bait? (Nietzsche, 471)

According to the German philosopher, by rejecting and crucifying Christ in front of “all the world,” the Jews made it seem as if they opposed the teachings of the Galilean carpenter. In this way, they made it all the more easy for the non-Jewish peoples, particularly the Greeks and Romans, to accept the new gospel of equality and humility. By accepting the tenets of Christianity, the non-Jewish peoples were made the more ripe for their seduction by “those *Jewish* values and new ideals” of humility and self-abnegation (Nietzsche, 471, Losurdo, 869). This particular brand of conspiracy theory was shared by Hitler, Rosenberg, and other chief Nazi ideologists, who saw the Jew, by means of Christianity and Bolshevism, as pitting “slaves of all kinds against the elite, the masters....” (Hitler, 721-722; Aschheim, 328; Losurdo, 328; Lichtheim, 185-186) According to the Nazi dictator, “... St. Paul discovered that he could succeed in ruining the Roman State by causing the principle to triumph of the equality of all men before a single God....” (Hitler, 61)⁴¹

Losurdo has called this kind of conspiracy theory “conspiracy theory of the revolution.” Instead of attributing revolutions to actual politico-historical and social factors, one attributes them as being “caused” by small conspiratorial groups. These small conspiratorial groups can be the Jews, or the Freemasons, or the Illuminati, etc. This tradition of conspiracy theory can be traced all the way to Burke, in the *Reflections*. There, the English Whig describes the French Revolution as the outcome of a conspiracy between Jewish bankers, property-less intellectuals, and declassed revolutionaries (Burke, 197, 211, 113; Losurdo, 274). We see, then, that Nietzsche and the National Socialist ideologues saw Christianity as being the product of a revolutionary Jewish conspiracy. Wagner, on the other hand, the supposed German proto-fascist *par excellence*, viewed Christianity positively, as improving the cruelty and barbarity of the “Aryan” peoples (Wagner, 225).

Was Nietzsche, then, an anti-Semite? One should be careful of leveling such an accusation against him. In his intellectual biography of the German philosopher, Losurdo states that Nietzsche’s writings on the Jews and Judaism should not be interpreted in an anti-Semitic fashion (Losurdo, 225). Nietzsche never bases his critique of Judaism and Judeo-Christian morality on a racist, biological foundation. Only a very shoddy type of

⁴¹ In an email communication to me.

hermeneutics can interpret his attack on the (supposedly) revolutionary implications of Judaism as a brief for eliminationist anti-Semitism.

Indeed, it can be safely said that no other major nineteenth century German thinker was as vehemently opposed to anti-Semitism as was Nietzsche. His remarks on the German anti-Semites of his time, found scattered throughout his works, are rightfully described by Kaufmann as “scathing” (Kaufmann, 445). No other modern political philosopher—not even the revolutionary socialist Karl Marx—has provided a more vehement and systematic attack against the horrors and vulgarities of anti-Semitism and racial prejudice. According to Losurdo, Nietzsche’s conviction that the teachings of the Hebrew prophets inevitably lead to socialism, was part of the cultural *zeitgeist* of Continental Europe. This belief was found to be held by thinkers across the political and cultural spectrum (Losurdo, 875-878). Nietzsche’s originality lies in his taking this thesis and using it as a means to explain the moral history of the West over the past two thousand years.

If anything, Nietzsche was a philo-Semite. He had a great deal of respect and admiration for the literary, philosophical, and cultural achievements of the Jewish people. In fact, one of his favorite thinkers was the Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza, whose philosophical individualism Nietzsche considered to be a “forerunner” of his own thought. But what were the motivations behind Nietzsche’s philo-Semitism? Is his philo-Semitism motivated by Enlightened, humanistic values, as Kaufmann, Deleuze, and others have asserted? Or is it motivated by politico-philosophical implications, implications that are profoundly reactionary and conservative?

Perhaps the key to understanding the basis of Nietzsche’s love of the Jews, and his burning hatred of the anti-Semites of his day, can be grasped by reading two passages on the Jews found in *Beyond Good and Evil*. Here, Nietzsche provides his readers with a paean of praise to the intellectual and moral powers of the Jews. This section deserves to be quoted at some length, because it encapsulates the philosophical and political bases of the German philosopher’s anti-anti-Semitism.

The Jews...are beyond any doubt the strongest, toughest, and purest race now living in Europe; they know how to prevail even under the worst conditions (even better than under favorable conditions), by means of virtues that today one would like to mark as vices—thanks above all to a resolute faith that need not be ashamed before “modern ideas” That the Jews, if they wanted—or if they were forced into it, which seems to be what the anti-Semites want—could even now have preponderance, indeed quite literally mastery over Europe, that is certain; that they are not planning for that is equally certain. Meanwhile they want and wish rather, even with

some impertunity, to be absorbed and assimilated by Europe.... (Nietzsche, 377-378)

In this passage, Nietzsche does not seem to be disputing the prejudices held by the German anti-Semites. The German philosopher does not reject the traditional ideological stock-in-trade of anti-Semitism. Indeed, Nietzsche subscribed to what the French sociologist and philosopher Alain Badiou calls “a reactionary philo-Semitism,” that is, a philo-Semitism that is based on traditional anti-Semitic tropes, tropes that are now imbued with positive value-judgments. That the Jews are supposedly members of a racial and ethnic group, and not members of a religious tradition, that they have the power to dominate the political life of Europe—all of these typical anti-Semitic *clichés* are accepted by Nietzsche. Indeed, what he does with these prejudices and stereotypes is new and innovative. He takes these repellent accusations hurled at the Jews by the German nationalists and anti-Semites, and clothes them in reverse value judgments. The explanations that anti-Semites, then and now, give as reasons for their hatred of the Jews, Nietzsche gives as reasons for his profound philo-Semitism.

That is, for Nietzsche, the Jews of Europe—whom he describes as members of a “race”—are a profoundly conservative force. This belief in the supposedly inherent conservatism of European Jewry goes against some of the ideological preconceptions of late nineteenth century anti-Semitism. At the end of the nineteenth century, the most widely held stereotype about the Jews was that they were an essentially subversive and revolutionary force. In the twentieth century, this view was to become a central tenet National Socialism and fascism.

Nietzsche rejects this stereotype of the “Jewish revolutionary,” and replaces it with another stereotype, one that has had a long historical pedigree, to wit, the stereotype of the Jewish capitalist and banker (Heiden, 59, 181-182).

The German philosopher, like the anti-Semites of his day, believes that the political, economic, and financial destiny of Europe is in the hands of Jewish capitalists. Losurdo writes, “Nietzsche, particularly in the last years of his conscious life, was obsessed with the idea of co-opting Jewish capitalists and financiers in the race of masters,”⁴² before the final battle in Europe against socialism and egalitarianism began (Losurdo, 617). Safranski, in his biography of Nietzsche, states that toward the end of his life, the German thinker was flirting with the idea of creating a political party, sponsored by the ruling classes of Europe. This new “party of life,” whose members would be saturated with Nietzsche’s aristocratic ideas,

⁴² Translated from the original Italian by A.A.F.

would then go on to destroy democracy and egalitarianism in Europe (Safranski, 370). In a letter he wrote to his friend Peter Gast, for example, Nietzsche writes, "Did you know that I will need the backing of all the Jewish financiers for my new movement?" (Safranski, 370).

Nietzsche's philo-Semitism was motivated by reactionary political ideas. For him, the Jews, along with the Prussian and Junker aristocracy, were one of the last bastions against the rising tide of radicalism and democratization. And it is precisely this antirevolutionary conservatism of his which leads him to loathe the German nationalists and anti-Semites of Bismarck's Second Reich. It is significant that, in his latter works, Nietzsche almost always lumps together in a single group the socialists and anarchists with the anti-Semites and German nationalists. Not only did he see the anti-Semites as vulgar and "plebeian," but he also detected in these "anti-Semitic screamers" the same base motives, the same *ressentiment*, as that felt by the socialists (Nietzsche, 378; Losurdo, 615-625).

For Nietzsche, what the socialists and anti-Semites have in common is their feelings of resentment for those who are either better than, or more well off than, they are. The German philosopher sees anti-Semitism and jingoism as the socialism and anarchism of the discontented and "plebeian" masses on the Right. In a section of *The Antichrist*, titled "Christian and anarchist," he writes, "When the Christian condemns... the world, his instinct is the same as that which prompts the socialist worker to condemn, slander, and besmirch *society*" (Nietzsche, 535). The instinct the Christian and the socialist have to "besmirch" the world is the same instinct that makes the anti-Semite blame the Jews for all of his misfortunes. It is the plebeianism of anti-Semitism and nationalism that leads Nietzsche to loathe them.

Anti-Semitism and Judeophobia (as well as nationalism and ethnic socialism) has not always been the exclusive domain of the anti-revolutionary, conservative, and reactionary political tradition. The equation of Judaism and European Jewry with capitalism, and its concomitant, anti-Semitism with anti-capitalism, do not originate with the German philosopher and his works; these can be found in various mid-to late-nineteenth-century European political and ideological traditions. Though anti-socialism and anti-egalitarianism are among the key elements of his thought, there is no evidence that Nietzsche was even vaguely familiar with the ideas of Marxian socialism. His depiction of European socialists as sentimental weaklings who long for a society that has "*ni dieu ni maître*"

(“neither God nor master”)⁴³ indicates that the knowledge of socialist doctrine was limited almost exclusively to the doctrines of the French and English utopian socialists, the followers of Proudhon, and the anarchists (Nietzsche, 98). The history and traditions of pre-Marxian socialism and anarchism do contain an anti-Semitic strain and tendency. Pierre Joseph Proudhon, for example, one of the premier theorists of what Marx contemptuously described as “petty-bourgeois socialism” and anarchism, linked the history and development of capitalism in Western Europe with the civil and political emancipation of the Jews, and argued that the mercenary, materialistic ethos of the bourgeoisie was essentially Jewish in origin. The Russian revolutionary Mikhail Bakunin, the father of modern anarchism and Marx’s main political and theoretical antagonist in the First International, was also no stranger to anti-Semitic ideas and to the ideational linkage between capitalism and the values and ethics of Judaism. According to Bakunin, “They (the Jews) are always exploiters of other people’s labor; they have a basic fear and loathing of the masses, whom, whether openly or not, they hold in contempt.” (Ulam, 42) Even the young Marx was no stranger to anti-Semitic feelings and thoughts, as even a cursory reading of his brilliant critique of the liberal conception of the state *On the Jewish Question* (1842) illustrates. Finally, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in Germany, Austria, and regions of Central Europe, the ideas of Marx and Engels were popularized and widely disseminated by the brilliant economic historian and sociologist Werner Sombart, who linked the “spirit of capitalism” not, as Weber does, to the Protestant work ethic, but to the materialist values and ethics of Judaism (von Hayek, 244). It was in this sense that the great German Social Democratic leader and theorist August Bebel, in the 1890s, coined the famous phrase, “Anti-Semitism is the socialism of fools.” This phrase was first coined at a time when the petty-bourgeois classes in Germany and Austria were feeling the deleterious effects of monopoly capitalist competition on one hand and the political and social might of the organized labor movement, on the other. In the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, these were the years when the phenomenon of Christian Socialism made its appearance as a mass political movement that, with the slogans of populist anti-Semitism, appealed to the antimonopoly and anti-capitalist sentiments of the petty-bourgeois classes of that sprawling multiethnic and multinational empire. For Bebel, anti-

⁴³ “Neither god or master,” which appears a few times in Nietzsche’s later works, was one of the slogans of the French Proudhonians, anarchists, and collectivist anarchists and socialists. The fact that Nietzsche mentions this slogan shows that his knowledge of the socialist movement was limited to pre-Marxian and non-Marxian socialism.

Semitism was a political ploy, a ruse utilized by the ruling classes to shift attention away from the realities of capitalist exploitation and to utilize the petty-bourgeoisie as a weapon in the class struggle against the organized proletarian movement. These were also the years when the Proudhonian and Bakuninist anarchist movements in the Latin countries, and whose social and ideological composition was made up of the anti-Semitic petty-bourgeois classes, terrified of a gradual proletarianization, were witnessing their last gasp.

Nietzsche was therefore correct in establishing a conceptual, ideational, and moral-ethical equivalence between socialism (specifically pre-Marxian socialism) and anti-Semitic *ressentiment*. Indeed, long before Arendt and neoliberal and neoconservative historians in the mid-nineteenth century equated the anti-Semitism of German National Socialism with the anti-capitalism of Soviet communism, the equation of anti-Semitism and anti-capitalism as emanations of plebeian resentment against the socially better-off, was already widespread in Wilhelmine Germany in the 1890s, particularly by liberal and anti-Socialist Jews (Losurdo, 553). Von Hayek (quoted at the beginning of this section) brilliantly and succinctly sums up this notion when he writes, “The fact that German anti-Semitism and anti-capitalism spring from the same root is of great importance for the understanding” of the rise of Fascism in Europe (von Hayek, 154). At the core of this moral, ethical, and conceptual equivalency is the notion that radical social change, and the feelings and notions of moral outrage against social and economic inequality upon which attempts at radical social change are based, in reality stem from envy towards “those who have turned out well” and expresses itself in orgies of rapaciousness and greed on the part of the masses. Nietzsche touches upon this brilliantly in *The Genealogy of Morals*, where he quotes the anarchist and socialist philosopher (and polemical opponent of Marx and Engels) Eugen Dühring as saying, “The doctrine of revenge is the red thread of justice running through all my works and efforts.” (Nietzsche, 263) In the twentieth century, the neoliberal theorist and economist Ludwig von Mises, in his *The Anti-Capitalist Mentality* (1952) would also make the Nietzschean argument that anti-capitalist doctrines are often formulated by penniless intellectuals who have failed to make their fortunes in the marketplace, thus linking notions of social justice and egalitarianism with feelings of resentment and envy, masked in the rhetoric of moral outrage, resentment, and indignation (von Mises 120; Losurdo, 322).⁴⁴

⁴⁴ The great twentieth-century English philosopher Bertrand Russell, who despised Nietzsche for what he saw as his amorality and his penchant for metaphysics (!) makes the surprisingly Nietzschean statement that very often, our moral outrage at

This equation of anti-capitalist sentiments with anti-Semitism and Judeophobia, which has a long and notable intellectual history and which we find in Nietzsche is problematic, to say the least, for any theoretical formulation of a politics of emancipation. In terms of the linkage between anti-capitalism and anti-Semitism, this notion ignores the history of the modern revolutionary movement, a history in which many Jews played an active role. It also delegitimizes any attempt at radical social change as mere emanations of resentment and envy, and as leading to anti-Semitic and racist persecutions, which modern radical movements for emancipation and social change have often opposed. Moreover, as mentioned above, it strengthens and legitimizes, in a paradoxical fashion, the anti-Semitic stereotype of the Jew as capitalist, as financier; thus, any attempt to overthrow or even radically reform capitalism is by its very nature anti-Semitic, since capitalism is, by implication, associated with Jews and Judaism.⁴⁵ Indeed, true to his adherence to Lamarckian evolutionary notions, the German philosopher proposes that the male members of the Prussian and Junker nobility and military aristocracy marry the daughters of Jewish financiers. This, as Nietzsche himself points out, was an idea first put forth by Bismarck, who looked favorably upon the Jewish bourgeoisie of Europe as a valuable asset in the struggle against German Social Democracy⁴⁶ (Nietzsche, 157-158; Kaufmann, 30; Losurdo, 422). Such a

societal injustices (whether real or imagined) is merely the intellectual rationalization and sublimation of mere envy and resentment felt towards those who are better-off socially, politically, economically, and even culturally (Russell, 124).

⁴⁵ We see the remnants of this nineteenth-century idea today, among some members of the right-wing of the Revisionist Zionist movement, who accuse those of the anti-capitalist socialist left in Europe and the United States (many of whom are admittedly very critical of Israel) as being anti-Semitic and subscribing to anti-Semitic stereotypes, and which are the supposed consequence of their anti-capitalist ideology.

⁴⁶ Another historical model and analogy Nietzsche utilizes to justify such an alliance is, as he states, the English nobility's intermarriage with the members of the rising bourgeoisie (Nietzsche, 157-158). It is interesting to note the similarities and differences between Nietzsche's and Marx's narratives of the social and political rise of the European bourgeoisie. For Marx, the rise of the middle class and its amalgamation with the old landowning aristocracy takes place in the social and intellectual sphere. In the *Manifesto*, for example, members of the aristocracy specifically, intellectuals of aristocratic descent recognized the coming socio-economic and political hegemony of the bourgeoisie, and therefore "went over to the bourgeoisie" (Marx, 481). For Nietzsche, however, the amalgamation of the feudal aristocracy with the (Jewish) bourgeoisie takes place and must continue to take place on a level that is above all racial and biological. Nietzsche therefore

union would produce a new military-financial aristocracy that would prevent any social and political “experiments” inspired by the Paris Commune. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes,

Accommodate with every caution, selectively; more or less as the English nobility does. It is plain as day that the easiest involvement with them (the Jews) could be undertaken by the stronger and already more firmly defined types of the new Germany, for instance the officers of the nobility of the Mark: it would be of manifold interest to see whether the genius of money and patience (and above all some spirit and spirituality, in which the place in question is seriously lacking) could not be added and cultivated into the hereditary art of commanding and obeying. The region in question (East Prussia) is classical today in both. But here it behoves me to break off my cheerful Germanifications and banquet speech: since I am already touching on what is *serious* to me, on the “European problem,” as I understand it, on the cultivation of a new caste that will rule over Europe (Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 157-158).

And in a note that follows the above quoted passage, but which has not been included in all published editions, he writes, “. . . and I am pleased in this respect to be in agreement with a famous expert on horses (Bismarck) about a recipe to be recommended here [“Christian stallions, Jewish mares”]⁴⁷ (Nietzsche, 395-396).

The creation and “cultivation” of such a “new caste”—the progeny of Prussian-Junker aristocrats married to the daughters of Jewish financiers—would, according to the German philosopher, halt the advance of liberalism and socialism in Europe, speed up the transformation of the European masses into pliable instruments of manual and intellectual labor through the process of mechanization, “democratization” and “leveling, and usher in a tragic and aristocratic age, a bellicose age, such as has not been seen since classical antiquity (Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 348). This conceptual association of European Jewry as constituting a separate, pure, and aristocratic race with the creation of a new European ruling caste that would finally eradicate the modern socialist and democratic movement is also seen in *Tancred* and other novels written in the 1840s by the young Benjamin Disraeli, the Anglo-Jewish prime minister of England, who saw the Jews as members of a pure race that had the right and the duty to rule Europe for the

racializes social and economic history in a way similar to but not identical with the fascists and the Nazis. His racialization of social categories of class, in this case also adheres to the liberal tradition established by Locke and de Mandeville (Losurdo, 220).

⁴⁷ That is, Christian and Prussian husbands, Jewish wives.

purposes of destroying liberalism and socialism, and who saw race as being “the key to history.” Needless to say, reactionary philo-Semitism in the nineteenth and early twentieth century has a long and well-respected intellectual lineage.⁴⁸ Nietzsche’s originality lay in the ideational, practical, and conceptual role the Jews play in reactionary political schema, in his formulation of a radical politics of dis-emancipation. The breeding of a new, European-Prussian-Jewish ruling caste was to serve the purpose of stamping out, utterly and completely, the various movements for social, economic, and political emancipation (the labor movement, the socialist parties, the feminist movements, even the radical wing of the liberal bourgeoisie, etc.). There was to be no compromise with the disintegrative values of modernity—as opposed to, say, Disraeli, who not only was a reactionary philo-Semite, but also saw the necessity of an Anglo-Jewish financial and political-military alliance as the prerequisite for an alliance with and even co-optation of the nationalist, more socially moderate wing of the English labor movement. Such a co-optation, for Disraeli, would be the main guarantor for the attainment of social peace within the capitalist-imperialist metropolis, as well as for the popular support needed to secure empire abroad (Disraeli, 22; Losurdo, 505).

It is also interesting, in delineating the special nature and significance of Nietzsche’s reactionary philo-Semitism, to contrast his conception of the role of the Jews in the destruction of the modern socialistic movement and the creation of a new European ruling caste with the views held by Ferdinand Lassalle, the famous German-Jewish labor organizer and leader of the (at first) anti-Marxist, statist wing of the German Social Democratic

⁴⁸ In his *Nietzsche* (2002), Losurdo makes the argument that in the late 1860s, even before his association with Wagner, the young Nietzsche was influenced by Judeophobic feelings and ideas. Losurdo describes Judeophobia as an ideological, ideational, and psychological antipathy towards the (perceived) values and norms of Judaism as it was perceived as a culture and a religion. Judeophobia is thus not the same as anti-Semitism, certainly not racial anti-Semitism, though there are specific ideological elements of racial and religious anti-Semitism that coincide with Judeophobia. Losurdo also posits that even in his later writings, when he vehemently opposes anti-Semitism, particularly political anti-Semitism, the German philosopher still subscribed to Judeophobic ideas. After a careful and thorough perusal of all his works, I conclude that the Judeophobic stage in Nietzsche’s life was in fact very brief, and coincided with his intellectual association with Wagner. After his break with Wagner, his subsequent flirtation with Enlightenment and positivist ideas (which will be further discussed below) and his last period of intellectual activity before the breakdown, Nietzsche was in fact a philo-Semite, though one that, as has already been discussed at length, had profoundly reactionary and conservative interpretations of the Jews, Judaism, and their role in history.

Party in the 1860s. Lassalle also subscribed to a reactionary philo-Semitism, and believed that Jews constituted a pure race destined to play a leading role in the future socio-political conflicts in Europe, an eventuality that would logically follow the birth and expansion of the modern labor movement and the expansion of a newly unified Imperial Germany (Wheen, 225). He also subscribed to a pseudo and proto-Nietzschean conception of the German as the prototype of the labor organizer and labor leader in the era of German imperialism (Wheen, 225). Lassalle famously contested Marx and Engels' leading intellectual and organizational role in the incipient German socialist and labor movement, and argued that socialism could succeed in Wilhelmine Germany only if the leaders of the SPD offered their moral, political, and even military support to the Junker aristocracy in opposition to the rising German bourgeoisie's attempts to gain political hegemony. In return, the Prussian feudal aristocracy would grant the SPD and the German workers state credits for the formation of producers' and consumers' cooperatives, which would smooth the way to an inevitable, but gradual, transition to state socialism (Marx and Engels, 12; Engels, 12, 15 n.). Such an alliance would also dampen the revolutionary and insurrectionary ardor of the workers, ameliorate the inhuman conditions stemming from the early phases of primitive capital accumulation, and prevent any attempt to seize the machinery of the state by force. Lassalle saw the revolutionary intellectual of Jewish origin as playing a leading and active role in the modern socialist movement, a role of leadership, of agency, and, most importantly, of facilitating, in Germany at least, the union of the workers and the feudal aristocracy in an anti-bourgeois and anti-liberal alliance, an alliance cemented by the loathing both the proletariat and the aristocracy have for the narrow, banal, and materialistic values of the bourgeoisie. This romanticization of the leading socialist revolutionary intellectual descent would even captivate the young Leon Trotsky (Deutcher, 108).

Nietzsche rejected this conception of the mediating influence of the Jewish intellectual in lessening the dangers of socialist revolution by ameliorating the excesses of early, unregulated capitalism, and in forming an anti-bourgeois alliance between the proletariat and the feudal aristocracy. For him, the Jews are to play an ultra-conservative, ultra-traditionalist role in European politics. That is, they are to help stem the tide of socialism, liberalism, and even feminism, primarily by offering up their coreligionists who are members of the financial aristocracy to form, as (female) marital partners to (male) members of the Prussian military caste. The offspring of such a marital alliance, an alliance between large capital and "spirit on one hand, and the "art of commanding" on the other, would then go on to constitute a new ruling class that would dominate all of Europe. Secondly,

by inculcating their traditionalist views regarding marriage, the family, and childbearing into the European intellectual and cultural zeitgeist, which has been contaminated by the values and ideals of the French Revolution, the values of *laissez-aller*, *laissez-faire*, the Jews would help deliver an irredeemable blow to the modern democratic movement (Nietzsche, 358).

In terms of the intellectual genealogy of Nietzsche's ideas and their relation to Fascism and Nazism, the implication is clear. Nietzsche, by his advocacy of Jews marrying members of the Junker nobility, and his admiration for what he sees as the Jewish financial domination of Europe (which he sees as a valuable conservative asset in the struggle against socialism) does not subscribe to traditional racial and religious anti-Semitism. His association of Jews and Judaism with the ethics and mores of capitalism and the financial aristocracy, and socialism with anti-Semitism, does, however, reveal his adherence to some of the classic tropes of anti-Semitism, and that his philo-Semitism is motivated, at least in part, by his hostility to socialism and all forms of political and economic egalitarianism.

Nietzsche's much-touted anti-statism, already touched upon in the last section, has been seen as a refutation of any supposed affinity the philosopher has with Nazism. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, for example, the German philosopher describes the modern bureaucratic state as "the new idol" and "the coldest of all cold monsters" (Nietzsche, 160). But even the element of anti-statism is not foreign to Nazism. German fascism, unlike its Italian equivalent, was deeply hostile to the "pragmatism" and "materialistic historicism" of Hegelian statist philosophy (Losurdo, 278-279; Picker, 122). In the second volume of *Mein Kampf*, the Nazi leader writes that the aim of the State is to protect and defend in the rights and interests of the German people (Hitler, 448). Indeed, Hitler's conception of the state is, in a perverse way, almost Lockean! Just as Locke, the great liberal philosopher, in the *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, urges citizens to make the famous "appeal to heaven" in cases of tyranny, so the Nazi leader decries statism and tyranny, and argues for the right and the duty of every German citizen to rise up and overthrow the state when it has acted in direct opposition to the rights and interests of the German people. In the second volume of his political manifesto, the Nazi leader mocks and derides, with biting scorn, the Prussian tradition of statolatry, a convention that found its ultimate expression in the traitorous and disastrous allegiance of the German civil service and state administration to the German Social Democrats after the latter became the new masters of the state after the November 1918 revolution (Hitler, 448). For Hitler, one of the main duties and responsibilities of the state—if not its chief duty and responsibility—is

its preservation of the purity of the racially fit, and to oversee the eradication of the unfit. According to him:

The state is a means to an end. Its end lies in the preservation and advancement of a community of physically and psychically homogeneous creatures. This preservation itself comprises first of all existence as a race and thereby permits the free development of all the forces dormant in this race. Of them a part will always primarily serve the preservation of physical life, and only the remaining part the promotion of a further spiritual development. Actually, the one always creates the precondition for the other. States which do not serve this purpose are misbegotten monstrosities, in fact. The fact of their existence changes this no more than the success of a gang of bandits can justify robbery (Hitler, 393).

And further on, he writes:

In opposition to this (statist view), the folkish philosophy finds the importance of mankind in its basic racial elements. In the state it sees, in principle, only a means to an end and construes its end as the preservation of the racial existence of man. Thus, it by no means believes in an equality of the races, but along with their differences it recognizes their higher or lesser value and feels itself obligated, through this knowledge, to promote the victory of the better and stronger, and demand the subordination of the inferior and weaker in accordance with the eternal will that dominates this universe. Thus, in principle, it serves the basic aristocratic principle of Nature and believes in the validity of this law down to the last individual. It sees not only the different value of the races, but also the different value of the individuals. From the mass, it extracts the importance of the individual personality, and thus, in contrast to disorganizing Marxism, it has an organizing effect. It believes in the necessity of an idealization of humanity, in which alone it sees the premise for the existence of humanity (Hitler, 383).

The state should be seen as an instrument for the preservation of the German people, and of its racial and physical health and purity, and nothing more (Hitler, 420). This eugenicist antipathy toward the state is also found in Nietzsche (Nietzsche, 235-244). The German philosopher's predilection for the heritage of classical antiquity and for the healthy and aristocratic skepticism of the Enlightenment also finds its echoes in the table-talk conversations of the Führer. During the many conversations with his aides and secretarial staff in the 1940s, we see Hitler, the supposedly staunch admirer of Nordic culture and despiser of "Latin" and Southern European "civilization" deploy imagery and rhetoric that calls up the images and memories of classical antiquity—specifically the ancient Greek city-states—in his descriptions of the elimination and subjugation of the Jews

and Slavs in Russia and Eastern Europe (Hitler, 335, 450). According to the Nazi dictator, the Russians and other Slavic peoples of the East were to be reduced to the category of slaves, of helots, similar to the helots of Sparta (Hitler, 335). We also see him praise the ancients—again, specifically, the ancient Greeks—for having recognized the necessity of slavery, as a solution to the inescapable practical difficulties and exigencies posed by the division of labor, that insoluble problem of human history, for the birth of a higher culture and civilization (Hitler, 335). How can we not recognize any intellectual and political affinity between the Nazi Führer and the Nietzsche of the pro-slavery manifesto *The Greek State*? Even Nietzsche's contempt for the abstract and universalist fanaticism and moral absolutism of Christianity and of the Judeo-Christian heritage and tradition, and their opposition to the healthy and noble skepticism of classical Greece and Rome, is found in the writings of the Nazi leader. In *Mein Kampf*, he writes:

The objection may very well be raised that such phenomena in world history arise for the most part from specifically Jewish modes of thought, in fact, that this type of intolerance and fanaticism positively embodies the Jewish nature. This may be a thousand times true; we may deeply regret this fact and establish with justifiable loathing that its appearance in the history of mankind is something that was previously alien to history yet this does not alter the fact that this condition is with us today (Hitler, 454).

And further on, he writes

The individual may establish with pain today that with the appearance of Christianity the first spiritual terror entered into the far freer ancient world, but he will not be able to contest the fact that since then the world has been afflicted and dominated by this coercion, and that this coercion is broken only by coercion, and terror only by terror. Only then can a new state of affairs be constructively created (Hitler, 454-455).

The universalist and abstract “intolerance” and moral “fanaticism” of Judaism and of “Jewish modes of thought,” including its most dangerous political and theological instantiations, socialism and Christianity, are thus roundly condemned by the Nazi leader. The moral absolutism and fanaticism of Judaism and Judeo-Christian morality, and the “spiritual terror” it established in the hearts and minds of modern European humanity, is not only deemed inferior to the “far freer ancient world,” according to Hitler, the ancient world, that is, classical Greece and Rome, are deemed culturally and intellectually superior to the supposed attainments of the Christian era. Like Nietzsche, Hitler lays principal blame for the fall of the ancient world to the rise of Christianity, and to its egalitarian and false humanitarianism, which it inherited from Judaism. We see then that this

notion—the notion of the dissolution of the ancient world by means of the false humanitarianism of Judeo-Christian morality—which is one of the fundamental tenets of Nietzsche’s thought, is also present in one of the most important texts of the National Socialist worldview. Of even greater significance is the fact that both Nietzsche and the Nazi leader formulate an antirevolutionary, reactionary politics of dis-empowerment based on the political, organizational, and tactical bases provided by Christianity and the French Revolution and the disintegrating modernity they gave birth to. In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche writes, “We”—meaning those who oppose modernity—“cannot help but be revolutionaries” (Nietzsche, 244). That is, only by deploying the tactics, strategies, and rhetoric of revolution, only by fomenting a revolution against the politico-ideological egalitarian legacy of the French Revolution and of Christianity, can this legacy actually be excised and extirpated and replaced by an aristocratic social order (Losurdo, in private communication to author via email). Similarly, Hitler argues that “a new state of affairs,” a new moral, ethical, and political order based on the values of race and brutal Social Darwinian competition, can be “created” only by after recognizing that “coercion is broken only by coercion, and terror only by terror” (Hitler, 454-455). In the specific historical example provided by the Third Reich, we see an instance of an anti-socialist, anti-egalitarian, and anti-liberal mass movement, one that is firmly grounded in the values of racism, imperialism, aristocratism, and conquest, taking over the machinery of the German state. It accomplishes this by deploying the tactics and the rhetoric that are specific to a mass society and a liberal and democratic regime, of an egalitarian modernity created by the “spiritual terror” of Judaism. Such a similarity in worldview and political prescription is often missed or glanced over by those scholars and historians who subscribe to the theory of the “hermeneutics of innocence.”

The German philosopher’s opposition towards the modern state is primarily motivated by his eugenicist views. By catering to the needs of the people, of “the bungled and the botched,” the state was preserving the failures and losers of life, instead of letting them perish (Nietzsche, 300). The Bismarckian welfare state of the 1870s, for example, was a favorite target of Nietzsche’s, for imbibing the false, humanitarian ideals of Christianity and socialism (Nietzsche, 20; Losurdo, 229, 317-324). Nietzsche’s elitist, eugenicist anti-statism is echoed not only by Hitler; it is also found, as mentioned above, in the racist thinker de Gobineau, and in de Tocqueville (de Gobineau, 20-21, 488; Biddiss, 171; de Tocqueville, 570; Losurdo, 199, 321). Moreover, the positive interpretation of Enlightenment thought as representative of a noble, anti-egalitarian and

anti-plebeian intellectual tradition is also echoed by the German dictator in his *Table Talk* (Nietzsche, 233-234; Hitler, 135-138; Losurdo; 233-234, 235-238).

CONCLUSION

WHO—AND WHAT—WAS NIETZSCHE?

In his intellectual biography of the German philosopher, Domenico Losurdo described him as a thinker that is “*totus politicos*,” that is, as a thinker who not only was very much aware of, and involved in, the political events and issues of his day, but who also formulated a philosophy that in itself was profoundly political (Losurdo, 778). Specifically, according to the Italian Marxist theorist and philosopher, Nietzsche’s philosophy must be read as a theoretical project that justifies and calls for a specific politics of radical dis-empowerment.

Throughout this thesis, we have shown how Nietzsche’s philosophy is a radical instantiation of the European conservative, reactionary, and counterrevolutionary political and intellectual tradition. Thus, any attempt to understand his philosophy as an all-encompassing body of moral (and extra-moral), ethical, political, aesthetic, epistemological, and even metaphysical thought, will ultimately fail unless one sees the political and reactionary aims and implications of that thought. Certainly, it is possible, as it is with any great thinker, to divorce Nietzsche’s thought from its political and historical context, and intentions, and tease out the implications of, say, the German philosopher’s epistemology, as for example, Kaufmann has brilliantly done in his 1954 work. Yet the attempt, by Kaufmann, Colli, and Montinari, Deleuze and others, to completely divorce the German thinker’s philosophy from his hostility to political and social egalitarianism, and his brilliant attempts to formulate a systematic theoretical and political theory of political dis-empowerment, is fallacious. It is primarily motivated, as we have argued above, by the wish to sever any linkage between Nietzsche’s thought and the atrocities of Nazism, in Kaufmann’s case, immediately after the Second World War, as the horrors of the Third Reich were just beginning to be discovered and debated in the Western world. Even Peter Viereck, who subscribes to the anti-political and a-political conception of Nietzsche, in his *Conservatism Revisited* (1962), in noting his contempt for the universalist and humanitarian ethos of Christianity, writes that the German philosopher’s “scorn of Christian ethics makes him at times

the agent of this (proto-Fascist and Fascist) barbarism as well as its unmasker" (Viereck, 50).

Was Nietzsche, then, a proto-fascist and the ideological forbear of German Nazism? The German conservative historian Ernst Nolte, in his book *The Three Faces of Fascism* (1969), notes that "the Nietzschean doctrine ...permitted the equation of socialism, liberalism, and traditional conservatism" (Nolte, 22). That is, Nietzsche's philosophy, according to Nolte, is fundamentally opposed to all of the democratic and liberal movements and ideologies that helped shape modernity. His extremely vocal opposition to socialism and representative democracy certainly precludes his being an "anti-political" thinker.

There is a great deal of truth to Nolte's formulation. Nietzsche was certainly a political elitist. Yet for him, the "elite" consisted of either the Platonic philosopher-king, or philosopher-intellectual (as he himself was), or the members of the old European aristocracy that was displaced by the bourgeoisie in the liberal and democratic revolutions of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, as in *The Gay Science* (1885) (Nietzsche, 228; Sec. 55, Losurdo, 225). Indeed, the German philosopher can be seen as at least in some way the last representative of an intellectual tradition that was quite prevalent in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Europe, and that found its expression in, among many others, Burke's and de Maistre's anti-revolutionary writings. That is, the anti-liberal and anti-bourgeois opposition to political democracy and its anti-belligose and utilitarian mores and ethos, which saw bourgeois liberalism and the burgeoning capitalist mode of production, with their respective emphasis on political and economic equality and their hostility toward aristocratism and feudal society, as paving the way for socialism, and as being the political forerunner and ideological herald of economic radicalism (Burke, 115; de Maistre, 228; Marx, 225; Marx and Engels, 238; Engels, 228; Nietzsche, 225-228, Losurdo, 553). Nietzsche certainly would have thought the Nazis (as well as the bourgeoisie) as being crude, ignorant boors and criminals. He would have considered the Nazis to be part of the people, of the "plebeian" masses and "rabble" he so despised.

His biting, contemptuous remarks on parliamentary democracy and on socialism cannot be denied. It also cannot be denied that, in his attempt to divorce Nietzsche's philosophical legacy from the Nazis, and in his view of the philosopher as being an apolitical, existentialist humanist, Kaufmann bent the stick too far in the other direction. Nietzsche certainly despised egalitarianism, and his profound insights (made long before Freud) into the irrationality of man's internal life certainly serve as a counterweight to the self-interested, enlightened rationalism of Locke, Hume, and Adam Smith.

But the claim that Nietzsche was a forerunner of National Socialism, or that he was in any way responsible for the horrors of the Holocaust, represents the very height of absurdity. The German thinker's loathing for anti-Semitism, jingoism, populism, and nationalism, all of which are key constitutive elements of National Socialist ideology, precludes his having had an overwhelming or direct influence on the Nazis. Take, for example, the issue of racism. There certainly is a racist element in some of Nietzsche's writings, as we have already discussed above. We now know, however, through the excellent research done by Kaufmann, that Nietzsche's views on race never influenced Hitler, Rosenberg, or any of the other fascist leaders. That honor belongs to a German racial theorist, Dr. Hans K. Gunther, and two obscure American eugenicists, Lothrop Stoddard and Madison Grant. Stoddard's and Grant's books, such as *The Rising Tide of Color Against White Supremacy* (1919) and *The Passing of the Great Race* (1923), greatly influenced German fascism.

In fact, these works also influenced President Harding's decision to encourage the anti-immigration laws of the early 1920s, laws which barred Southern and Eastern Europeans and Jews—the very people Nietzsche believed had more *esprit* and *delicately* than the Germans—from immigrating to the United States (Kaufmann, 292-293). Indeed, Kaufmann makes the interesting (and long overlooked) observation that many of the theories found in the American South used to justify segregation had more of an influence on the Nazis than anything ever written by Nietzsche (Kaufmann, 292).

This does not mean that there is nothing to be found in Nietzsche's *corpus* that can be found later in National Socialism. Nietzsche's praise of eugenics, his brutal Darwinism, and his conception of Judeo-Christian morality as the forbear of socio-political equality—all these strands of thought are found in National Socialist "theory." These ideas were also part of the intellectual *corpus* of late nineteenth century anti-revolutionary thought. Moreover, the (admittedly shrewd) deployment of the tactics and methods of mass agitation and mass demagoguery (such as the use of anti-Marxist, yet populist and quasi-socialist, anti-Semitism), needed to create an anti-democratic and anti-socialist mass movement in a mass society and in an age of mass politics, so skillfully carried out by the German National Socialists, would have nevertheless disgusted the aristocratic Nietzsche (Viereck, 50). Certainly, the anti-Semitism of the Nazis, so central to the National Socialist worldview, and their attempts to exterminate and enslave the Jews and Slavic peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, would have outraged the German philosopher, who saw these respective peoples as essential racial and ethnic constituents of the future European ruling class,

and who argued for the establishment of a pan-European imperialist hegemony over the non-European peoples of the world (Nietzsche, 221; Losurdo, 238).

Thinkers such as de Tocqueville, Taine, de Maistre, etc., also held views that were similar to Nietzsche's—and the National Socialists'. Yet no one has so far come forward to accuse de Tocqueville, for example, of causing the horrors of Auschwitz and Buchenwald. Nietzsche's thought needs to be contextualized. In order to fully understand the place his thought has in modern philosophical thinking, it is important to keep in mind the unique period in which he lived. When he wrote *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* in 1872, Europe had already experienced the revolutionary convulsions of 1789-1794, 1830-1831, 1848-1849, and most recently, the panic and fright of the Paris Commune of 1871. From the early 1870s all the way up to the war of 1914-1918, Europe experienced a great reactionary backlash in political, cultural, and artistic life. Nietzsche lived and wrote in this historical context; he is a product of his time. It is certainly true that the Nazis utilized some of his ideas, as they utilized the ideas of other theorists. However, the significance of Nietzsche's thinking, in terms of its relation to the Nazis, lies in the fact that, in his philosophy, we are in the presence of a system of thought that sees state-sponsored eugenics and war as necessary ingredients in the formation of a hierarchical and anti-egalitarian European political and economic colossus. Such contempt for the humanitarian ethics of traditional Christian morality and praise for bellicose and pseudo-Darwinist values were, as has already been mentioned, part of the anti-democratic intellectual and cultural *Zeitgeist* of mid and late nineteenth century Europe, and helped create an ethico-political and ideological space for an anti-democratic and exterminatory political movement like National Socialism (and other similar movements) to rise in Europe in the twentieth century.

Who, then, was Nietzsche? He was above all a brilliant critic of radical egalitarianism and a prophet of a new politics, a politics of radical political and social dis-empowerment that would help create a complete break with the legacy of the French Revolution and its various political and ideological heirs, and create a hierarchical, anti-democratic order in Europe, a Europe that would then be fit enough to carry out its colonialist and imperialist mission of establishing itself as "mistress" over the non-European and extra-European peoples "of the earth" (Nietzsche, 221; Losurdo, 238). Moreover, his philosophical nominalism and his hostility towards the revolutionary implications of Christian theology can also be found in the works of Burke, de Tocqueville, and de Maistre. The critique of revolution, provided by these conservative political theorists, laid the foundation for the

radical, late nineteenth century critique of the modern democratic movement. Nietzsche, in his philosophical works, partakes of this anti-revolutionary tradition.

Nietzsche must ultimately be seen as a profound and brilliant critic of modernity, one whose critique has immanent reactionary political implications. The implications should by no means cloud our appreciation for the originality and depth of this thinker's formulations. If the preconceptions and immediate implications of Nietzsche's ideas are conservative, the incisiveness of his analyses is revolutionary. The premier Italian interpreter and translator of Nietzsche, and who also subscribes to the anti-political conception of Nietzsche, in his afterword to *Beyond Good and Evil* and *On The Genealogy of Morality*, delineates the role that knowledge and suffering, and their function, has in Nietzsche's philosophy. Colli unwittingly touches on the important question of the function, the *instrumentality* and functionality of the German philosopher's thought, and its relation to his anti-revolutionary and conservative politics, as well as the internal consistency of completeness of his thought. He writes:

Of course suffering is greatest in the knowing one, in the one who grasps the will to power in its origin. Philosophy itself, as well as its contradictory opinions, is a mask in order to endure this suffering. Knowledge is no longer a value in itself as in the works before *Zarathustra*, and in fact in the last part of the *Genealogy of Morality* arguments and themes against science begin to appear. 'All that is profound loves a mask; the very profoundest things even have a hatred for images and likenesses. Shouldn't the opposite be the only proper disguise to accompany the shame of a god?' (BGE 40) (Colli, 428) (Emphasis added).

Quite aside from the failure to grasp the aristocratic, elitist, and anti-plebeian motivations and implications of Nietzsche's conception of knowledge and science, and his deployment of them (such as his aristocratic interpretation and utilization of Enlightenment thought and the Enlightenment tradition, as represented by Voltaire's hostility towards Catholic obscurantism), Colli raises the profound question of the relation between knowledge and science and their relation to Nietzsche's philosophy and his formulation of a politics of dis-empowerment. It is not only knowledge that "is no longer a value in itself," either in his early or later works, but philosophy as such which is imbued, by Nietzsche, with a political purpose. If, as he states, all of life is "will to power, and nothing else besides," and if the "metaphysics of" the will to power enable Nietzsche "to transfer the discussion (of suffering) to the sphere of historical becoming," then philosophy as such, knowledge as such, enable the German philosopher to construct a politics, a worldview, of political and social dis-empowerment

that could successfully combat and destroy the modern European democratic movement (Colli: 424). Thus, Nietzsche's philosophy, in its entirety, must be seen as the instantiation of the deployment of philosophy, morality, ethics, aesthetics, history, metaphysics, and epistemology in the politico-ideological struggle against egalitarianism and the various ideological legacies of 1789. Nietzsche truly is a philosopher that is "*totus politicos*." (Losurdo, 771)

However, Nietzsche was not only a prophet of anti-revolutionary, anti-egalitarian and anti-revolutionary conservatism, or even of a radical and incisive critique of modernity. The value of the German philosopher's work also lies in his critique of the problematic implications and even potential dangers of a radical reconstitution of society. In a review of Losurdo's work on Nietzsche, Ernst Nolte correctly states that while the Italian Marxist theorist and philosopher is correct in noting the hostility towards socialism and political and economic egalitarianism that informs all his works, he fails to see the horrors perpetrated in the name of Marxism and other radical and leftist ideologies in the twentieth century, ideologies that Losurdo sees as inherently progressive and emancipatory(?) Indeed, the horrors of the Gulag and of the Stalinist Purges in the 1930s are a reminder of the possible dangers of radical reconstitutions of society, and of the uncertainties and insecurities accompanying large-scale attempts at radical social and political change. Viereck, who sees Nietzsche as the first major European thinker to associate "the modern mass man" with "nationalism and with worship of quantity and power, as opposed to quality and thought," quotes the American historian Crane Brinton⁴⁹ as saying of Burke:

(Burke) confronted in the French Revolution the kind of challenge we have confronted and still confront in the totalitarian revolutions of our day. He met that challenge by an appeal to the fundamental standards of our western civilization, an appeal which has itself helped clarify and formulate those standards. The debate between Burke and Paine, whose famous "Rights of Man" was a pamphlet in reply to Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution," has been decided in favor of Burke as clearly as the debate over the relation between the motions of sun and earth has been decided in favor of Copernicus... Anyone brought up in the Christian tradition should from the start be proof against the great error Burke spent his life combating,

⁴⁹ Brinton had himself published a biography of Nietzsche, *Nietzsche* (1949), which was considered to be the definitive postwar, Anglo-Saxon intellectual biography of the German philosopher before Kaufman published his in 1950, and in which he describes him as being "at least half a Nazi" (Brinton, 112; Kaufmann: 225).

namely that human beings are born naturally good and naturally reasonable (Brinton, 16; Viereck, 50, 83-84).

The implications of the above-quoted passage are clear. It is virtually impossible to deny the horrors and atrocities committed in the twentieth century in the name of Marxism and other progressive and emancipatory ideologies and theories. Indeed, if one were to go back even earlier in the modern era, one could also point to the Paris Reign of Terror, the French Revolutionary Wars, and the Napoleonic Wars as instances of violence, bloodshed, and state-sponsored terror enacted in the name of revolutionary ideologies that set out to destroy and reconstitute society as a whole. Certainly, conservative and reactionary condemnations of revolutionary excesses have often (and still are) been merely ideological and moral justifications and even crude smokescreens for social, economic, political, racial, and gender inequality, and the injustices that arise from political and social oppression. However, it cannot be denied that abstract and universalist theories of universal human emancipation have, in the modern era, led to untold horrors, from the Gulag to the Soviet show trials in Soviet Russia in the 1930s, to the man-made famines and disastrous collectivization campaigns in Russia, Vietnam, and China in the 1950s and 1960s (Solzhenitsyn, 235). Indeed, as Ernst Nolte rightly points out, the Russian Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 created a totalitarian police-state that was the prototype, the model, of all fascist and totalitarian regimes in Europe and throughout the world in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, and even beyond (Nolte, 233-235; Pipes, 235). Nietzsche was one of the foremost critics—if not the foremost critic—in the late nineteenth century of ideological fanaticism and of a revolutionary enthusiasm that has the potential to inspire bloody social experiments and social engineering, against the “great error” of subscribing to an optimistic conception of human nature (Viereck, 85; Losurdo, 777). Manifestly, it follows that Nietzsche’s skepticism of, and hostility towards, historicist and Hegelian notions of inevitable historical progress, already mentioned in the first section, illustrates the German philosopher’s healthy skepticism of historical teleology, a teleology which crystallizes and rigidifies historical categories and categorizations, and transforms them into actors which struggle in a dialectical fashion and which supposedly embody the movement and progress of history (Deleuze, 177). His critique of European historicism is also an implicit and potential critique of ethnocentric and Eurocentric conceptions of what the nature of progress is, of what constitutes progress, and of the sweeping and grand historical generalizations of historicism, which leave little or no room for the role of the individual to act and enact social and political change. Thus, Nietzsche’s

aristocratic and healthy skepticism, and critique of, revolutionary ideology serves as a useful and healthy reminder of the potential dangers of revolutionary reconstitutions of society, of revolutionary and emancipative ideologies, and of radical social experiments.

This anti-absolutist philosophical skepticism also indicates that Nietzsche was above all a thinker, a “free spirit,” according to his own self-description, who did not “advocate” either capitalism, or socialism, or liberalism, or any of the other “isms” of the modern world; he was a thinker who wanted to make others think (Nietzsche, 225; Kaufmann, 335). And perhaps it is this purposeful wish of Nietzsche’s, of not wanting to be pegged down to any particular ideology—rather than his “aristocratic radicalism”—that disturbs his readers most.

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