## Table of contents

### Synopsis

- Foreword .................................................................................................................................................. 5

### 1 - Elements of the Ideal of Cultivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rational Consciousness: the Idea of Physis</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfecting Nature</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of labour</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuality in civilisation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The politics of cultivation</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular and non-secular orientations</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posternity</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Axial Age</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2 - Types of the Ideal of Cultivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Warrior or Courtly Ideal of Cultivation: Paideia and Arete</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of the Polis - The Republican Ideal of Cultivation</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan-Hellenism - the National Ideal of Cultivation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenism - the personal Ideal of Cultivation</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ideal of Cultivation in Europe</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The German Ideal of Cultivation: Bildung</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3 - Nietzsche and the decline of Bildung

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family and Schooling</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Decline of Bildung</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nietzsche’s Isolation</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activism</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Political Project</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4 - Nietzsche’s World History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture and Civilisation</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nietzsche’s World History</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secularism and the modern crisis of values</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5 - The Problem of Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value and Becoming</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value and wisdom</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nietzsche’s experience of nihilism</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toward the revaluation of values</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratagems for justifying value</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6 - The idea of physis and the younger Nietzsche

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Idea of Physis</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The German Idea of Physis</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The German Idea of Nature as Will</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature and Consciousness in the younger Nietzsche</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The problem of theory and practice</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nietzsche’s idea of Physis</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7 - The Will to Power in Nature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The intellectual need for the doctrine of Will to Power</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Will to Power is</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will to Power as life</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will to Power and the evolution of species</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Species and individuals</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8 - Will to power as value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evolution of the idea of will to power as physis</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How an organism perceives</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How an organism knows</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How organisms become conscious</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How organisms become moral</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relation of types of morality to will to power</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is most valuable?</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 9 - What is a Genius?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genius as an ethical concept</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Origins and elements of the idea of genius .......................................................... 77
Mimesis and genius ......................................................................................... 78
Style and genius ............................................................................................... 78
Poetic Furor and genius .................................................................................... 78
The controversy over the three elements of genius ......................................... 79
Developments in the idea of genius .................................................................. 79
The German idea of genius ............................................................................. 80
The elements of genius in Nietzsche’s works ................................................... 82
Integrity ............................................................................................................ 82
Integrity and the younger Nietzsche ............................................................... 83
Integrity, freedom and necessity ...................................................................... 85
Style .................................................................................................................. 87
Plenitude .......................................................................................................... 91
Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 93

10 - Nietzsche’s Politics of Cultivation ............................................................... 95
Nietzsche’s concern with politics ..................................................................... 95
Eudemonic Versus Culture Politics .................................................................. 96
Nietzsche’s Political Extremism ...................................................................... 97

11 - The historical character of the German State .......................................... 98
The material character of the Prussian State .................................................. 98
Spiritual character of the Prussian State ......................................................... 99
A reforming hierarchy .................................................................................... 100

12 - Power-state and Culture-state in German thought .................................. 102
Machtstaat and Kulturstaat ................................................................................ 102
The Cosmopolitan Kulturstaat ........................................................................ 103
The Organic Kulturstaat .................................................................................. 107

13 - Nietzsche’s Culture State .......................................................................... 110
Nietzsche’s Idea of the State ........................................................................... 110
Labour and Property ....................................................................................... 114
Heterogeneity, Homogeneity, Hierarchy ......................................................... 118
War or Peace ................................................................................................... 121

14. Religion, Myth and the State ........................................................................ 131

15 - Nations, Races and the Mission of Europe ............................................... 136
The emergence of German nationalism ........................................................... 136
Nietzsche’s Response to German Nationalism ............................................... 137
Nations and Culture ......................................................................................... 138
The relation of races to culture ..................................................................... 139
The example of extinct nations ...................................................................... 141
The Latins ......................................................................................................... 141
The Slavs ......................................................................................................... 142
The Anglo-Saxons ........................................................................................... 143
The Jews ........................................................................................................... 143
The Germans .................................................................................................. 145
The Mission and Future of Europe .................................................................. 146
How to Unite .................................................................................................... 147
The Culture-State of Europe .......................................................................... 147

16 - The politics of spiritual reform .................................................................. 149
Nietzsche’s Activism ........................................................................................ 149
The Modality of Change - Reform rather than Revolution ......................... 149
Comparative History and the Greeks ............................................................... 152
The Vehicles of Spiritual Reform .................................................................... 153

17 - Spiritual reform through art ...................................................................... 155

18 - Spiritual reform through education ........................................................... 158
Two Educational ideals: Scholar-official and Warrior-gentleman ................... 158
Educational models in Germany ....................................................................... 161
German intellectual fraternity and political reform ........................................ 162
Nietzsche’s embrace of the scholarly vocation ................................................. 164
Nietzsche’s scholarly activism ......................................................................... 166
Nietzsche’s pedagogical ideas ......................................................................... 168
How Nietzsche becomes a gentleman ............................................................. 169

19 - Philosophy and Reform ............................................................................ 172
Synopsis

What I have called the *Ideal of Cultivation* is a fundamental ethical principle of civilisation, originated by aristocratic warriors in Greek antiquity who held that the true purpose of humanity is to perfect nature.

It was then professed that individuals and even entire peoples could consciously develop and improve themselves in a way that was thought to obey the original lawful impulses of nature, a process which was likened to those of agriculture and animal husbandry.

Subsequently the cognate idea of a *politics of cultivation* arose which deemed that society should be organised specifically to produce more virtuous or perfect human types. Given their fundamental association with Hellenism both ideas have been revisited constantly in the intellectual history of the west, and most notably during the great secular periods, the Renaissance and Enlightenment when active attempts were made to retrieve the ideals of antiquity. Both ideas were particularly pervasive in the German enlightenment, the *Aufklärung*, and were assimilated by the succeeding Romantic generation.

In nineteenth century Germany, when interest in these ideas was quickly waning, the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche acquired an unswerving attachment to them and made the service of them his life’s work.

The intention of this essay is to trace methodically the appearance of the *Ideal of Cultivation* in Nietzsche's philosophy and politics, and to outline his responses to a world which was abandoning the principles in which he deeply believed. This essay should be regarded as a case study in the long history of a fundamental ethical idea rather than one about the philosopher Nietzsche.
Foreword

All eyes up. A table is overturned on the other side of the room: a flurry of punches traded, an ethical debate is taking place.

What is the best way of living? The best way of looking at our place in the world? Old questions, furious scenes and all the regulars are at it again. There's the journalist, a low-minded thug, flailing wildly at anyone who knows better. Not much science in it, but sometimes he connects and staggers a foe, or friend, or anyone else near enough. In the thick of it the theologian, a slow, lumbering fellow, throws predictable punches that are easily dodged. By his side the puny armed professional philosopher mumbles quietly through his beard and fires a few feeble jabs. His attention is diverted when some foreign philosophers, gouty old kick boxers, enter the fray.

Their method of fighting abhors him, so he lunges after them and they indulge a separate, ferocious but technically incommensurate sortilege in a corner of the room. Nobody watches. Most eyes are fixed on the culture-critic who entertains with his clever feints, and imaginative footwork. This superflebl fellow has flair. He blacks the eye of the theologian, but is laid out by a windmill from the journalist. The crowd spills around the brawlers, and when they've had their fill they take up playing cards. Which is where they began.

Over by the window the historian of ideas suppresses a yawn. Restless and uncomfortable, it's as if he is debating whether to dive in and smack someone, or play policeman. Why the fuss? Don't these people remember anything? This same fight happened here a year ago, and ten years before that. Before this the fight happened at a frequency of thirty seven year intervals for nearly four hundred years and even three thousand years ago more or less the same kind of people were having a go. The same punches traded; the same profanities. Why are they still fighting? They are acting as though there were actually answers to these questions; at least answers that are more correct. Should we stop fighting just because we've done it before? Let them play. These innocents are making history, or making it continue. The historian finishes his drink and leaves the room. The professional philosopher lurches from a spiteful kidney punch as he passes.

The historian is passive. He can't help it. It is the outcome of the ironic and disconsolate position of the long view, or what Braudel, albeit in the context of material history, calls la longue durée. Pointing to the long continuity of the material civilisations of the Mediterranean, he sees the fact that underneath the surface play of history with its events, personalities and peoples certain structures - fundamental ways of living and therefore of thinking remain. In each generation it is repeated with a slightly altered emphasis or variation, but as Agamemnon said of Helen, the same whore as of old. Déjà vu afflicts the world of ideas, that is to say, ethical ideas. It does not do this in the realm of technique and science, where there is progress and complexity. Ethical ideas do not progress. They do not become more complex or interesting. They are simply strategies or ways we use to justify our actions and the way we live. There is a natural dialectic in it. The entire thought of a civilisation, whether superstitious, religious, philosophic, or scientific in procedure, arises out of or is in some way related to these ideas, which are by many turns related to its material structure.

The complex of environmental, genetic, biological, biographical and historical influences may make each person's subjectivity unique, and supply history with an apparently unceasing variety of responses and suppositions about the world. But in the end there are not so many fundamentally different ways that you can live. And therefore, not so many fundamentally different ways you can value a life. That is why totally separate peoples in similar circumstances produce similar responses, solutions and stratagems to evaluate and to justify their lives.

If you were to think of ideas as shapes and studied their morphology over the longest duration there is not a lot that changes. History is a description of change. This history is a description of what doesn't.
1 - Elements of the Ideal of Cultivation

The ethical system I am referring is known by other terms like culture, self-improvement, self-perfection, perfectionism, the liberal education, or perhaps the German Bildung, the Greek paideia or the Latin humanitas. Let’s use another name so all these other terms don’t get in the way. Each implies a local tradition, a different set of emphases not found elsewhere. But underneath are common assumptions, just as species diverge but remain related to a common ancestor.

The idea of cultivation is a genus in the family of ethical systems, and comprises many species.

The Latin etymology of the word culture has been a metaphor for the Ideal of Cultivation for nearly three thousand years. The process of perfecting of human nature has always seemed to resemble the practice of agriculture. The idea that minds and bodies improved by education or breeding were like plants grown in tilled fields appealed to Greek, then Roman intellectuals and their successors in the West. Thus the noun culture or cultura deriving from the Latin colere means to till the earth. Its past participle is cultus whence the noun cultus, as in cultus deorum and cultus agri which became cultura agri or agriculture - the first art of civilisation, the first significant productive activity of humanity that exploits the potential of nature.

In literary history we attribute this equation to Cicero but it was no doubt already widely in use. His phrase, cultura animi in the Tusculanarum Disputationum, refers to the cultivation of the mind or spirit. “A field, though fertile,” he says, “cannot be productive without cultivation, nor a mind without teaching. The cultivation of the mind is the business of philosophy. It removes imperfections, roots and all, and prepares minds for seed sowing. It imparts to them, as one might say, sows things which when come to maturity will produce abundant fruit.” One thousand years later, Renaissance humanists adopted the word and eventually it gave rise to its vernacular variants in European languages: cultura, Kultur, culture, etc. Since the word culture in modern English has far too many tangential associations, let’s use the term cultivation.

The Ideal of Cultivation is not a coherent idea, but an orientation toward the world; a pattern of consciousness that can exist only when we build cities and live in permanent settlements. Sedentary life shapes our perceptions and expectations in ways not accessible to hunter gatherers or horse riding nomads. Not all civilisations have thought this idea, but it could not possibly have been thought anywhere but in a civilisation. That is to say, civilisation in a strictly technical sense, as it derives from civitas, Latin for city, or city-state.

Civilised peoples make the city the centre of their material existence. The city’s novelty is in concentrating population in permanent settlement through agriculture and animal husbandry. It then makes possible the erection of grand, permanent edifices, vast public works such as irrigation canals, the invention of writing, codification of law, increased division of labour and complex social stratifications, the expansive tendencies of imperialism or colonisation through military conquest, trade and exploration; the advance of techniques to manipulate nature; the emergence of the state as the predominant social institution and the development of political activity.

To say that civilisation itself must encourage development of an Ideal of Cultivation is perhaps banal when so many other different and competing ethical ideas, and in some sense all ethical thought could be attributed to the same fact. But it is not banal from the perspective of deep historical time: where civilisation is a stunningly recent event in the life of our species. When we apply this insight to the work of a modern thinker like Nietzsche it can illuminate ideas that have grown invisible because of their familiarity.

Rational Consciousness: the Idea of Physis

Defiance of nature is what distinguishes the simplest civilisation. Hunter-gatherers excel in adapting themselves to harsh environments; civilisation excels in adapting the environment for its purposes. It is about mastery and control not just making do with what is there. That is why the technology of civilisation is superior.

Underlying all of its technologies however is the practice of agriculture. Without agriculture as the main form of subsistence, civilisation cannot happen, because only agriculture can promise ongoing and predictable subsistence. It enables us to readjust perceptions of reality from rudimentary needs, toward more elaborate desires, and new types of social arrangements.

Agriculture causes non-civilised forms of consciousness to break down. Non-civilised peoples believe

events are caused entirely by magical forces or spirits acting within the material world. This animistic consciousness sees natural processes and human actions as the caprice of animate forces. Though it is easy for the animist to suppose that the world acts according to desires, as he himself does, his sense of causality is encouraged by close dependence on his habitat, which he is powerless to change.

In civilisation, technology transforms habitat, and makes us confident of our powers. Even if animism never wholly disappears, its influence wanes once technique becomes complex and effective. A modern woman may check her horoscope before she begins the day, but she takes the pill before she sees her boyfriend. Successful technique depends on the discovery that nature takes a predictable course after a certain action is performed. These are sequences of causality to which even gods are subject and which mankind can exploit. In the process of learning, classifying and organising them we dispense with myth and reduce magical forces to simple mechanisms. The more our technique advances, the more rationalistic we become, as in Alexandrian Greece, or early modern Europe.

Likewise, as we surround ourselves with structures and artefacts of our own making, the wilderness seems separate and more foreign to us. The physical environment of the civilised world is a mosaic of boundaries, stone walls, straight roads, cultivated fields. The geometry of buildings and artefacts never seen in the chaos of the forest or steppe identifies limits and proportions to which the animist is not accustomed. Bounded and buffered by superficial regularity, civilised man, who is engaged in a ceaseless eternal struggle against entropy, imagines that nature too must have the same character, that it too must be lawful and comprehensible, in other words, rational.

This belief, developed by Hellenic civilisation more than any predecessor, is the foundation of an Ideal of Cultivation. You cannot wish to perfect nature if you think it is capricious and unregulated, or if you cannot expect predictable effects from specific actions. Hellenic civilisation, based on the polis or city-state, and unusually prone to political turmoil, was also more than usually obsessed with regulation. Its aspiration for order was encouraged by the material environment of the civilisation and by the need for a stable intellectual reference point about which to construct a society. Initially this was provided by animist myths, but as these retreated, rationalist principles were sought that were universal and applicable to every polis. Eventually Greeks assumed that nature had distinctive and comprehensible patterns of growth and that reason was a quality of nature, unfolding itself in its forms. From this point on it was possible to relate ethical behaviour to natural processes, and thus to link ethical speculation to a rationalist cosmology.

In the animist phase, we feel that it is best for us to follow the example of the gods as does, for example, Hebrew and Christian belief. In the rationalist order we seek to behave like nature. In this order it is the height of reason and good sense to become as natural as possible. By obeying nature's laws you achieve a higher form of being for both nature and yourself. Man, it is held, should strive for nature's perfection and represent that perfection in his life, as he is the only creature able to do consciously what nature already does unconsciously.

The belief that you can justify yourself by relating your actions to the widest motions of the cosmos, what may be termed the principle of physis, is the next fundamental step in creating the Ideal of Cultivation and will be discussed in detail later. For the moment, let us consider what we might mean when we seek to perfect nature.

**Perfecting Nature**

There are two ways people can look at the task of perfecting nature. The first supposes that there are pre-existing ideal forms in the world that we must conform to as closely as possible. The second assumes that there is no particular end or ideal state, but that perfection consists in continually improving and evolving from what already exists.

**First idea - closed and harmonic**

The first idea is an extension of our tendency to simplify and organise sensory data by storing it in symbolic form.

Because we represent the world to each other through spoken, written and gestured symbols, we sometimes we deceive ourselves into believing that symbols have a life of their own. We say *table*, and make a shadowy image in our mind that is the universal table. You and I don’t share precisely the same image but it is enough for us to agree about what we are referring to: a flat plane supported by three or more legs. All the varieties of tables we have ever seen are encapsulated in our imagination by this image.

But what if, as happened in antiquity, some philosopher turns the trick and supposes that all the varieties of tables there are were only outward manifestations or corruptions of a universal ideal table that lies not just in our imagination, but inherently in nature.
In antiquity this belief was pervasive. Many Greek thinkers taught that everything in nature contained an ideal telos or destiny to which it tended by specific laws of development. The aim of every organism, including man, was to grow to the completeness already promised at its conception. This was the highest excellence and virtue. Accordingly, to see perfection would be to see a thing when it can become no more, i.e. when it reaches a state that approximates the ideal behind it. Perfection in this sense could be regarded as the completion of quality, in the same way as infinity can be regarded as the completion of dimension. This first type of perfection then, consists in abolishing resistance and arriving at a state of order and peace.

Perhaps the same understanding is behind Greek adoration of the circle: simple, uniform, harmonious, closed, yet infinite. In ethical discourse the circle could be equated to the quality of sophrysune. Originally this meant a harmonious, healthy state of mind but later signified tact, balance, or healthy control of the faculties. It is evident that the Greeks began to imagine that living itself could be a crafted object whose end was purification and approximation to an ideal type.

The belief that all phenomena are representations of transcendent idealities already resting behind them is implicit in Plato’s philosophy of forms and has supported varieties of idealist speculation to the present. For Plato and his sympathisers, the ethical injunction to perfect nature would consist in working towards a pre-existing ideal which mankind must first discover.

Second idea - open-ended and progressive

There is a second way of understanding perfection, which holds that excellence is neither immutable nor eternal, but in constant renewal. Perfection arises by imposing an ideal upon the real, rather than by pursuing the ideal reality that is within nature. The completion of perfection can never happen because when one ideal position is reached a better one is observed a little further on. This process may be thought of as ceaseless perfecting rather than striving for perfection. It assumes that the forms of nature can be graded hierarchically from the simple to most complex, with the lowest species of all being's at the bottom and immortal divinities at the top. However were we to assume that the hierarchy was static and permanent, and all things happy to remain within their forms, there could be no demand for perfection. It can only occur when we assume that forms can change within themselves and achieve new ways of being, when hierarchy is seen to be in motion and that all things are struggling from a lowly toward a more complex and excellent state.

The injunction that follows is obvious. If mankind is midway in the scale of beings, higher than animals but lower than gods, he is incomplete. That state of incompleteness is an invitation to improvement and goodness would always consist in acquiring some quality of higher nature or divinity. It is a positive moral advantage that man is not already perfect or immortal, since if he were already divine he would not be able to justify himself. But even if mankind already sits at nature’s pinnacle, it is possible for mankind to justify itself by developing further, into a new species perhaps, or else by presenting mankind as nature's tool for bettering itself. As nature's highest being we could strive to improve all being. Perfecting would always consist in mastering technique and ceaselessly, restlessly, overcoming resistance.

This understanding of perfection, already evident in antiquity, has become the preferred form in the West since the Middle Ages. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it supported new varieties of the Ideal of Cultivation and a new and dominating competitor we know today as the idea of progress.

The idea of progress holds that the process of perfecting is linear and accretive, but it does not seek to achieve the same things as an ideal of cultivation. In general it holds the goal of our endeavour to be the promotion of happiness by conquering nature to increase of our comfort and material welfare. Progress consists in making life as easy and as comfortable, or as just and as equitable, as possible, but the Ideal of Cultivation assumes that perfection can only enhance moral, intellectual and spiritual excellence. Our growing power over nature should result in the improvement of the soul, the mind, the virtue, the inner quality of man, and the elevation of the value of his actions.

Both ways of understanding how nature can be perfected, one closed and harmonic and the other open-ended and progressive, have held education to be the primary method for improving the nature of mankind, and of raising the level of nature. Terms for education and for cultivation or culture, such as Bildung or Paideia have almost always been synonymous. In antiquity, education was most often compared in its effects on man to those of agriculture upon plants. Greek thinkers praised education extravagantly using this metaphor. Antiphon states that "the first thing, I believe, for mankind is education. Whenever anyone does the beginning of anything correctly, it is likely also that the end will be right. As one sows so can one expect to reap. If in a young body one sows a noble education, this lives and flourishes through the whole of his life, and neither rain nor drought destroy it." ¹

More than two thousand years later adherents to the ideal still hold this line. Immanuel Kant, whose ethical philosophy it sustains, explicitly advises that "in education lies the great secret of the

perfecting of human nature.” Accordingly the education of humanity, the process of acquiring and passing on knowledge and skill, completes what already is given to it by nature.

**Division of labour**

Agriculture changes our relation to nature and makes new social formations possible. The more efficiently that food is produced the greater the number of people who can live alongside each other. Larger numbers jostle uneasily in forms of social organisation like the tribe or clan, which have been the archetypal social form and the source of human evolution. The tribe is a small vessel and cannot hold such numbers. By forcing more people into one place civilisation loosens tribal bonds and makes new social constellations possible.

A civilisation that develops and diversifies its productive base - pottery, metal making and working are typical – creates too much knowledge for any one mind and too much work for one pair of hands. To keep that knowledge, and do that work it is efficient to assign it to specialists. In the tribe there is already specialisation between sexes and individuals, but in civilisation whole classes and castes emerge based upon the function they perform. At a bare minimum civilisation needs a lower caste to support, either gradingly as free citizens or sullenly as slaves, a numerically smaller class that is free from the burden of subsistence. The non-productive class may be further stratified by the services or functions it performs, as warriors, scribes, merchants, artisans, priests...

By this means existence is functionalised. You are no longer a human but a representative of your role. Role becomes personal destiny every time one generation passes it on to the next. In Europe’s Middle Ages, being born into a guild sealed what you did with your life. It was an arranged marriage. The agony of modern teenagers who do not know what to study and have no idea what they want to do was unknown. Even so, once modern teenagers do cross that Rubicon, they can afterwards attest that they are a C# developer or project manager.

In civilisation, vocational ethics appear that honour the values or skills of specific castes or trades; the potter justifies himself by his fine pots, the scribe by his learning, the merchant by his wealth. Each vocation seeking its own excellence may be seen as a type of perfectionism, but cannot be regarded as an *Idea of Cultivation*. This demands a more open-ended view of human possibility, which holds that specialism works against our best interests and impairs our completeness. The highest estimation of *universal* abilities is one of the enduring elements of every *Ideal of Cultivation*.

The ideal of cultivation is a reaction against the functionalising of existence. So while civilisation produces a division of labour and increases the number of specialists, there is also a reaction to this process as certain classes disassociate themselves from it: maybe a warrior aristocracy with the power of arms, or priests or scribes with the power to manipulate symbols or, in some instances, merchants, with the power of the purse.

Ruling castes, whether military, intellectual or economic in character and mostly all three, have the benefit of a universal outlook not expected of those in trades. This is natural when you are perched on the top of the tree and have leisure and perspective to observe all that is happening below. Upper classes estimate the virtues of command most highly and sneer at detailed work. As administrators they are expected to take the widest possible view and not encumber themselves with minutiae. Broader knowledge makes them adaptable, capable of not one, but many excellences.

If not equipped for many tasks *by nature*, they receive an *education* that trains them to be. Since ruling classes do not struggle for their needs and can lead a *leisured* existence, they can ornament their behaviour with codes of honour that would encumber those who daily confront necessity.

Leisure encourages virtuosity, as much in the skills of command as pastimes. A martial nobility or bourgeois admires soldierly skill, strength, bravery, and fortitude, but also honours its adornment by courtly manners, noble intentions, well-roundedness, fine dress, and poetry and music. It is not incidental that it is to professional warriors that the world owes its earliest examples of *high* culture. The Homeric *hoplites*, the *troubadours* of Provencal, the *Samurai* of Japan were martial castes who sought to show excellence in artistic accomplishment *as well as* in deeds.

Ruling classes and castes are the originators and retainers of *ideals of cultivation*, and present their prejudices and proclivities as values of universal validity.

**Individuality in civilisation**

Civilisation liberates the individual from the family or clan and subjects the clan to the rule of the state. *Ideals of cultivation* may be individualist or corporatist, but all pre-suppose a degree of self-

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*1 Kant, Immanuel, *Education*, tr. A. Churton, Ann Arbor/Michigan, 1960*
reflection not available to hunter gatherers or simple farmers.

The tribe member does not see his life as something separate; it is subject to laws and privileges seldom questioned. If conflict occurs, it results from power struggles between clans or tribes, and not, as occurs in civilisation, between different religions or ideologies or different ways of thinking about how power or wealth should be distributed. Diversification of social interactions in civilisation weakens and simplifies the tyranny of tribal kinship, and unconscious attachment to the clan.

Great populations in one place multiply the number and types of social interactions possible, which in turn, force individuals to make choices and divide their loyalties. Subjective innocence is lost. Individuals can defect from the group and think of their existence as something separate and entire in itself. In the populous cosmopolitan cities of Hellenistic Greece and the Roman Empire, individuals could be atomised, and receive an impression of themselves as self-contained beings. Self-consciousness, whose increase is proportionate to the existence of individuality, underlies every attempt to formulate an ethical system like an *Ideal of Cultivation*.

In the tribal group there is moral thinking not ethical thinking. In tight social structures how you act within yourself does not matter as much as how you behave in relation to others. Ethical thought is about the best life you can lead for yourself. It can only occur when the bonds holding together the tribe loosen and introspection undermines moral thinking. In the introspective Hellenistic civilisation, every variety of belief from naive religion to extreme scepticism was available. Probably the same variety as exists today, and certainly no less sophisticated.

Once the individual becomes the focus of ethical thinking, there is a parallel demand for universal standards. Individuals are tiny slender things, and seek ethical support *in the wider world*. The more atomised they feel, the more they are likely to give their destiny cosmic dimensions, and the more they calibrate their own value *against universal standards* that apply to all people of all nations.

Self conscious individuals, unlike unconscious group members, magnify the value of their existence, sometimes more highly than the group itself. At the same time groups in which the value of individuality is raised can even justify themselves by honouring their precepts and memory of great heroes. Peoples prone to hero-worship, who celebrate and pride themselves in the deeds or thoughts of the great men they have produced, judge the quality of other peoples accordingly. This is quite different to peoples that deify individuals such as kings or emperors impersonally; that is, worship individuals for their rank and power rather than for their achievements.

That great traveller Herodotus noted that the Greeks - who did evolve an *Ideal of Cultivation* - admired and mythologised singularly excellent individuals, but “heroes - men, that is, who have been subsequently deified - have no place in the religion of Egypt” which, as far as we can tell, never produced such an ideal. Elsewhere he explicitly related the quality of its individuals to a nation’s capacity for civilisation: “Round the Black Sea” he says, “are to be found, if we except Scythia, the most uncivilised nations in the world. No one could claim that the rest have any of the arts of civilised life, or have produced any man of distinction.....”

The judgement that individuals of distinction determine how we should value the group, does not however necessarily mean that freedom for individuals was easy or welcome. In the *polis* any who performed great deeds were punished if their power or success threatened equilibrium. It was Athens, after all, that practiced ostracism and banned from the city many of its brightest and best simply because they were guilty of being too prominent. In spite of egalitarian checks and balances of this sort, we can say that any civilisation that celebrates talent is also prone to develop *ideals of cultivation* and perfectionism. When you think that mortals are able to become divine you are probably an optimistic view of human possibility and when great accomplishments are so honoured many would hope to justify themselves by realising them.

**The politics of cultivation**

*Ideals of cultivation* can be for individuals and an entire group. A group, like an individual, may believe that it can justify itself by perfecting its nature, and can consciously resolve to organise itself in a way so as to realise this end. In doing so it may see the group itself as the most important thing, or may decide that the purpose of the group is to make it favourable for the development of all individuals.

Elaborate resolutions like this can only be made when the group is capable of politics, law-making, and statecraft. The premise that humanity *en masse* can be shaped and moulded through technical control can only occur within civilisation, which employs politics to maintain order or power and distribute goods, but also to cultivate its citizenry. The *politics of cultivation* supposes that humanity

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2 *ibid.*, Book IV-48, p.257.
can breed cultivated individuals by manipulating social structures. For this to occur, the tribe has to have been supplanted by the form of organisation known as the "state" which is itself the product of the synoecism of tribes or villages.

As civilisations become more complex, the power and role of the state increases, with the result that it becomes the primary power affecting all decisions about how we conduct ourselves. Eventually the exercise of state power by individuals or groups encourages the exhibition of virtuosity, and the view that the state itself can be regarded as a product of technique, and statecraft as a form of artistry.

The Hellenic city-states were what 19th century German scholars called culture-states or state-cultures: states in which leaders and intellectuals consciously sought to create a superior citizenry by enacting laws to encourage virtuous behaviour. Most honoured among the Greeks were the real or mythical founders of cities: the great legislators – wise men like Solon or Lycurgus, who created the character of the nation through wisely drawn laws.

Military aristocracies like that of Sparta actively practiced the politics of cultivation and its constitution was a model of it. Designed to make citizens militarily proficient (mainly to subdue the large helot population that kept the aristocracy fed) it inspired and guided radicals elsewhere like the Athenians Plato or Xenophon. For Spartans individual excellence was needed to protect the group; with the state’s survival paramount, as Plutarch described it: "No man was allowed to live as he pleased, but... belonged entirely to their country, and not to themselves." This state, which produced little other than brave warriors, was regarded as a work in itself and a home for virtue. In states like Athens, intense public life required an active and resourceful citizenry, and virtue was more broadly defined. Afterwards, when Rome conquered the Mediterranean, Greek intellectuals like Polybius examined the republican constitution that had produced a new nation of virtuous heroes.

In the polis ideals of cultivation were truly political in character, and aimed to breed virtue for the benefit of the group. Once the power of the polis was broken by the Macedonian and Roman empires, the politics of cultivation gave way to individualist ideals of cultivation. Imperial administrations could never be as intrusive or interested in shaping the quality of its citizenry as the city-states.

Secular and non-secular orientations

The material environment of civilisation stimulates new experiences of being and time and new expectations about the way life should be lived. Agriculture makes it possible for us to live in one place with food and drink across the seasons. Being in one place for long periods, means you invest more of yourself in that place: your labour, your attachments. You build durable structures to house and protect yourself and - something not really known to nomads - your property. And then, after you learn how to build permanent structures, you learn how to make a place sacred by what you build there. Stone structures inspire grander designs: tombs, temples or palaces that attest to the enduring power of peoples, princes or gods.

Those who live in cities live in an object world of things that are made: of things that serve a practical purpose or that eternalise a symbol or meaning. We delight in these things: buildings, tools, artefacts sacred or ornamental, of this or earlier generations and in our capacity to make new or better ones. Each artefact or construction that is handed down links ancestors to descendents. Through the forms of writing, devised by a majority of civilisations, we extend the powers of human memory and give a permanent form to ideas and events, business transactions, heroic deeds. Through symbols the entire world, even thoughts, can be made thing-like - retifed. History can be recorded and webs of significances can be woven around the buildings and artefacts they see before them.

The intense material and emotional investment of civilised peoples in the fabrication of objects, the production of deeds and the manipulation of symbols promotes a form of this-worldly spirituality. It honours the conviction that our responsibilities, energies and interest should be conferred on earthly life, and that there is no world of any consequence to us other than the one we inhabit daily.

But even when the secular mood dominates in a civilisation, it remains in combat with the power of mythic consciousness, or other-worldliness. In the form of ecstatic religions like Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam, other-worldliness transforms and updates itself to respond to and accommodate secular civilisation. In essence it treats life in this world as a temporary prelude to a more significant existence that starts after death, and because death is not the end of life material or intellectual accomplishment in life matter little, and human action has little value other than in service to gods.

1 Jacob Burckhardt in particular focused his investigations on this phenomenon in his Reflections on History, tr. M.D.H., Edinburgh, 1943.
2 It was this form of politics, for instance, which Cyrus the Persian was practising when he refused to accept an offer to move his nation to richer lands. "Soft countries", he was said to have replied. "Breed soft men. It is not the property of any one soil to produce fine fruits and good soldiers too." Herodotus, op. cit., Book IX-124, p.599.
4 It is true of course that even semi-ordinary peoples have undertaken the construction of grand edifices, as attested to by the megalith builders of Western Europe. The megaliths, however, were not permanent but seasonal sites, to which their builders returned for specific purposes. They did not inhabit or regularly use these structures, nor were they in permanent purview of the areas of settlement.
The theology of medieval Europe scorned human works and found impious the belief that men could surpass or perfect nature.

It is important to recognise that this is not just a battle between religion and secularism. Not all religion is captured by the mood and for long periods it can persist as an empty sham, in which observance matters more than feeling. Religion is not in itself inevitably other-worldly in character, for many variants even of ecstatic faiths have proposed that salvation could be found in this world. During the Renaissance and later in the Reformation theology could even conspire with philosophy to provide a reasoned ground for secular achievement, but every step in that direction necessarily lessens the importance of gods and raises the estimation of man; something astutely anticipated by the conservative Churchmen of Christianity’s heyday.

Civilisations dominated by religion can grow and prosper materially, as Sumeria and Egypt show, and whose greatest monuments were either tombs or homes for gods, whose state structures were dominated by priestly precepts and goals. But this is so only when there is a great deal of hypocrisy, when the forms of other-worldliness are aped, but the energies of the majority are intent on enjoyment of the fruits of the present. Even when the spell of other-worldliness takes hold and is widely believed it cannot stifle the self-interest of the merchant, the artisan, or the land-owner, or the aggression of the war-lord. Civilisations of fundamentally other-worldly orientation still require a vigorous secular base if they are not to decline, or become subject to external predation.

The this-worldly response to mortality provides the most favourable foundation for an Ideal of Cultivation, because it demands a confidence in human powers that is not to be found among devotees of the other-world. But this is not enough. This-worldliness may simply encourage hedonism and enjoyment of earthly pleasures while we can, which is unlikely to result in formulation of an Ideal of Cultivation, since the latter makes considerable ethical demands and is unable to promise spontaneous happiness. Like the foundation of civilisation itself, it has little to do with the desire for happiness, since it requires a restlessness that can only stem from dissatisfaction. In periods of cultural advance people are not happier, but they are more vigorous. It was during the Greek enlightenment that the tragic drama developed. Holding life a chaotic misery to be encountered in a spirit of dignity or nobility, the quality of writing exceeded that of the less turbulent but “happier” age of Alexandrian imperialism, when only domestic comedy remained a vital medium of expression.

It is only in the most developed phases of a civilisation that the search for happiness becomes paramount. Either that, or the spirit of the epigon, the latecomers, sets in and kills the secular mood. In late antiquity individuals either embraced the eudaimonic doctrines of the philosophic schools or journeyed to mystical other-worlds, of the sort promised by Christianity. Secular despair removed of hope or promise (the kind that has charmed poets of all civilisations) is also hostile to the goals of cultivation. If it were thought that mortality made all human endeavour insignificant and empty, and that men cannot influence the world for the better, or that the cosmos is utterly indifferent to their fortunes, then who would want to help themselves or labour for their self-improvement?

To operate effectively an Ideal of Cultivation needs both hope and of hopelessness. It needs the fear of death, but not the paralysing belief in the pointlessness of all endeavour. It needs a belief that some form of immortality is realisable: in the enduring artefacts and objects of civilisation we can, through things made or deeds performed, continue to exist for generations to come.

Although the desire to live on in the memory of descendents continues and deepens tendencies to ancestor worship in tribal society, its objects of reverence are exclusive and rare. Ancestor worship honours any dead patriarch or matriarch, but to be the revered objects of posterity you need to have done something noteworthy: you must have merited fame. It is this elitism embodied in Heraclitus’ declaration that “The best men prefer one thing to all others - everlasting fame to things mortal...” and appositely in Schiller’s suggestion that “all that is common sinks down to Orcus unheard”.

The desire by some to achieve everlasting glory means that most exist only in order to be conduits for justification of an elect few. Posterity cannot ever serve the majority of individuals because, not everyone can be remembered for their deeds. However all individuals can achieve modest forms of immortality if they can see themselves as part of larger achievements or structures: a twig in a family genealogy perhaps; as a valued servant of the state, or a shopkeeper in a great and successful nation. The relationship between the renowned elect and the anonymous majority is mutually sustaining. Nations are grateful to their great individuals for in their glory all, down to the least, can bask and assume some credit.

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12 Schiller, Nänie (1796), from Elegien.
Posterity

The quest for living or posthumous glory incites passionate undertakings as much as the drives for sex, wealth or power. It begins on the battlefield, with the expectation that your deeds will be celebrated, maybe by poets. In Greece, Homer’s epics tempt the bellicose. It was with Achilles that Alexander contended, as later conquerors from Caesar to Napoleon sought to outshine Alexander.

The cult of heroism in war is a model for other forms of achievement. The poets who celebrate heroes become heroes as poets and so battlefield glitter transfers to literature, art, philosophy or science. When Greek and Roman poets openly laboured for immortal fame, posterity became went beyond great deeds, becoming a series of intellectual productions with a palpable and powerful afterlife. The reward of knowing you will be remembered, and the satisfaction of seeing your actions or productions benefiting those to come has tempted many engaged in culture. Good deeds are said to have a cumulative effect; whereby those selfless and noble enough to work for posterity enrich future generations by their efforts.

It is plain how belief in posterity is needed to support an Ideal of Cultivation. Recognition of achievement encourages us to develop ourselves as part of an ongoing project handed from generation to generation, like the expanding Republic of Genius of the humanists, to which every nation contributes its finest individuals.

The need for culture to be supported by a faith in the immortality of posterity was observed by Diderot, most astute of all the philosophers, who describes “posterity” as “being for the philosopher what the other world is for the religious.”14 It is, he says, the “sole encouragement, the sole support, the sole consolation... of men in a thousand unhappy circumstances.”15 He goes so far as to doubt whether people would wish to live by an Ideal of Cultivation at all if it were not for the mutual recognition of the generations. “If our predecessors,” he says, “have done nothing for us, and if we do nothing for our descendents, it is almost in vain that nature wills that man should be perfectible.”16 The result would be “no more ambition, no more monuments, poets, historians, perhaps no more warriors or wars. Everyone would cultivate his garden and plant his cabbages.”17 Again he assures us that “if a comet collided with earth and destroyed the achievements of men to date - what effect would the knowledge of this event have on the conduct of men. Such knowledge would destroy all incentive to good or great action.”18

Appalled by his insight, Diderot could not shake off the horrible realisation that the highest spiritual achievements of civilisation are subject to the fickle and ephemeral operations of human memory, and that not even the monuments or arts of civilisation would suffice to cause people to recollect their debts to the past and future. It is inescapable that in a paltry few cerebra of a generation, the entire labour of humanity rests in trust.

The Axial Age

All civilisations increase human control of nature, but an Ideal of Cultivation can only be thought when people become conscious of the possibilities of that fact, and of their existence. Not all civilisations have been so self-aware and those that have - most notably China, India and Greece - did so when they were already old enough to have suffered cycles of decline and regeneration. What is remarkable is that all three did this independently, yet roughly contemporaneously, when many other fundamentally new intellectual currents were washing across civilisations from Europe to Asia.

This event, which some regard as a world historical shift in consciousness, of which the Ideal of Cultivation is simply another result, occurred between the ninth and second centuries BC. For Karl Jaspers this axial or pivotal age came about when the peoples of a few civilisations began to forsake the sensibilities of their predecessors and attempted to compose religious and intellectual works that we have lived by and developed ever since. Homer, the tragedians and the philosophers of Greece, the prophets of Palestine, Zoroaster in Persia, the Upanishads and Buddha in India, and Confucius and Lao-tse in China all point to a remarkable development. "The axis of world history seems to pass through the fifth century B.C., in the midst of the spiritual process between 800 and 200 B.C... The most extraordinary events are concentrated in this period. Confucius and Lao-tse were living in China, all the schools of Chinese philosophy came into being, including those of Mo-tse, Chuang-tse, Lieh-tse and a host of others; India produced the Upanishads and Buddha and, like China, ran the whole gamut of philosophical possibilities down to scepticism, to materialism, sophism and nihilism; in Iran Zarathushra taught a challenging view of the world as a struggle between good and evil; in Palestine

15 Ibid., p.102. From Becker op. cit., p.149.
16 Ibid., p.100. Becker loc. cit.
18 Diderot, Oeuvres XVIII, p.79. Becker op. cit., p.149.

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the prophets made their appearance, from Elijah, by way of Isaiah and Jeremiah to Deutero-Isaiah; Greece witnessed the appearance of Homer, of the philosophers - Parmenides, Heraclitus and Plato - of the tragedians, Thucydides and Archemides. Everything implied by these names developed during these few centuries almost simultaneously in China, India, and the West, without any one of these regions knowing of the others.  

The appearance in China, India, and Greece of philosophy as a way of thinking and acting pushes back mythical thought and brings forward rational inquiry and ethical religion. Older civilisations such as Sumeria and Egypt differ from non-civilisation more in technique than mentality. Their technological achievements excite, but their ventures in the realm of the spirit lack the lucidity and boldness of the axial civilisations. With some notable exceptions they remain curiously unconscious.

In Greece, China, and India similar forms of social organisation and environmental circumstances precede the axial period. In no case did the new civilisation emerge sui generis; it inherited a fund of technical knowledge and powers, although in some cases only a portion of what had previously existed could have been available. The Greeks of the axial period emerged out of a dark ages, in which all about the ruins of ancient cities and palaces suggested a rapid, catastrophic collapse. The Mohenjo-daro had vanished almost from recollection.

Similarities also exist in the political organisation of the three civilisations. A commanding imperial structure did not arise until much later in their development; so politics was local in character, and many independent towns, city-states and territories contended for prestige and power in a context of common language and culture. Prosperity persisted alongside minor yet incessant party-strife, revolution and external war. In a milieu disposed to fragmentation the individual is either compelled into allegiances or isolated and released into self-inspection and introspection.

The philosophies and religions of the axial-age are the fruit of intense and self-absorbed speculation. By applying intelligence in consistent appraisal of similar problems the people of the axial civilisations reach a layer of interpretation of experience which is residual and unchanging. According to Jaspers, "until today mankind has lived by what happened during the Axial Period, by what was thought and created during the period. In each new upward flight it returns in recollection to this period and is fired anew by it. Ever since then it has been the case that recollections and reawakenings of the potentialities of the Axial Period - renaissances - afford a spiritual impetus. Return to this beginning is the ever-recurrent event in China, India and the West."  

Ever since the Axial age the intellectual life of western civilisation has been a process of forgetting, rediscovering and then modifying core beliefs then discovered. Even at the source there was never a single set of precepts for the Ideal of Cultivation. These changed as civilisations changed, although in accordance within easily recognisable typologies. But understanding the first developments in the history of the ideal will help us to describe the form of the ideal that Nietzsche in turn was to articulate.

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19 ibid., p.7.
2 - Types of the Ideal of Cultivation

The Ideal of Cultivation took different forms in relation to the phases of Greek civilisation. Literary evidence is scant in the early stages but we have enough information to enable us to trace its evolution from Mycenae to the empire of Alexander.

In this span most of the basic patterns of the Ideal of Cultivation that appear later in the west were conceived and acted upon: the Homeric courtly ideal, the republican or political ideal, the nationalist ideal of Pan-Hellenism, and the personalist cosmopolitan models of Hellenism.

The most detailed and definitive investigation of the history and character of the Greek Ideal of Cultivation ever attempted is Werner Jaeger's three volume Paideia and in the following brief sketches, it is to this authority that we largely defer.20

The Warrior or Courtly Ideal of Cultivation: Paideia and Areté

The earliest Ideal of Cultivation in Greece appears after two profound events: the existence of a highly developed Mycenaean civilisation in the latter part of the second millennium BC, and its decline and disappearance, possibly after invasions by Greek-speaking but less technically developed invaders. The dark age that followed in peninsular Greece and its Aegean colonies lasted until about the eighth century BC, when appeared the first signs of a surge in original thought and creativity that was to become the Greek enlightenment.

By the eighth century BC Mycenaean palaces were in ruins, but aristocratic culture and values were not. Homeric epics keep alive the memory of the courts and warriors long after they are gone. If they cannot speak reliably of that civilisation, they do provide, in the first phase of the Greek Ideal of Cultivation, powerful ethical guidance equivalent to that of the Old Testament in Jewish culture. But where the Bible takes the values of nomadic patriarchy as paradigm, Homeric epic idealises the values of landed nobility and offers as models for living the behaviour of Achaean warriors: their individuality, pride, personal honour, and technical excellence in combat. The earliest Hellenic Ideal of Cultivation invokes as the image of human perfection warrior heroes whose life and deeds transfigure existence and extend ideals of humanity to semi-divinity.

Poetry and philosophy carry values beyond their material origins. The images of excellent men drawn by poets inspire emulation long after the society that originated them has waned. In tumultuous post-Periclean Athens Plato complains jealously of those who regard Homer as the "educator of Greece", and seeks to replace poetic education with a philosophical one of his own.21 But values do not persist through poetry if there are not also many who share a penchant for warfare and valour. Mycenae was dominated by a palace culture, but the Greek civilisation of the eighth century BC was dominated by aristocratic classes of the polis or city-state whose values must have resembled those of their predecessors.

In this period the terms areté and paideia - pivotal and enduring components of subsequent phases of the Ideal of Cultivation - were first employed to describe the highest ethical qualities. The word areté defines personal excellence or nobility, and was used in much the same way as the Renaissance Italian word virtù. Like virtù, areté did not have the moral connotations we associate with Christian goodness, but those of proficiency, talent, or valour tempered by a profound sense of honour.22 It was the supreme pride of the aristocracy or, as they called themselves, the Kaloikagathoi (from the compound of Kalos kai agathos - literally meaning the beautiful and the good), to value the qualities they believed they embodied: gentlemanly conduct, knightly valour, courtly refinement and artistic accomplishment, much as the minnesänger of the Middle Ages or the courtier of the Renaissance. The kaloikagathos was a synthetic individual able to master all he chose to do, save what was menial or specialist. He exercised daily and prided himself as much on his body as his intellect and learning. A strong sense of pride and honour, rather than moral codes, set him on the path to right conduct. All this in a person constituted areté.

The process by which an individual acquired areté was called paideia (Paideia) which came to mean formation, education, or self-perfecting, though at the earliest period of its usage it referred to nothing more than child nurture or upbringing.23 Because areté was the dominant value of the dominant class it became the aim of education for all free citizens within the polis. That is to say, while education for the Greeks had simple utilitarian goals, as training among civilised and non-civilised peoples has

23 loc. cit., Jaeger notes that the first appearance of the word paideia in its narrower usage occurs in Aeschylus, where it still refers to the child-rearing.

CT. Vol I, p.418.
always had, its primary aim was to produce a specific ethical type.

This is evident in their use of writing and reading which spread throughout Greece in the sixth and seventh centuries BC. Older civilisations like Egypt, Mesopotamia and perhaps the Minoan cultures of the Aegean had a longer history of literacy but developed the instruction of writing as a specialist training for officials and priests in the service of the state. In these civilisations literacy was the preserve of a scribal caste aware of the power and prestige it conferred on them and holding in contempt those condemned to manual labours.

In the Greek city-states no specialist scholarly caste developed and therefore there was no scribal education. Citizens had to perform various duties in public service, so allocating literacy to one functional caste was not practical, hence the prevailing aristocratic contempt for the technician, the artisan, or specialised man. Greek schools were never sponsored by the state and were either run privately for poorer students or tuition was provided at home for the rich. To some extent, all citizens were teachers, and school classes were not conducted separated, as they are today, from outside observers who could interfere with, encourage, or condemn the instruction.

In earlier civilisations you performed a function because you were literate, but the Greeks thought that reading or writing simply added to your humanity. If education had any purpose it was to fashion a synthetic individual who could realise any potential without impairing any other. So fashioned, a person might encounter and control life’s contingencies. Paideia should show us, as the Athenian rhetoricians Isocrates asserted, how to distinguish between “misfortunes” due to ignorance and others due to necessity. It should teach us to “guard against the former and bear the latter nobly.”

Our actions and also our knowledge must reflect well roundedness, as the Sophists were to demonstrate with virtuosity. Social conventions limit what we can profess to know, but allow us to take pride in our discrimination and judgement in all affairs. This became a familiar point raised in praise of paideia. The educated man has unerring judgement. He quickly grasps the essentials of every problem and complements his insight with an understanding of the principles underlying the varieties of learning.

Aristotle notes the difference between scientific knowledge and paideia, stating that a man subjected to the latter as opposed to the former can “judge correctly whether another man’s explanation is right or wrong.” He then goes on to point to this capacity as the very foundation of cultivation. “That is in fact what we think the generally cultured man is”, he says, “and culture (paideia) is the ability to do that. Only we think the cultured man is able to judge about practically everything by himself, while the other man can do so only for one special field. For in special fields too there must be a cultured man corresponding to the universal type we have described.”

The cultivated man scorns the utility and effeminacy of utilitarian training because he is free and accustomed to leisure. He does not have to work for a living so can occupy himself with what is not immediately useful. Free citizens must be generally capable and adaptable, but also receptive to refined leisure. This ancient scruple of the idle warrior is reflected in the subjects pupils were taught, for although some had obvious practical benefits others, like music, manifestly did not.

Aristotle’s pedestrian intellect informs us of prevailing opinion, and advances this argument to support the contemporary practice of teaching pupils “useful” and “useless” subjects. In the Politics he observes that “the subjects nowadays regularly studied serve both virtue and utility...” and notes that “about four are generally taught to children: (1) Reading and Writing, (2) Physical Training, (3) Music, and (4), not always included, Drawing.” Of these he says, “reading and writing and drawing are useful in daily life in a variety of ways, gymnastic because it aims to make men strong and brave. But about music there is a real question. Most men nowadays take part in music for the sake of the pleasure it gives; but some lay it down that music is fundamental in education on the ground that nature herself, as has often been said, aims at producing men not merely able to work properly but fit also for the life of cultivated leisure. And this latter, we repeat, is the basis of the whole business... There remains one purpose - to provide an occupation for leisure; and that is clearly the reason why they did introduce music into education, regarding it as an occupation of free men... Clearly then there is a form of education which we must provide for our sons, not as being useful or essential but elevated and gentlemanly.”

The novelty of the Greeks was to believe that education was a foundation of virtue as opposed to mere training. Paideia was not just a preparation for life, but life’s entire purpose: a justification for living. You can only live at the highest level by continually renewing yourself in the process of self-perfection. In Jaeger’s view, the Greeks “...relied wholly on this clear realisation of the natural principles governing human life, and the immanent laws by which man exercises his physical and intellectual powers. To use that knowledge as a formative force in education, and by it to shape the living man as the potter moulds clay... into a preconceived form - that was a bold creative idea which

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could have been developed only by that nation of artists and philosophers. The greatest work of art they had to create was man.”

When the worth of a life is measured how much it is subject to paideia, any person who has not enjoyed its benefits is deemed to have no value. This conviction was stated repeatedly in Greek literature before and after the fifth century enlightenment. If there were quarrels about how paideia should be conducted, its absolute value was never disputed. In the Timaeus Plato has Socrates remark that if the proper conditions combine in man “with any true nurture or education he attains the fullness and health of the perfect man, and escapes the worst disease of all; but if he neglects education (paideia) he walks lame while alive to the end of his journey, and returns imperfect and good for nothing to the world below.” Plato’s pupil Aristotle is equally passionate. Once, when asked how the educated and uneducated differ: “As much...” he was said to have answered, “as the living from the dead.” There is also the oft-cited anecdote of the philosopher Stilpo, who was in Megara when it was occupied by the forces of Demetrius. The conqueror ensured that Stilpo’s house was preserved and all his plundered property returned to him. “But when he requested that a schedule of the lost property be drawn up, Stilpo denied that he had lost anything which really belonged to him, for no one had taken away his paideia.”

The shape of the Greek Ideal of Cultivation changes along with the shape of Greek civilisation, but the silhouette of the Mycanean aristocrat is never completely obscured. The prejudices of Mycanean aristocracy, exaggerated and absolute, are also those of the elites at every stage of Greek civilisation and in most that follow in the West, or wherever ardent lust for glory is tempered by refinement of manners. The earliest form of the Ideal of Cultivation is the ethos of the courtier or gentleman: balancing the extremes of the vita activa and vita otirosa (the traditional polarities of warrior culture where short durations of extreme action link longer durations of idleness) and opposing the vita contemplativa. If learning is needed to develop men to perfection, it must be checked by gymnastic exercise or warlike recreations.

To be complete you need to develop your mind and body in equal measure.

**Age of the Polis - The Republican Ideal of Cultivation**

In the 7th and 6th centuries BC a civilisation rose from the ruins of Mycenae that differed to the one that preceded it. The basis of Mycenae was not so much the city as we understand it but extended fortresses, strongholds and palaces of many kings and kinglets. It is likely that enormous divisions would have existed between these aristocratic families, whose principal preoccupation was war, and the subject peoples who laboured to sustain them.

In the next stage of Greek civilisation however, the city-state or polis held centre stage, and monarchy was rare. The polis was not the extended possession of a king, or god, but of a people and in it the gulf between aristocracy and other free citizens contracted, although all were economically dependent on a large slave class. Even where tyrants were in power, they were not regarded as having special right to rule, they were simply citizens who were more powerful than others.

Within the city-state new economies of trade and manufacture supplied the wealth of an urban elite, a bourgeoisie which, though not having the lustre of the aristocrat’s landed wealth, was a potent political force. Even the free-born artisan, despised for his manual labour by the aristocrat, could become wealthy and politically effective.

This new citizenry - and it is for the first time that we can actually talk about citizenry in a political sense - acquired a corporate spirit based on their loyalty to the city. Religion too played a role, providing a mythos to support the secular civic order. Greek religion in the age of the polis served the state, rather than itself; an entire reversal of the practice of the ancient city-states of Mesopotamia.

The polis was by no centre of harmony and cooperation. It lacked the bureaucratic apparatus of empires and kingdoms and therefore a professional administrative class. Public duties and offices were allocated to citizens. The amateurism of public service and the presence of a turbulent and independent populace multiplied parties and interests within the polis and consequently many competing opinions about how the state should be organised emerged. It was this place and time after all that supplied the West with all of its fundamental political ideas.

Public offices were still mostly occupied by the aristocracy, but the people participated as never before in affairs of state. When the tyrannies that ruled most Greek states in the sixth century collapsed, political activity grew more frenetic. Each city’s party of nobles contended with the bourgeoisie for power. To complicate matters, each polis also contended bitterly with its neighbours.

28 Plato, Timaeus, 444.
30 ibid., Book II-115-117, p.245.
Commercial, military and diplomatic competition between city-states demanded the highest levels of leadership and service as smaller states were easily and not infrequently uprooted or destroyed. The fractious, destabilising and public nature of Greek politics gave capable individuals a new domain in which to advance themselves and every well born youth now aspired to be a statesman or leader.

In keeping with newly awakened sources of civic devotion and responsibilities the model of areté shifted from the Mycenaean hero to a different style of heroism. Although the polis still needed warriors, it also needed politicians. Cities realised that prosperity depended on political affairs being in the hands of the most adept. Thought was given to a more appropriate form of paideia to train such beings, and this brought on a pedagogical revolution around the second half of the fifth century that we associate with the sophists.

These hired instructors invented what we would call today “higher education” for young adults where previously there had only ever been schooling for children. Little is known of their method but their teaching focussed on imparting technical political skills, philosophic reasoning and universal knowledge. The object of their pedagogy was to prepare students for public life. Decisively athletics and gymnastics were displaced from top positions in the pantheon of excellence by training of the intellect. The kaloskagathos now needed more than an appealing appearance. Intellectual training in rhetoric and philosophy provided students with skills in forensic eloquence and dialectical reasoning.

That rhetoric should find its way into sophist teachings is obvious. Power in the polis, with its volatile populace, belonged to those with a persuasive voice. Statesmen needed to know how to sway or steady a crowd, and posts in public administration, courts and the military all demanded skill in public speaking. In time oratory was practised as an art in itself and as another measure of the cultivated man. For Isocrates (436-338 BC), the greatest teacher of rhetoric in fourth century Athens, it even identified a deep and serious humanism far beyond the claims of political technique. "It is not," he says, by their "courage or wealth, or such advantages" which determine that a man has received paideia but "is made manifest most of all by their speech, and that this has proved itself to be the surest sign of culture in every one of us, and that those who are skilled in speech are not only men of power in their own cities but are also held in honour in other states." Unlike rhetoric, philosophy had no immediate utility but it did serve to round out a student's knowledge of the world and develop a capacity for logic and clear thinking. No one could claim to be educated without having studied either subject. So even though the sophists' instruction had utilitarian ends, it did not exclude the aristocratic principles that guided paideia in the earlier epoch; namely, to develop men for their intrinsic worth, rather than fit them as cogs into the communal machine.

When cities sought to extend their powers or assert themselves against rival states they did not intensify the division of labour, or increase the dependence of each individual on the whole. Universalism was preferred with each individual being capable of independent action. The prized self-sufficiency of the ancient hero remained. He just had to be brainy as well. This was the case even in states as corporate and as disciplined as Sparta, which after all achieved the most complete and rigorous educational system of all the Greeks. The intention of Sparta's educational practices was to breed not only an heroic nation, but a nation of heroes.

The Greeks were at the edge of the vast Persian Empire, and many Ionian cities in Asia Minor were its subjects. In the north was a wilderness inhabited by nomadic pastoralists. Although not united politically, they felt themselves superior in achievement and capacity to the oriental civilisations and the European pastoralists. They attributed their superiority not to any innate qualities but to the paideia they received through their political institutions and customs, believing Greek states were better able to breed areté in their citizens.

The civilisation of the polis was profoundly concerned with the kind of paideia individuals received through school and training, but was also aware that this was only one of the means for breeding areté. Many observed that the political environment of a city: its customs, institutions and laws was also a kind of school that shaped continuously the sentiments and values of all its citizens. This awareness - what we have already called the politics of cultivation - incited debate throughout the Greek cities: argument raged over which kind of state constitution developed the most capable citizens. This awareness is obvious in the words Thucydides (460-c.400 BC) places in the mouth of Pericles (490-429 BC). In the famous Funeral Oration Pericles compares the achievements of Athens with other Greek states, and describes his city as "an education to Greece", for its citizens demonstrate universal capacities and self-reliance: "... in my opinion each single one of our citizens in all the manifold aspects of life, is able to show himself the rightful lord and owner of his own person, and do this moreover with exceptional grace and exceptional versatility."

Pericles’ Athens was what German scholars were to call a culture-state: one that actively seeks to
produce citizens capable of great works and deeds. The Greeks were the first to dream utopias, and were experimental and daring in their state-craft. The debate as to which state had the superior constitution fell to the two dominant powers of Greece: democratic Athens and oligarchic Sparta. The struggle for empire of these states during the Peloponnesian Wars (431-404 BC) was justified by ideological argument that parallels the Cold War. It was Athens' practice when it subdue a polis to install a "puppet" democracy, believing a party of the people would co-operate with the conqueror, while Sparta would invariably install an oligarchy based on the party of the nobles.

The era of the polis was the classical age of Greek culture, the period of enlightenment during which daring innovations occurred in philosophy, literature, art, and architecture - all that we associate with "high culture" - and which remain important to the West today. The distinction conferred on individuals who performed public service of a high order extended to any who could bring a talent to perfection, and by so honouring themselves honour their city as well.

The polis valued well-rounded ability, but also specific talents that were exceptionally developed. Barring barriers such as sex and serfdom it was a meritocracy that considered that the possession and perfection of talent conferred on one genuine nobility. Intellectual attainment was respected, but as part of the vita activa. Achievements of philosophy or literature were not things to be appreciated privately in a quiet room, but deeds in the world upon which all could gaze. The very style of poetical and philosophical works shows that they were to be read aloud or studied in public.

With the exception of Renaissance Italy, the republican form of the Ideal of Cultivation has been the least commonly observed of the variants, particularly in its political form. The close similarities between the civilisation of the Greek city-states and those of the Italian Renaissance point to the reason. Both were heirs to older high civilisations that had become barbarised; both consisted of many competing city-states offering different constitutional forms; both had politically active and devoted citizenry; and both experienced an awakening of creative powers in all areas of life. In the Renaissance, the methodical retrieval and reformulation of Graeco-Roman culture actually enabled individuals to adopt consciously the values and culture of people who had lived in similar circumstances.

Drawing on a wealth of contemporary and antique examples, the level of discussion of the politics of cultivation occurred at a pitch never since replicated, save in eighteenth century Germany. To some occurred the perception that the very civilisation of small city-states was more likely to produce individuals with areté than any other. Machiavelli (1469-1527), in his Arte della Guerra states that "where many states exist, there emerge many efficient men... where a great number of states no longer exist, virtù by necessity becomes gradually extinct, because the cause responsible for virtù among men has disappeared."35 For the Renaissance Italians the fundamental criterion to rate the superiority of a state or its constitution was always: how many poets, artists, heroes, or philosophers has it produced, how virtuous is its citizenry? Two models were posed: the republican one favoured by the Florentines (inspired by the antique examples of Athens and republican Rome and modern Florence and Venice) and that of the benevolent tyrant favoured by the Lombard states.36

Florentines like Leonardo Bruni (1492-1556) - better known as Aretino - were arrogantly aware that their city had exceeded all others in the production of genius, and saw their political institutions as the best source of areté in Italy, and in the known world. To explain why, Bruni advises: "Equal liberty exists for all...; the hope of winning public honours and ascending is the same for all, provided they possess industry and natural gifts and lead a serious minded and respected way of life; for our commonwealth require virtus and probitas in its citizens. Whoever has these qualifications is thought to be of sufficiently noble birth to participate in the government of the republic... it is marvellous to see how powerful this access to public office, once it is offered to a free people, proves to be in awakening the talents of the citizens..."For where men are given the hope of attaining honour in the state, they take courage and raise themselves to a higher plane; where they are deprived of that hope, they grow idle and lose their strength. Therefore, since such hope and opportunity are held out in our commonwealth, we need not be surprised that talent and industry distinguish themselves in the highest degree."37

Bruni's comments identify the archetype of the republican model which perhaps most purely represented the Ideal of Cultivation of the polis, and which strikes us today as its classical expression.

**Pan-Hellenism - the National Ideal of Cultivation**

A new way of perceiving paideia occurred to some Greeks in the period between the close of the Peloponnesian wars and the conquest of Greece by the kingdom of Macedon in 338 BC. It was not to

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36 The classical study of this phenomenon is Hans Baron's, The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny, New Jersey, 1966.
37 Aretino, Laudatio Florentinae Urbis, a panegyric on Florence's principle of civic liberty. Passage cited in Baron, op. cit., p.419
figure significantly in Greek intellectual or political history, but it does hint at a way of thinking about the ideal that was to become significant in the West, most notably in nineteenth century Germany.

The Persian Wars (490-479 BC) made the Greeks aware of their unity and difference from other peoples. Success in the face of extreme danger confirmed their superiority over undistinguished barbaroi. They concluded that it was their paideia which raised them above all others. The gymnastic and intellectual training of the freeborn and the fund of literature and arts in the Greek states was the one quality that they held in common, no matter how great their mutual enmity. The common esteem for paideia was evident in the ferocious campaigns of the Peloponnesian Wars, and would appear in the most unexpected guises. Plutarch relates how, after the disastrous loss of the Athenian fleet in the harbour of Syracuse in 413 BC, Athenian sailors and soldiers captured by the Syracusans were treated with leniency if they could recite refrains from Euripides. Some were given freedom in return for teaching their new masters all they could remember of his works. 38

Endless internecine war between the city-states forces some to ponder how to overcome the discord. Although there was never a call for political union, some did express a desire for a type of Pan-Hellenism that would unleash the bloodlust of the Greeks upon foreigners rather than upon themselves. In the arguments for peace and common Pan-Hellenic purpose, paideia and the Greek language were invoked as the basis for Hellenic bonds.

The Athenian rhetorician Isocrates advanced the most sustained and brilliant arguments for Pan-Hellenism in precisely these terms. In his Panegyricus his first principle was that paideia was the one quality which all Greeks shared. In this respect he praises his own Athens for having "brought it about that the name "Hellenes" suggests no longer a race but an intelligence, and that the title "Hellenes" is applied rather to those who share our culture [paideia] than to those who share a common blood." 39 The second was that the only hope for harmony among them, or at prevent least them sucking their own cities would lie in making common war against a barbaric and bountiful enemy like Persia.

Isocrates' voice was dimly heard in the turmoil that followed and in the end the Greeks did not achieve unity: it was imposed on them by Macedon. Afterwards they did collectively engage in the conquest of Persia but only as ancillaries to the phalanxes of Alexander (356-323BC).

This interlude intimates the first use of an Ideal of Cultivation to justify a national purpose, if we consider nation to imply, as it came to do in the modern west, a people of common language and customs. A hint of it is seen again in Machiavelli's appeal to the Renaissance Italian states to unite against the barbarians (French, Spanish, Swiss) - people of lesser attainments occupying the Italian peninsula. 40 It was developed sustainedly by eighteenth and early nineteenth century intellectuals of the German principalities, who reconciled themselves with German political impotence by lauding the cultural achievements of their peoples. If Germans were not united politically, they were more profoundly united by the purpose of raising the cultural level of all mankind. When this argument was radically altered in the half century leading up to Germany's unification in 1871 it could no longer be classed as an ethical system relating to the Ideal of Cultivation. 41

Hellenism - the personal Ideal of Cultivation

The conquest of the Greeks by Macedon inaugurated the next phase of their civilisation, which has become known as Hellenism. For three centuries Greek power, language and culture radiated from the Aegean east to India and west to France and Spain. Greek was the international language of culture and commerce and Greek art, letters, and architecture was universalised.

As Hellenic culture westernised the orient, Greeks themselves were orientalised. The city-states submitted to the rule of potentates who fought over four or five larger pieces of Alexander's empire. At first Hellenism was vital and visionary: there were advances in learning, sciences, philosophy, administration and even in the conduct of war, which paradoxically grew less bloody as technique grew deadlier, mainly because it was no longer the citizen who fought, but professional soldiers. By the second century BC, when most of Greece fell to Roman rule (c197-190BC), it was one of slow humiliating retreat; there was a general depopulation of Attica and the Peloponnesse, a decline in belief in the Greek religions and a pervasive interest in oriental superstitions.

39 Isocrates, op. cit., p.149
40 See Machiavelli, The Prince, Chapter XXVI.
41 Berenson advises that "Le mot Kultur au XIXe siècle subit l'empreinte de l'évolution des idées et d'abord succombe au perticulairesm national. Après la défait de la Prusse à Jena (1806), les écrits allemands prennent un ton nouveau, marqué par un nationalisme qui va profondément changer le caractère et les moeurs du pays. Tout l'effort de certains historiens, littérateurs, philosophes, linguistes, voire même artistes, tend à mettre en lumière la spécificité de la mission du peuple germanique et à mettre l'accent sur la valeur originale et la primauté incontestable de la Kultur allemande." "Des les premières années du XIXe siècle, avec la génération romantique, le mot commence à é volatility. Il se rapporte davantage aux aspects intellectuels et moraux de la vie sociale et surtout il tend a le lieu au concept de nation. De nouvelles idées apparaissent, celle d'une mission particulière confiée à une nation pour la réalisation de la Kultur et même parfois celle d'une Kultur nationale. Les idées émergent plus ou moins chez les différents penseurs romantiques, elles restent parfois latentes, mais aussi elles sont développées avec force par Fichte dans ses célèbres Discours à la Nation Allemande." op. cit., p.55.
Subject to imperial powers, under Macedon and then Rome, the culture of the city-states is undermined. As local economic entities they prosper, and even preserve many of the features of the classical polis but, shorn of independence, they are no more than centres of local administration, deferring in all significant matters to imperial advice.

Inside an empire of enormous power and breadth the culture of the polis lacks meaning. The degree of civic pride that remains amounts to little more than regional patriotism. In all respects the deep spiritual centre, civic religion, is jeopardised by the changing nature of public service. Service in the polis, military, administrative or diplomatic, was a patriotic duty expected of all citizens and therefore amateur in character. Under imperial systems it was professionalised. Each of the Hellenistic empires - Macedonian, Seleucid, and Egyptian, and later, Roman governors - created classes of functionaries to implement their objectives. Individuals who entered public life no longer served the patria, but the bureaucracy that sustained them.

In Greece, a life in public affairs no longer offered the same prospects of achievement or renown. As Polybius (c.205-c.123 BC) observed, men of action instead turned to learning and literature. To the Romans the "noble Hellene" gradually became Graeculus: a clever, useful, but contemptible creature who tutors the children: the very caricature that Greeks once applied to civilised barbarians.

The Ideal of Cultivation was adapted to the new circumstances and it became more important in life than perhaps it had ever been. As with all philosophy or religion in this period, it was turned inward turning, focusing away from the polis or public engagement, onto private existence.

In this imperial phase the laws of each city-state, once ruthlessly and religiously observed, lost absolute significance. In many ways individuals were freer to act as they wished, if not participating usefully in public affairs. Cultural relativism became more pronounced as many travelled in the east and observed a diversity of laws and customs.

Those who thought they needed it sought a zone of regulation away from the arbitrary institutions that could apply wherever they travelled. A capacity for self-government and self-mastery was already important in earlier forms of paideia but in Hellenism it was given primacy. Human action had to be guaranteed by universal principles; people had to know that they were acting justly in accord with nature, that they were perfecting nature by obeying its laws. In some sense all of the major Hellenistic philosophical schools - Stoics, Epicureans, Cynics and Academics - were attempts to respond to this need, and in doing so drew heavily on the example and teachings of Socrates. Though each school contended to own the educated mind, the ideal model of the cultivated man was the same. The hero of Hellenistic paideia was no longer the aristocratic warrior, or the statesman, but the sage; the wise man engaged in an inward search for knowledge and conquest of his will.

The inward turn partnered the decline of public life. No longer distracted by the vita activa, the educated, which now comprised the new classes of imperial functionaries and learned specialists, sought a worthy vita contemplativa. They exalted the development of the mind and the excellence of learning or settled down to comfortable development of the arts. Not accidentally the Hellenistic period was one in which occurred the greatest advance in Greek learning and the vitality that formerly entered other spheres now flowed unto it. Libraries and higher centres of learning were established in many cities such as, most famously, Alexandria.

Personal paideia became a secular religion in which all Greek peoples could find their own salvation. Across Asia and the Mediterranean, or wherever they founded a colony or settled in an alien city, they would preserve their distinctiveness by erecting a gymnasium: at once a school and a sporting complex, and bring up their children in the forms of paideia. These centres were the focal point of Greek communal life and remained so into the early centuries of the first millennium. The emperor Trajan (53?-117AD) once sneered in a letter to Pliny, then his governor in Bythinia, *these poor Greeks all love a gymnasium.*

Eventually the Hellenist Ideal of Cultivation was adopted by the Roman upper classes and by other peoples of the Mediterranean. When Greece embarked on its Hellenistic phase, Rome was still a republican city-state with a profoundly felt civic religion, and practised a politics of cultivation aimed at producing virtuous rather than literary citizenry. The Romans were not as dextrous in intellect or art, but certainly outstripped the Greeks in the production of heroes.

By 197 BC, when Rome’s empire straddled Europe, Africa and Asia it was already acquainted with

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42 Polybius observed that “in our own times, partly because of the empire which Alexander established in Asia and the Romans in other parts of the world, almost all regions have become approachable either by land or sea. At the same time our men of action in Greece have been released from the pressures of political or military ambition, and so have plenty of opportunities to pursue inquiries or research.” From the Histories, Book III, 59, and published as The Rise of the Roman Empire, tr. I. Scott-Kilvert, Penguin, 1979.

43 Jaeger credits Socrates with the revolution which brought about the need for self-rule and self-mastery in individuals by applying the sense of lawful conduct existing in the polis to the administration of the soul. Cf Vol. II, p.53.

44 The sage could appeal as a hero even to the greatest of warriors. Consider the famous remark which Alexander the Great was said to have made of Diogenes of Sinope: “Had I not been Alexander, I should have liked to have been Diogenes.” Diogenes Laertius, op. cit., Vol. II, Book VI,32-34, p.35.

the range of Greek culture and learning. The Roman elite shared a republican mindset and accepted that *paideia* (which they translated as *humanitas*46) and glorious attainments were rightful goals. But when their city entered its own imperial phase under Augustus in the first century BC their orientation became Hellenistic in character. Thereafter Greek and Roman cultures did not diverge significantly.

From the Augustan age to the last period of high culture in the time of Trajan, Rome was intellectually dominant and more creative, and better preserved the ideal than the Greek states. As a centre of world administration it enjoyed for longer the stimulants of public service and power. This possibility was foreseen, according to Plutarch, as early the first century BC by Cicero’s (106-43 BC) Rhodian teacher of rhetoric Apollonius who, on hearing his pupil declaim in Greek congratulated him but observed that it had made him sorry for the fate of Greece: “The only glories that were left to us”, he was alleged to have said, “were our culture [paideia] and eloquence. Now I see these too are going to be taken over in your person by Rome.”47

In the later phase of Hellenism and the Roman Empire, free born individuals - no longer pestered by the jealous demands of the city and no longer supported by the beliefs of their ancestors - are cast adrift to a degree not previously observed within civilisation. Inevitably they seek out intellectual and spiritual moorings to give them a sense of place and reason to be. There is no lack of alternatives in Hellenist civilisation. Personalist ethical systems abound in every form from sophisticated philosophies to the vilest superstitions. Members of the educated elite continue to invest their personal salvation in *paideia*, but there is an other-worldly resonance in everything they say and do, as they grow weary with secular forms and seek solace in faith.

Epitaphs on tombs and funeral monuments from the period show, as Marrou observes, that the dead, either by prior express wish or on the initiative of their families are often represented as men of letters, orators, philosophers, amateur artists or musicians. “Thus cultural life came to be looked upon as a reflection and foretaste of the happy life enjoyed by the souls blessed with immortality - and not only that, but as the means of obtaining it: mental labour and the pursuit of science and art were a sure way of cleansing the soul from the stains of earthly passion and freeing it from the restricting bonds of matter. After devoting his whole life to the service of the Muses a man could confidently count on their patronage when he came to die; for they could summon him into their presence and lead him into the astral spheres along with all those other souls who had on earth been similarly prepared for that great honour... This kind of mysticism was not of course professed by all men of letters with the same consciousness and the same intrepid faith, but to some degree it affected the culture of them all: paideia - a thing divine - a heavenly game, a nobility of soul, was invested with a kind of sacred radiance that gave it a special dignity of a genuinely religious kind. In the deep confusion caused by the sudden collapse of ancient beliefs, it was the one true unshakeable value to which the mind of man could cling; and Hellenistic culture thus erected into an absolute, eventually became for many the equivalent of a religion.”48

In later antiquity the secular faith of *paideia* could not withstand *other-worldly* religion. Many cults, undemanding of intellect and offering more exalted promises than posterity or glory, attracted the upper classes, with the result that Christianity, the most virulent and audacious of them, displaced all competitors.

Early Christian intellectuals recruiting from among the educated were well aware that they were fighting an *Ideal of Cultivation*. In *De Spectaculis* Tertullian (c. AD 150-220+) forcefully presents his *other-worldly* position: “We have no concern in this life except to depart from it as speedily as possible.” “For what else is our prayer, but that of the apostle - to leave the world and to be at home with the Lord?”49 And in *De Præscriptione* he explicitly opposes the spiritual home of *paideia* against the home of Christianity: “What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy [Plato’s school] and the Church?”50 As the candles of ancient civilisation blew out in Europe and the Mediterranean, others remained attached to the classical legacy and sought to adapt it to Christian doctrine. In spite of its antipathy but because of its need, Christianity crudely preserved the forms of classical education, while suppressing its spirit.

In the middle centuries of the first millennium individuals attached to *paideia* threw sand against the wind. The Byzantine emperor Julian (331-363) - designated the *Apostate* for his recalcitrance and perhaps the last self-confessed pagan ruler - could still defend Hellenic education against the Christians. In his epistle Against the *Galilæans* he declares: “...you yourselves know, it seems to me the very different effect on the intelligence of your writings as compared with ours; and that from studying yours no man could attain to excellence or even to ordinary goodness, whereas from studying ours every man would become better than before, even though he were without natural fitness. But when a man is naturally well endowed, and moreover receives the education of our

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46 Cicero, for example, employs this term as follows: “He is a learned, highly cultivated person...” or “eruditiorem hominem et summa humanitatem”. Letter to C. Memmius, (no.315), Letters to his Friends, Vol. II.


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literature, he actually becomes as a gift of the gods to mankind, either by kindling the light of knowledge, or by founding some kind of political institution, or by routing numbers of his country's foes, or even by travelling far over the earth and far by sea, and thus proving himself a man of heroic mould...” 51 Thereafter, declarations of this sort by secular rulers are difficult to find.

The Ideal of Cultivation in Europe

The Ideal of Cultivation is not easily observed again in life or letters of the Latin west or the Greek east for another eight centuries, when civilisation again angled to the secular. As ever, some made to retrieve antique culture: in the Arab world after its conquests to Spain in the eighth century and at the court of Charlemagne (742-814) who, himself illiterate, implemented a new educational system based on their literature. Byzantium held on to its inheritance but at a lower level of civilisation. Provence produced for nearly two centuries (1000-1200) a form of courtly aristocratic culture, but it was unconscious of its possibilities. None of these could be said to be a civilisation in which individuals sought, as their highest goal, to perfect their nature.

Finally, in the Italian states, more vigorously secular than any others in Europe, the slow retrieval of fragments of the ancient literature caused the ideal to flicker back into consciousness. Their retrieval and propagation of antique literature placed at the disposal of the Europe the forms of the ideal already realised by the Greeks, and the new civilisation borrowed what was appropriate to its character. Antique values were reinterpretated or rediscovered in contemporary parallels.

The civilisation of the Italian city-state resembled the Greek polis in many ways and was in sympathy with the republican ideal of cultivation. In the rest of Europe, in nations subject to courtly and imperial structures, the Hellenistic ideal was preferred, mainly by those educated by and employed within the church bureaucracy. Officials or scribes, empowered by their virtuosity in manipulating symbols, naturally overrated their value, and because their ideal also had to accommodate Christian doctrine, it rarely replicated the purely secular forms of early Hellenism. A concern with the perfection of the soul, or of Christian virtue was the form the compromise often took.

Even so, no Ideal of Cultivation was as pervasive among the clerics or official classes of early modern Europe, for Christianity (Protestant and Catholic) continued to dominate the life of the spirit. In the courts of Europe the secular spirit was more assured, and the ideal of the courtier, refined and perfected in the courts of Italy's tyrant states, became attractive to all of Europe's aristocracies and integral to their general education. Emphasis on the classics for the training of young gentlemen became the standard. Paideia became important again in the lives of the upper classes of all nations that participated in the European enlightenment of the eighteenth century. It was in this century perhaps, at the apogee of the ancien regime, that ideals of cultivation again became important to educated people and nowhere more thoroughly than in Germany.

The German Ideal of Cultivation: Bildung

In eighteenth century German life and thought the Ideal of Cultivation was more alive than elsewhere in Europe, with its special character and force embodied in the word Bildung. 52 This word is similar to the Greek paideia, in that it combines the separate meanings of the English words culture and education. Literally, it means to form or to shape and in many respects resembles the Hellenist version of the Ideal of Cultivation on account of its inwardsness and concern with personal perfection.

If the sage is the icon of Hellenist paideia, then the genius is the same for German Bildung. The Hellenist sage is self-regulating, self-governing and, using the divine light of reason, seeks to discover and consciously obey universal laws of nature rather than those of the state or religion. In German culture, the genius is a warrior fighting for nature against custom, who throws off the chains of tradition and creates rules that are more in harmony with his own nature rather than those of society. To a greater extent than the Hellenistic sage, the genius was concerned with accomplishments in art and culture. This flowed on to the majority of educated Germans who, if not endowed with genius, were content to quietly study, and nourish themselves on the productions of those who were.

The profound difference between the German and Hellenist ideals however was in their understanding of what nature actually is. For the Greeks the cosmos was static and its laws unchanging, but for the Germans it was dynamic and hylozoic. Nature consists of blindly driving forces, or what became known as will (Wille), which generate all the forms of matter and life. The

52 Herder, recalling the Latin Humanitas, uses the phrase “Bildung zur Humanitat.” In the Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanitat, for example, he defines the term as follows: “Humanitat ist der Charakter unseres Geschichts, es ist uns aber nee in Anlagen angeboren und muß uns eigentlich angebildet werden. Wie bringen nicht fertig auf die welt mit; auf der Welt aber soll er das ziel unsres Bestrebens, die Summe unsrer Übung, unser Wert sein. Das Göttliche in unserm Geschicht ist also Bildung zur Humanitat.” Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanitat (2 vols.) Berlin, Aufbau-Verlag, 1971, Vol. II, p.148, (II-27, 1794).
genius is one who binds the blind forces of nature to a deliberate purpose; he can perfect nature by, in his own person, making it do consciously what it already did unknowingly.

By seeking to illuminate nature and make it conscious not just in thought but in works of art and in the living of one's life, the genius justifies life and humanity. This was the abiding theme and task of philosophy in the eighteenth century German enlightenment, known as the Aufklärung.

_Bildung_ did not appear at once or wholly formed. It accommodated foreign influences such as Spinozism, the aesthetic theories of Lord Shaftesbury (1621-83), and most importantly, French courtly culture. All these were received because they could be digested within existing German culture. The purely intellectual contributions that gave _Bildung_ its final form are easily identified.

Clearly influential was Samuel Pufendorf's (1632-1694) _De Jure Naturae et Gentium_, which proposes "culture" to be the proper social task of man, thereby conferring on human duty a strongly secular and qualitative emphasis. Leibniz's (1646-1716) seminal work focuses on the possibility of human perfectibility and establishes a major precedent for hylozoism and voluntarism in German philosophy. The labours of the Aufklärer historians and literary figures like Klopstock (1724-1803) and Lessing (1729-81), further the belief in human perfectibility: of a perpetual improvement of mankind through education and cultivation. Aesthetics and the question of genius figure strongly in the preoccupations of the Aufklärers, particularly in the systematic work of Baumgarten (1714-62) and Hamann (1730-88) and the dominant philosophical figure of German Enlightenment, Kant (1724-1804), shows a wide ranging concern for _Bildung_.

Winckelmann's (1717-68) researches into antiquity feed the German obsession with Greek classicism and _paideia_, and the paradoxical pedagogical practice of rearing children with one hand on Luther's Bible and the other on Homer's _Iliad_. Each of these threads gather in the synthesis achieved by the circle at Weimar and Jena, whose foremost members include Goethe (1749-1832), Herder (1744-1803), Wieland (1733-1813) and Schiller (1759-1805) and whose collaboration produces the classical formulation of _Bildung_ as a justification and programme for living.58

_Bildung_ remains intrinsic to the literary and philosophical activity of intellectuals like Fichte (1762-1814), Schelling (1775-1854), Hegel (1770-1831) the Schlegels (1767-1845 and 1772-1829) until about the middle of the nineteenth century, where it figures prominently in the widely influential philosophies of Hegel and Schopenhauer (1788-1860).

Beneath these intellectual developments and impressing on them a particular character were the abiding facts of German civilisation. From the Middle Ages until Napoleon ended the system in 1806, most of Germany was a multitude of petty principedoms known as the Holy Roman Empire. Nominally, the princes were subject to the emperor, but his rule was loosely maintained. Administration of the individual states was left to the princes who employed their own bureaucracies for the purpose; with the exception of a few free-cities of moderate wealth, there was no deeper basis for civic values and the bourgeoisie remained small and powerless.

By its nature this civilisation preferred Hellenistic or courtly models of the _Ideal of Cultivation_. After Napoleon the German states remained independent, albeit under the hegemony of either Austria or Prussia, until they were unified by Prussian arms in 1871. In this period _Bildung_ was consistently invoked as the basis for the cultural unity of German states. As German liberalism and nationalism grew sentiments verging on the republican were sounded occasionally but the bureaucratic structures remained, and were even deepened in many areas of life. _Bildung_ in Germany continued to retain its Hellenistic character.

By the mid nineteenth century the value of _Bildung_ to German intellectual life had waned dramatically, displaced by the values of a more recent civilisation. It was this event that fundamentally shaped the life and thought of Nietzsche, who came to intellectual maturity precisely in this period of transition.

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58 See W.H. Bruford's _Culture and Society in Classical Weimar 1775-1806_. Cambridge, 1962. This is perhaps the most valuable among English language studies of the character and background of Weimar Classicism, and the significance of the ideal of Bildung in the ethical life of German intelligentsia during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.
3 - Nietzsche and the decline of Bildung

As a pastor's son raised in the middle-sized Prussian town of Naumburg in the 1840's, Nietzsche is exposed intensely, from the earliest age, to the Ideal of Cultivation of the German enlightenment. It shows itself in his childhood play, schooling, and in the values of his family, friends and acquaintances.

Family and Schooling

His father dies before he is five, so he takes example from the fathers of his childhood friends, Krug and Pinder: both are officials for whom, outside of affairs of state, the pursuit of Bildung absorbs their leisure. At the Pinder’s home, Nietzsche is introduced to the poetry of Goethe. Herr Pinder reads passages aloud to the children for hours at a time. He wants to instil in them the cadences of classical German. At the house of Herr Krug, who mixes in musical circles in Naumburg and knows Mendelssohn, Nietzsche learns about the musical masters. Music and literature are his leisure in childhood and adolescence and indispensable to him in adulthood.

At a tender age he acquires the German obsession with Hellenism, another legacy of Aufklärung. At ten he collaborates with friends to write and enact a Greek play and, as his sister was to observe, their games often revolve around Greek subjects and motifs.54

Early schooling at the Dom Gymnasium in Naumburg reinforces these obsessions. Hellenism and Bildung are intrinsic to the Prussian educational system due to reforms made shortly after the nation’s defeat by Napoleon at Jena. Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767 - 1835), a thorough-going Aufklärer, keen to restore Prussian power and prestige, places classical studies at the centre of the new system of secondary and university education. He introduces an academically oriented stream of secondary schooling, as opposed to technical and vocational Realschule, also founded according to his specifications, called Gymnasia. It is a deliberate attempt to invoke the pedagogical goals and practices of paideia. The standard curriculum generally spans nine years with the expectation that pupils will go to university. Students are instructed in Latin, Greek, German, and the history and religions associated with each language; mathematics is a later addition.

Each of these subjects is taught to encourage scientific detachment, and disdain specialised vocational training. The aim, to create an elite officialdom better able to run the Prussian power-state, reflects the inwardness of German Bildung. The needs of the Greek polis, seething with democratic and tyrannical passions, hardly resembles those of a Prussian state needing managers and scholars, rather than politicians. Prussia was not a patria, and its people did not participate in civic life.

At fourteen, Nietzsche earns admission to Pforta, one of the older and most celebrated classical schools in Germany, having already produced such distinguished graduates as Klopstock, Novalis, Ranke, Fichte and the Schlegels. Through Prussian military regimen and complete immersion in studies of classical antiquity, the school strives to exclude students from the affairs of contemporary life. Newspapers are forbidden. The heavy intellectual and physical demands instil a desire to serve, and ensure that the political interests of students are extinguished.

Outside of school Nietzsche maintains his literary and musical interests and, with the old friends in Naumburg, forms a cultural society named Germania. Each member of the group submits monthly contributions, poems, essays, architectural designs or musical compositions, for group criticism.55

Those motivated by the Ideal of Cultivation typically yearn cultural fraternity: a society of the like-minded devoted to conversation, learning, and mutual encouragement; the Platonic academy, the Renaissance court, the French salon as opposed to the more frequently encountered and touching reality: the isolated scholar burning candles at night and writing letters. It is noteworthy that he succeeded in organising such a fraternity in his youth as Nietzsche dreamed of accomplishing the same all his life, albeit without success.

The name Germania pointed the eagerness of these young Pan-Germanists to raise the standard of their Kultur, echoed the hope of several generations devoted to Bildung that a second Hellas might awaken on German soil. When Nietzsche was finally confronted with the choice of a university career, it was by no means inevitable, but entirely in keeping with his scientific-humanistic training that he chooses to devote his future to classical philology. The prospect of state-service, other than in the capacity of university teacher did not attract him. Though finding distasteful the boozing, duelling and whoring practised by students in their fraternities, his time at universities in Bonn and Leipzig reinforced principles acquired in all his previous training.

Although the experience of Bildung in his childhood and youth and by the literature of the classical German writers who had forged and articulated it, underlay everything he wrote as a philosopher it does not infer that he was typical of his contemporaries. The Ideal of Cultivation was, during the very decades of his youth, rapidly losing its hold on the hearts and minds of aristocratic and middle class Germans. In the new nation Bildung was an anachronism.\textsuperscript{36}

**The Decline of Bildung**

One factor displacing Bildung from German heads and hearts is the eminence of the state, especially the Prussian state, as an object of devotion. That object had always existed alongside the Ideal of Cultivation and in many respects was served by it. And even the earliest statements of State-worship appear in the writing of Thomasius\textsuperscript{57} its existence is a long term reality in Prussian political history.

The rise of the Prussian state from provincial electorate to major European power in the space of two hundred years is an enigma of European history. The borders of centralising powers like France and England were imposed by geographical and cultural realities, but Prussia was a diverse group of territories that had little more in common than a monarch. Outside of France there were no large Francophone territories, likewise for England. But Prussia was surrounded by German as well as non-German rivals... The Hohenzollern dynasty that ruled Prussia from the fifteenth century up until World War I drew around itself a civil and military bureaucracy based on duty and loyalty to the crown. These habits were later assimilated into the new German Reich that was created under the Prussian hammer. State-idolatry received systematic intellectual justification after the popularity of Hegelian philosophy in Germany during the middle decades of the nineteenth century but if the notion of state as ultimate good was too abstract to many Germans before unification it would be made concrete under Prussian rule.

Napoleon’s occupation of Germany caused an explosion of patriotic fervour that resulted in the Wars of Liberation. German patriotsm caused many intellectuals to combine the concept of the state with that of nationality, and Germanity; the state not as a mere centralised power but as the political expression of the German Volk: a homeland with common language, manners and customs (in other words, Kultur). The insistence of these intellectuals that Germanity determine the borders of the new German Reich helped to hasten the demise of Bildung. The melding of the Prussian doctrine of state with the Romantic concept of nation had potent political appeal, and proved increasingly attractive to educated Germans particularly to German liberal movements. By the time the Prussian victory over France in the war of 1871 unified the nation the ethical imperatives of duty to the state and love of nation were naturally preferred.

Displaced but not entirely supplanted, nor was it despised, even by the most ardent nationalists. If there were cases of antipathy to Bildung (as shown by Bismark who was for that matter was not even much of a German nationalist) it retained its prestige among the educated. General diffusion diluted it and once assimilated into the doctrine of nation-state, it transformed from a universal human duty into a cult of national culture and consciousness.

Where once educated Germans might have regarded the awakening individual potential as a celebration of humanity (Humanität as Herder never ceased declaring), nationalists saw it celebrate the achievements of German letters, art, science and scholarship - a chauvinism quite alien to the originally cosmopolitan nature of the ideal. It was then only a short step to the notorious propaganda campaigns of the Great War where the term Kultur stood for all the mysterious depth Germans possessed and the French and English did not.

The end of the Aufklärer episode in Weimar, which could be dated from Goethe’s death in 1832, ended the pursuit of personal cultivation in the manner of religious believers in personal salvation.\textsuperscript{58} The belief that we must perfect the inner self is documented in the writings of artists and intellectuals at Weimar, and in the lives of some of the most outstanding individuals of the age. For self-absorbed poets such as Holderlin, academics such as Kant, and bureaucrats such as Wilhelm von Humboldt, it presented the only true path to improving the world and made a sharp distinction between worldly material success and the integrity of the inner life. Cultivation was a spiritual activity irrevocable with overhasty acquisition of property and status. But goals that promise no material reward cannot be

\textsuperscript{36} See Bruford, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{57} It should be noted that the later Thomasius (in Fundamenta Juris Naturae et Gentium e Sensu Communi Deducta) in fact embodied the typical character of Aufklärer politics in that he demanded spiritual liberty while believing that the rightful function of the state was to order the externals of life: The individual would thus attain greater freedom by living in accordance with the powers of the state rather than by resisting them. His was an early example of the distinction in German politics between the Rechtsstaat and Kulturstaat which will be discussed in Chapter XIII of this essay. See also Leonard Krieger, The German Idea of Freedom. History of a Political Tradition. Chicago and London, 1957.

\textsuperscript{58} The inwardness of the Bildung ideal has often been explained as the transference to a secular idea of priestly religiosity. Though this may seem a reasonably plausible suggestion, simple transpositions of this sort simply explain away the question before it is posed. Indeed, we could almost believe it is a "Protestant work-ethic" which characterises the industry of sociologists of religion in ascribing all intellectual and ethical phenomena to modulations of religious psychology. In the case here considered, might not the "inwardness" of both Pietism and of Bildung share a common substratum and cause? From whence, after all, does Pietism derive its own special character? German Protestantism, as Lagarde was to complain in the last century, has not been so intellectually dynamic that it has not needed to assimilate ideas from the substantially more creative secular writers of Germany.
pursued without leisure.

The time demanded for learning, science or art is only provided by material security. There are always dedicated individuals who pursue their life task in contempt of poverty, but the fact is that the Bildung ethos was adopted only by wealthy Germans. In late eighteenth century Weimar, as in other states, the dominance of the monarchy or aristocracy over a comfortable and unpolitical middle class neutralised the potential conflict between Innerlichkeit and strivings for political or monetary goals. Since the bourgeoisie had little scope to express its political interests, it could turn its passion inwards and nurture culture in a realm of personal freedom. German humanism was too pale abstraction; it burned as a living force: "a moral command, directed at each individual, for the reconstruction of his personal life." And though its true goal was personal freedom, the activity of the cultivated man was not without reward or recognition. Conspicuous examples of cultivation such as the academic, the bureaucrat, and the professional held a place of distinction only less than that of the aristocrat.

Allowing able individuals of non-aristocratic classes to rise to positions of honour releases and defuses social tensions. According to De Tocqueville, the ancien régime suffered for obstinately and jealously withholding privileges from talented men of the lower estates. Although Frenchmen of humbler birth could hold powerful bureaucratic positions they did not share proportionately in honours and privileges. For De Tocqueville, this was one of the fuels that allowed the fire of revolution to burn. If relative harmony existed among classes in the eighteenth century Germany, changing economic and political attitudes in the next hundred years led to fractiousness and conflict.

German industrial development was modest in the first decade of the nineteenth century, but by 1871 its dimensions were awesome. The injection into the German economy of the French war indemnity helped German industrial production to outstrip that of its rival by the end of the same decade. The seductions of material progress insinuated new rules into social parlour games. Those creating the new Germany saw their material objectives and successes as worthy of regard. But the parvenu wears his wealth with unease; he looks about and behind to observe what appearance and behaviour becomes a wealthy man. Knowing that he is wanting in purity of blood, and seeing everywhere how old wealth commands the greatest courtesies, he imitates its manner and customs to justify and ennoble his status. If Bildung was the companion of status and distinction; would it not be appropriate to at least acquire the postures of cultivated behaviour? If you cannot, for want of capacity or desire, promote an inner perfection, can you not at least suggest cultivation by calculated display?

Association of the idea of culture with that of social status was implicit and normal in the aristocratic structures of Weimar society. For Nietzsche's generation and those that followed, the visible signs of affluence and classical schooling were enough to identify the cultivated. "To illustrate current opinion in 1893, Friedrich Paulsen quotes from a newspaper the sentence: "A man apparently belonging to the educated (cultivated) classes caused a stir through his unusual behaviour in the street." It is implied here that education or cultivation, for which modern German characteristically uses the same word "Bildung", can be recognised by external signs, and the normal view at this time is, Paulsen says, that the educated do not work with their hands, that they dress and behave "properly" and can hold their own in conversation. It is a fairly reliable sign if they use foreign words correctly, and if they know foreign languages there is no doubt at all about their 'Bildung'."

The extent of the young Nietzsche's devotion to Weimar values, meant that there could be no greater impiety than to reduce them to cant and display; nothing more contemptible than to profess Bildung without sacrificing oneself on its altar. It was not the wholly uneducated who threatened the Ideal of Cultivation, but the half-educated, the false enthusiasts. The Bildungspfister or culture philistine (a student expression used in German letters since the previous century) was the archfiend of his youthful demonology, and against this philistinism he directed his ferocious diatribes.

In the first Untimely Meditation he tears like an enraged terrier at the ageing Hegelian and bible critic, David Strauss, whose recently published autobiographical work David Strauss, the Confessor and Writer gave heart to half-learned and complacent philistia.

Shortly before the outbreak of World War I the sociologist Georg Simmel suggests an elemental cause for the decline of Bildung. Looking back over the previous century he sees in every aspect of modern life the effects of fragmenting divisions of labour. The hope of cultivating synthetic individuals shrinks as economic and national success is progressively ensured by specialists and experts. The productive demands of the new economic system, the explosion of knowledge, the modern state's expanding bureaucratic apparatus, the total compartmentalising trend taken together generates the ethos of the technician, who associates inner worth with the function that he performs. The technician justifies himself as a unit within a larger order; his raison d' être is embedded within his fragmented nature, his "one-sidedness". Writing fourteen years after Nietzsche's death, Simmel

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63 Bedford, op. cit. pp.418-419.
64 loc. cit.
observed: "If you were to ask educated people today by what ideals they live, most would give a specialised answer derived from their occupational experience. Only rarely would they speak of a cultural ideal which rules them as total human beings."63

The close of the nineteenth century is a natural terminus for the *Ideal of Cultivation* in Germany. The attention of moderns is on brassier idols, to the despondence of a few of the learned, who believe they are fighting a rearguard action. The modern ethos is everywhere victorious and among those who would preserve culture, pessimism is standard. Each draws their isolation about them like a cloak, and pits a lonely voice against the clamour of millions.

These postures were not exclusively Teutonic but Germany's rapid economic development forces the alarm to be sounded more stridently. For true believers the decline of interest in Bildung is not merely a personal disappointment; the value of human existence itself is at stake and barbarism is the only alternative. Wherever pessimism takes root, barbarism is deemed inescapable. In 1831 - the last year of his life - Goethe already intimates in apocalyptic cadences of what is nigh: "It is already here, we are in the midst of it, for wherein does barbarism consist unless in not appreciating what is excellent."64

Five years later Karl Leberecht Immerman has occasion to describe his contemporaries, in language anticipating the young Nietzsche - as "epigones", whose every action betrays "a desolate irresolution and perturbation, a ridiculous quest for security, a distractedness, a chasing after one knows not what, a fear of terrors the more uncanny for having no form! It is as if mankind cast about in its boat on an overpowering sea, is suffering from a moral seasickness whose end can hardly be conceived."

"It is necessary", he adds, "to have belonged at least partially to a different period to be entirely able to feel the contrast of both eras, the more recent of which began with the revolution..."65

Forty years later the same complaints were still being sounded. After hearing reports of the events of 1871 in Paris, Jacob Burckhardt, in peaceful and secluded Basel, predicted a future shaken by continual explosions. The French revolution had merely been a primer. In explicit reaction to the modern trend his historical researches focused on the ages of highest cultural attainment: imperial Athens, and most famously Renaissance Italy; aside from their merits as historical investigations, Burckhardt's works were implicitly ironic and gloomy reflections on contemporary Europe.

**Nietzsche's Isolation**

Why does Nietzsche attach himself to the *Ideal of Cultivation* when it is in decline rather than study law and make money? We are told he was a pious child, at least concerning religion; and, if he didn't stay that way with respect to Christianity, he did with respect to culture. This was a man who had to venerate and even cursory reading of his early notes and correspondence quickly reveals the extent of his zeal.

In May 1871, news of the bloody and destructive Paris uprising reached him at the University of Basel, when he was then Professor of Philology. Like his colleague Jacob Burckhardt, he learned with horror that a great part of Paris, including the Tuileries, the Hôtel-de-Ville, the Cour des Comptes and, as rumour had it, the Louvre had gone up in flames (the latter had in fact been saved). On 27 May he writes to Vischer-Bilfinger in Basel declaring that the reports from Paris have been "...so schrecklich, dass ich gar nicht mehr zu einer auch nur erträglichen Stimmung komme. Was ist man, solchen Erdbeben der Cultur gegenüber, als Gelehrter! Wie atomistisch fühlt man sich! Sein ganzes Leben und seine beste Kraft benutzt man, eine Periode der Cultur besser zu verstehen und besser zu erklären; wie erscheint dieser Beruf, wenn ein einzig er unseliger Tag die kostbarsten Document solcher Perioden zu Asche vernichtet! "It is", he concluded, "the worst day of my life."66

Returning to the subject a month later in a letter to Carl von Gersdorff, he uses explicitly religious terms: the communards responsible for the fires were "blasphemers" (*Freveler*), who were conveyors of a general "guilt" (*Schuld*): "I know what it means, the fight against culture. When I heard of the fires in Paris, I felt for several days annihilated and was overwhelmed by fears and doubts; the entire scholarly, scientific, philosophical and artistic existence seemed an absurdity, if a single day could wipe out the most glorious works of art, which cannot exist for the sake of poor human beings but which has higher missions to fulfil. But even when the pain was at its worst, I could not cast a stone against those blasphemers, who were to me only carriers of the general guilt..."67

To have felt so religiously Nietzsche needed personal reasons to identify his existence with the values of Bildung. As a clever young man he excelled in the activities that belonged to Bildung; and his self-esteem and expectation of rewards and honours could only be realised in a life devoted to higher

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66 Briefwechsel 1869-1872, to Vischer-Bilfinger, 27 May 1871, KG II2, p.195.
67 SL, to V. Gersdorff, June 1871.
culture. This was also the world inhabited by those he admired and from whom he sought recognition.

The asynchronism between Nietzsche's values and those which influential classes and individuals were adopting enables us to comprehend the self-acknowledged isolation that he began to experience. Early on he described himself as "untimely" (Unzeitgemässe), not of his age; his early published essays frankly declared this fact in their title: Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen, or, Untimely Meditations. If he did not feel "at home" among contemporaries, he certainly did not identify himself with the Christian past. And if not the present and past? Increasingly in the later works he addresses himself to readers to come and actively prepares a posthumous existence. The smallness of his readership reinforces his hopes of the future; if he is not understood by his contemporaries, he surely belongs to what has not yet arrived. But the philosopher all deem radical, iconoclastic, a harbinger of twentieth century viewpoints, is really nothing more than an old fogey zealously attached to values his contemporaries were forsaking.

When a particular group dominates a civilisation it controls the formation of customs, culture and institutions and its values become the order of things. But if it can no longer resist the advance of rivals, a state of transition results. Its values become questionable and questioned. In these twilight zones complex and surprising reactions result: individuals concerned only for their well-being drift wherever power or comfort leads them, flourishing as hypocrites. In others competing values coexist, even in ear-splitting discord, but without causing undue disturbance. For some, the fact that one belief is in doubt passes a taint on all others, and a condition of uncertainty results that we call nihilism. They may seek novel strategies to deal with the crisis and embrace ethical possibilities outside of the realities of their context. Among competing factions, an individual may side with one or another, or may call the entire dispute into question and submit it to examination from above the fray. Doubts are refined by questions of "whither" or "why" and philosophy becomes intensely concerned with the problem of worth, of the summum bonum, not merely for one historical moment, but for all time.

These were the circumstances existing at the moment of antiquity's greatest philosophical revolution: that we associate today with the name and teachings of Socrates.

In his youth Socrates experienced Athenian imperial expansion, and equated the values of the polis with virtue and achievement. As the city prospered the divisions between parties were checked. But from his middle age until his death at the close of the fifth century, Athenian confidence and supremacy crumbled. Afflicted by plague and defeat at the hands of Sparta and her allies, the city erupted in bloody political strife. Ethical speculation proliferates in uncertainty. Thus it was that the entire weight of Socrates' philosophical activity as directed at finding a new more certain ground for values. Neglectful and contemptuous of natural philosophy, seeing the affairs of state as the most pressing, equipped with a new technique of dialectical interrogation, he gathered a devoted following, but did not inspire what he had intended. Rather than one solid teaching he inspired competing schools all eager to prescribe ethical practice for individuals, rather than states.

Nietzsche considers that Socrates situation so closely resembles his own that he confesses: "Socrates is so close to me that I am almost continually fighting with him." It is Nietzsche's traditionalism that provokes his iconoclasm and enables him to see what is invisible to those blinded by the obfuscation of the zeitgeist. Not surprisngly, he values this isolation, regarding it as essential for every philosopher, who by nature must set himself apart to defeat the process of becoming: "What does a philosopher demand of himself first and last?" To overcome his time in himself, to become timeless. Nietzsche does not just criticise modernity, he exorts his contemporaries back to the Ideal of Cultivation. He imagines that he can house the ideal inside a philosophical structure that will help it survive every inclemency.

Estranged from his epoch, he casts about for allies and the like-minded: people with whom he can share the burden and secrets of his programme. In books of the recently or long dead he discovers kindred spirits: Schopenhauer, Hölderlin, Goethe and others. Among contemporaries, the most significant is Richard Wagner, with whom he enjoys the most important friendship of his life, for he imagines that Wagner shares a common purpose with him and believes the maestro of music-drama can inspire and lead a new German cultural movement and salvage culture from ruin. Only, the friendship is broken when the younger man sees more of Wagner's nature and intentions. The group the composer gathers in Bayreuth, aesthetes and idealists, anti-Semites, and German nationalists, are alien to everything Nietzsche understands as culture. When he abandons Bayreuth, he abandons the philosophy of his youth.

Nietzsche courts another friendship without success, that of his colleague at Basel, Jacob Burckhardt, whom he suspects pursues a similar course of studies for similar ends. In an uncommonly humble letter of 1886, well into the last decade of his productive life, he recalls Burckhardt to their common purpose, explicitly referring to the Ideal of Cultivation: "...it seems to me that you have the same problems in view - that you are working on the same problems in a similar way, perhaps even more forcefully and deeply than I, because you are less loquacious. But then I am younger... The

68 SFW, PAT p.127.
69 COW, pref.
mysterious conditions of any growth in culture, that extremely dubious relation between what is called the "improvement" of man (or even "humanisation") and the enlargement of the human type, above all, the contradiction between every moral concept and every scientific concept of life - enough, enough - here is a problem which we fortunately share with not very many persons, living or dead." Burckhardt was no activist, and despite his distaste for the new epoch expected that little could be done to contain or avert its momentum. His reticence distanced him from his younger colleague, for whom the decline of the Bildung ideal represented a fundamental affront and challenge.

Activism

From Bayreuth onwards Nietzsche leads the vita solitaria. Plagued by ill health and in search of more temperate climes, he cuts the figure of a Petrarchan humanist: travelling, writing, corresponding with some of the most eminent of his time: the lifestyle of unharnessed intellects since the Middle Ages. All this he manages on a small but adequate stipend from the University of Basel.

He hopes that his books, which produce no significant income, might attract a brotherhood of scholars; a consideration that contributes to their personal tone and focus on matters that the author’s ideal reader might also ponder. Books are "hooks" to catch friends in the cause of culture. Notably he seeks out individuals, as no group professes a similar concern.

Unlike Marx, who promises to relieve the misery of an entire class, Nietzsche only nourishes the hopes of a dwindling band of aesthetes. His aristocratic radicalism, as his philosophy was termed by George Brandes, was not the political expression of a contemporary class. Neither aristocracy, nor haute bourgeoisie would rally to the banner. So, disavowing modern Europe's upper classes, he fancies the advent of a spiritual aristocracy, of intellectuals no doubt, who will rally to his name.

All along he still wishes devoutly to have some practical effect on the world: "Symptoms of a decay of education [Bildung] are everywhere, a complete extirpation; haste, the subsiding waters of religion, national conflicts, science fragmenting and disintegrating, the contemptible cash and pleasure economy of the educated classes, their lack of love and grandeur. It is clearer and clearer to me that the learned classes are in every respect a part of this movement. They become more thoughtless and loveless with every day. Everything, art as well as science, serves the approaching barbarity. Where should we turn? The great deluge of barbarity is at the door: Since we really have nothing whatsoever with which to defend ourselves and are all a part of this movement. What is to be done?"

You ask what is to be done? And then you ask what are the means, the resources, the force to resist the debacle of culture? What can individuals do against the forces of an entire civilisation? One thing is clear: culture must no longer remain an event of the inner life; pure Innerlichkeit must be supplanted by action. The values of Bildung must be politiscised.

The younger Nietzsche's idea of action is scarcely revolutionary however and still bears the imprint of Bildung. For most Aufklärers change resulted from slow, cumulative reform, guided by enlightened rulers or ministries, and instilled by education. His youthful politics of cultivation was exclusively a politics of the spirit: artists, educators, philosophers being the agents to lead the reform: the age-old faith of idealists who think the world can be changed by changing our perception of value or reality and then reorganising or reshaping institutions. Nietzsche's public lectures On the Future of Our Educational Institutions, delivered as a twenty-eighth year old Professor of Classical Philology at Basel, amplify this theme. A new generation of spiritual teachers and leaders operating from within the educational institutions of Germany and capable of recognising genius and nurturing its growth will guide the reform of culture and this will transform the nation.

Idealism invariably discovers a "political" method appropriate to itself. This is illustrated again by Nietzsche in 1870, the year of the Franco-Prussian war. Although a believer in the unity of a cultivated Europe, he was not inaccessible to patriotic conscience and his sentiments at the outbreak of hostilities in July of 1870 were manifestly anti-French. He debated whether to offer his services to the fatherland as soldier or as an ambulance driver. Because he had already acquired Swiss citizenship, he decided on serving in the second capacity since it overcame the complications of nationality. His period of service in the campaign was brief, cut short after contracting dysentery.

Departing the front to convalesce "somewhere in an Alpine nook" he occupies himself with reflections on the rise and decline of Attic tragedy. After eager patriotic sacrifice such behaviour scarcely reflects political indifference or a flight from the realities of power politics. These studies were neither unpolitical, nor recreational. By understanding the social conditions that produced Hellenic tragedy he hoped to devise a plan to set Germany on a similar course of development, so that his nation might lead Europe to a new age of higher culture.

30 SL, to Jacob Burckhardt, 22 September 1886.
31 PHT, PAT p.102.
The Birth of Tragedy, the book that grew out of these studies, places the burden of hope on the shoulders of Richard Wagner, whose music-drama would school modern Germans in principles of tragic consciousness and feeling. Presumably, by being able to produce tragedy once again, we might stimulate the rebirth of Hellenism in all areas of life. This wayward political tract, written in an atmosphere acrid with the gun smoke of Realpolitik, actually posed that another Renaissance could be inspired by new German music.

After breaking with Wagner, he was determined to be less idealistic. He renounced metaphysical comforts and in order to uproot every last vestige of idealism made sure his investigations of culture and society were defined - even exaggeratedly - in physiological terms. A more robust image of culture and the cultivated man demanded a more robust political stance.

We must be wary therefore of accepting verbatim Nietzsche's claim to being the last "unpolitical German". This does not mean that he is uninterested in politics per se; merely distancing himself from the conduct of affairs in the German Reich: the petty politics of parties and nation states. His diatribes against Bismark and the House of Hohenzollern in the last few notes made before his collapse in January 1889 show no wont of political zeal. The hand on the pen is clearly the instrument of an enveloping hysteria, but even hysteria is instructive, with the last line of the fragments reading: "Indem, ich dich vernichte Hohenzollern, vernichte ich die Luge."

The question of how society should be organised remains his fundamental concern and his outlook is one of Grosse Politik, or culture politics on the grand scale: continental developments and world historical events rather than the connivances of parties and of nation states.

The Political Project

Titanic self-reflection is the prerogative of philosophy and nowhere was this privilege more frequently exercised than by its German practitioners. Neither does Nietzsche deny himself his right and it should not trouble us if, during his last phase, he represents his thought as a decisive world-historical moment. At an altitude of thought "six thousand feet beyond man and time", with the panorama of European values extending to every horizon, he meditates on the cloud shadows looming over the landscape below.

As the nineteenth century hurries to its completion perturbations in the spirit of Europe betray a future punctuated by "tremendous wars, upheavals, explosions", the next two hundred years of Western history will witness the "advent of nihilism". Notebooks from Nietzsche's last productive years crackle like lightning before the storm: the whole of European culture, he warns, "has been moving as toward a catastrophe, with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade: restlessly, violently, headlong, like a river that wants to reach the end, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect." "Es wird Kriege geben, wie es noch keine auf Erden gab." Europe is unwilling to confront its future. Just as the question of "leadership of the earth" demands the greatest investment of intellectual capital it is squandered in hysterical passions of provincial immediacy.

With a curious tension of dread and glee Nietzsche expects to witness a "tremendous stocktaking after the most terrible earthquake." One moment complaining of the pervasive ignorance of the crisis: "For never was a more important moment in history - but who knows a thing about it?", he then declares this imbalance to be altogether necessary "at a time when an undreamed of loftiness and freedom of intellectual passion is laying hold of the problem of humanity and is calling for a decision as to human destiny."

Acquainting readers with the experience of his "untimeliness", he matches himself to the greatness of the moment: "my aims and tasks are more embracing than anyone else's and what I call "great politics" gives at least a good standpoint and bird's eye view for the present."

He is buoyed by the conviction his thought will mark the boundaries of a new world-historical epoch.

If hyperbole strains the productions of his last years, his philosophy has a programmatic unity that underpins the polemical audacities and urgency of his writings. It is, so to speak, an intoxication arising from intense self-clarity. Swelling inner conviction belongs to those who believe they are at the crowning stages of a life-task. That Nietzsche possessed such a task cannot be doubted, for he had posed its existence on more than one occasion and always with dire seriousness: "I have an aim, which compels me to go on living and for the sake of which I must cope with even the most painful matters. Without this aim I would take things much more lightly - that is, I would stop living."

In its most momentous form he intends to inscribe on the nineteenth century mind the question:

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32 NF 1888-1889, KG VIII-3, p.461.
33 WP, Pref. 2.
34 NF 1888-1889, KG VIII-3, p.454.
35 WP, a133.
36 SL, to Overbeck, 18 October 1888.
37 SL, to Overbeck, 30 April 1884.
38 SL, to Overbeck, 18 August 1883.
Whither man? and set before humanity the proposition of self-rule: that man may forsake myopic enthusiasms, subdue the tyranny of blind accident, and direct his energies wholly at the most far-reaching goals of the species. "My life task is to prepare for humanity one supreme moment in which it can come to its senses, a Great Noon in which it will turn its gaze backwards and forwards, in which it will step from under the yoke of accident and priests, and for the first time set the question of the Why and Wherefore of humanity as a whole - this life task naturally follows out of the conviction that mankind does not get on the right road of it own accord, that it is by no means divinely ruled..."79

This Great Noon, or revaluation of all values, as he otherwise refers to it, is the summum bonum, the value of values that will guide his actions and carry him to his life task. From the juvenilia until his collapse, there are no breaks in the project's continuity. It is only that, with the completion of The Gay Science and Thus Spake Zarathustra by 1884, the sum total of creative responses to the project's requirements had been fully exhausted and they began to assume their definitive form and acquire a familiar terminology. The sea-changes that swept over him owe their origin simply to reassessments of the questions raised by his continuing life-task.

The specific nature of that task is presented wholly in terms of the Ideal of Cultivation of the German Aufklärung, and it is thus the fate of Bildung or high culture that concerns him above all. He believes that, more than any contemporary, he has the breadth of vision to grasp the course and values of culture.80 From beginning to end Nietzsche never frames his political activism in any other way than to understand and promote the necessary conditions for high culture. We need only cite self-clarifications from each period to demonstrate the persistence of his intention.

Thus from the early period, prior to Human All Too Human, we hear:

"My task: is to grasp the inner connection and necessity of every true culture, the protective and remedial measures of this culture, and its relation to the genius of the people..."81 and,

"...We wished to make earnest endeavours to consider the best possible means of becoming men of culture."

From the middle period:

"In any case, if mankind is not to destroy itself by such a conscious universal rule, there must be previously found, as a scientific standard for ecumenical aims, a knowledge of the conditions of culture superior to what has been attained hitherto. Herein lies the enormous task of the great minds of the next century."

"The earthly rule of man must be taken in hand by himself, his 'omniscience' must watch over the further fate of culture with a sharp eye.

And in the later period:

"In place of 'sociology' a theory of the forms of domination... In place of 'society', the culture complex, as my chief interest (as a whole or in its parts)."85

"And in all seriousness, nobody before me knew the right way, the way up; it is only beginning with me that there are hopes again, tasks, ways that can be prescribed for culture..."

In an unfinished essay of 1873, intended for the series of Untimely Meditations, he portrays the true philosopher as a physician of culture, who investigates its physiology and prescribes what needs to be done to enlarge the human spirit. More suspicious of the wisdom of philosophers in the later works, often associating it with decadence, he still applies the medical metaphor in positive descriptions of the philosopher's practice, settling finally on the image of the vivisector. "It seems to me more and more", he observes, "that the philosopher, being necessarily a man of tomorrow... has always found himself in contradiction to his today; his enemy has always been the ideal of today. Hitherto these extraordinary promoters of mankind who have been called philosophers have seldom felt themselves to be friends of knowledge but rather, disagreeable fools and question marks - have found their task... in being the bad conscience of their age. By laying the knife vivisectionally to the bosom of the very virtues of the age they betrayed what was their own secret: to know a new greatness of man, a new untrodden path to his enlargement."87

On other occasions he associates the duty of the philosopher with that of the statesman: a statesman of culture politics, a legislator of the future, an educator on the grand scale who, like Confucius, points

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79 BEH, III, DD-2.
80 BEH, III, COW-2.
81 TP, PAT p10.
82 FEI, p 30.
84 HAH I. a249.
85 WP, 4662.
86 BEH, III, TI-2.
87 BGE, 412.
out a way of living for an entire people though, in better instances, for the purpose of higher cultivation. Each facet of the later Nietzsche's thoughts and imagery converge on the idea of a systematic political philosophy. The grand fantasies from this period - the concepts of übermensch, will to power, and the eternal recurrence - form an integrated system of value. They provide a positive programme for the future. The appearance of the most cultivated individual, the genius, in history should no longer be the result of happy chance but an attainment through conscious willing of that result and can only be achieved by organising society specifically for the purpose of breeding genius: "The problem I raise here is not what ought to succeed mankind in the sequence of the species (the human being is an end) but what type of human being one ought to breed, ought to will, as more valuable, more worthy of life, more certain of the future. This more valuable type has existed often enough already, but as a lucky accident, as an exception, never as willed."\(^{80}\)

The assertion that the thought experiments, psychological probing, creative dogma and polemic that compose Nietzsche's philosophy is shapeless, discontinuous, unsystematic - even contrivedly so - is scarcely credible. Nietzsche, well acquainted with the problems that his use of aphorism might pose, warned against interpreting this form of presentation as a sign of its incoherence; "Against the short-sighted - do you think it is piecework because it is (and must be) offered to you in pieces?" \(^{80}\)

Nietzsche's perspectivism appears to undermine his intention to accomplish a revaluation of all values (Umwertung aller Werte). The purpose of revaluation (ortransvaluation as it has sometimes presented) is to establish an order of rank among value judgements. That these judgements are perspectival is immaterial, since to accomplish this it must be supposed that he has - or imagines he has - an Archimedean point of leverage that allows him to lift one idea of worth above another. But is this not at cross purposes with his equally methodical nihilism, which is fundamentally a levelling or equalising process of thought. This nihilism gathers momentum from the mid-point of his career and culminates in his systematic attempt at extirpating every anthropomorphism that reason and linguistic habit has implanted into nature - being, unity, causality, teleology.

Nietzsche's plans are both at cross-purposes with and furthered by his nihilistic excavations. Radical scepticism was merely the preparatory clearing of ground before the work of construction could begin. To this end he allowed himself to become "the first perfect nihilist of Europe who, however, has even now lived through the whole of nihilism, to the end, leaving it behind, outside himself." \(^{80}\)

Nihilism was not a goal, but the outcome of thinking towards one; a monster that philosophy must encounter in open combat, or preferably, accommodate within its framework.

During his last productive decade Nietzsche was planning a systematic work to rival any in the tradition of German philosophy. Writing to Peter Gast in 1884, soon after the completion of Thus Spake Zarathustra he comments on the satisfactory progress of his work, and expresses the intention that "the next six years will be for working out a scheme which I sketched for my 'philosophy, '" In another letter of the same year to Malwida von Meysenburg, he supports that intention and adds - "now that I have built the portico to my philosophy, I must start working tirelessly until the main edifice stands finished before me." \(^{82}\)

Years later, he is still insisting on the "hundred weight of need" pressing upon him to "create a coherent structure of thought during the next few years." \(^{83}\) Although he did not live to complete this work, the shape it might have taken can be observed in the notebooks of the 1880's presented as The Will to Power. These notes contain ideas not ventured elsewhere, but do not depart from the flavour of works published during the same period. They supplement and make explicit connections that would have been drawn in a proposed systematic work.

That system was unlikely to be metaphysical in content, owing little to transcendental perambulations and more to an encompassing political design. His philosophical activity is not in pursuit of immutable essences or utopian Truth; but for an aim and future for humanity. The first imperative therefore was to express an ideal of human worth, the second, to prescribe means for realising it. By studying the forms and trends of modern civilisation he gains the knowledge needed to design a politics of world-historical dimensions. The response to the question - Whither? must be grounded in the history and nature of man; it must attend to the interrelations between being and becoming, worth and worthlessness, knowledge and practice, illusion and actuality; it will digress into the traditional domains of philosophy only to secure what it requires. It must understand what in nature and man is necessary and what can be changed, as an image of worth must never surmount possibility.

A world goal presupposes a cosmology; a solar system in which the goal blazes like the sun. All nature is politicised: even the atom. And everything about the organisation of society refers to back to what occurs in nature. A single task sprouts innumerable tendrils of enquiry and preparation; a living
system with its own laws of growth and stages of metamorphosis. With a coherent philosophical structure Nietzsche hopes to encase his thought in its final and perfect transformation, entertaining this prospect especially after the composition of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* when he believes he possesses all the necessary instruments to accomplish the task. With the theory of nature as *will to power*, the *eternal recurrence* as a means to grasp the problem of becoming, the array of psychological insights into human mores, the goal of the *übermensch* and explorations of nihilism all existing side by side, all that remains is to bind these ideas into a harmonious ensemble.
4 - Nietzsche's World History

Nietzsche’s stance in relation to his contemporaries depends entirely on the fact that he perceives world-history as a mortal struggle between the *Ideal of Cultivation* and all other value systems. It is the basis of his remark that *great politics* provides the best standpoint from which to view the present. Great politics is the struggle between spiritual and material powers to decide how society should be organised. Allusions to “grosse Politik” occur most frequently during the last decade of this career, but the outlook is incipient in the early work. Whenever Nietzsche expresses a perception on world-historical developments it is *in nuce* a statement of the great political standpoint. There is perhaps no better way of illustrating this than by recounting the history of western civilisation through Nietzsche’s eyes. He himself nowhere draws a cohesive *world history*, but it can be constructed fairly easily from examination of his work.

When Nietzsche equates *world history* and *European history* it is not just cultural *hubris*, simply nineteenth century political reality: Europe rules the world. And the legacy of this rule, based on military, economic and technological dominance is eternal.

We hear much about globalisation, as if it is something recent, whereas in fact, globalisation started the moment modern humans moved out of Africa, when they populated the continents of Australia and North and South America. It went further when Greek, Roman, Chinese and other civilised explorers discovered worlds beyond their own and set out to conquer, colonise and trade with them. It reached its modern position with the European discovery of the trade routes to Asia and the continents of the New World. From there European domination has brought global convergence and uniformity so that only the most distant and concealed places are free of any imprint of the western mind. Even if, in time, world power shifts to other continents, the globe will never again have the same aspect or dimensions. In some sense it will remain forever Europeanised, and for this reason its past might quite justifiably be called *European*.

What is the point of origin of this event? Nietzsche’s answer is unequivocal: world history begins with the Greeks, for it was Greek civilisation which begat Europe: “…the Greek was the first great union and synthesis of everything Near Eastern, and on that account the inception of the European soul, the discovery of our "new world".*6

* By synthesising “everything Near Eastern” the Greeks constitute a decisive advance over the other great peoples of the Orient; and a wholly novel principle emerges in the self-conscious life of man.

This advance is not measured by imperial ascendency or military might in itself, for then the transient rule of Parthian, Mongol, or Hun might have a place in this narrative, which it does not; rather by a capacity for the highest degree of culture. This is the meaning of “great politics”, which in Nietzsche’s view is intrinsically a *politics of culture*, the aim of which is to bring forth a harvest of “noble” or “great” individuals, that is, geniuses. What is sought in history *are not the happy ages, but those which offer a favourable soil for the production of genius.*,67 In genius the values of culture are expressed to a superlative degree; he represents an objective value, an end in itself. The nation or epoch which has actively promoted the production of genius is one which has triumphed in the domain of great politics.

Culture and Civilisation

For Nietzsche Greek civilisation is overwhelmingly fruitful: its success is to produce genius on a scale and with a persistence unparalleled in history, not merely by an accidental convergence of circumstances, but by understanding this as its most pressing goal and task.

It is an advance beyond civilisation *per se* in a way that is different to how civilisation can be claimed as an advance over hunter gathering. In the second case civilisation is seen to be superior in its technology and productivity. Fields of agriculture and city walls are a better defence against want, the elements, and human predators. By distancing us from nature through urban existence we refine our manners, discover new forms of social arrangements and live easier lives.

Nietzsche’s measure of human progress is not improvements in technology but the greatness of personalities attained. He sees the conquest over the past effected only by the highest exemplars of humanity. People do not merely have to be *civilised*; high culture might even contain more characteristics of the barbaric. There is more culture in a barbarians thirst for great deeds; were this thirst is organised and there is unity between thought and action. If it weakens savage desires by

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64 Cf. DD, a189. Perhaps the earliest occurrence of this phrase in Nietzsche’s work.
65 SL, to Overbeck, 7 April 1884.
66 WP, a1051.
67 SSW, PAT, p.142.
uprooting them, civilisation destroys the human energies that are transformed and sublimated into culture.

On this account both forms of life may fall into opposition: "The high points of culture and civilisation do not coincide; one should not be deceived about the abysmal antagonism of culture and civilisation. The great moments of culture were always, morally speaking, times of corruption; and conversely the periods when the taming of the human animal ("civilisation") was desired and enforced were times of intolerance against the boldest and most spiritual natures. Civilisation has aims different from those of culture - perhaps they are even opposite." 98

The conflict between Kultur and Zivilisation touted and trumpeted by the intelligentsia of both camps during the Great War, was a war waged with zeal exceeding that in the trenches. In defence of a deep and serious Kultur the Germans trained their artillery on effete and machine-like Western Zivilisation. Western propagandists relived the last days of the Imperium Romanum and saw that they were holding off another barbarian invasion.

Nietzsche's distinction between culture and civilisation, and his implantable anti-nationalism separates him from the generation that followed. The idea of 'culture' of the German war propagandists was already being prepared in the late eighteenth century and propagated spectacularly by Romantic historicism. This emphasised the unique, local, national, and linguistically specific life patterns of a people which produce complexes of sentiment and custom significant only to their participants. These complexes are not transferable by way of exposition; they can only be understood by active participation in them and are hence alien and incomprehensible to the outsider.

This disposition contributed to the strong interest in hermeneutics shown by German scholars from Dilthey to Weber. It also anticipated the ethically neutral investigations of modern anthropology, and yet, by way of associating Kultur with the Volk or Volksgeist (Volk often being used to refer specifically to the German people) a foundation was laid for German nationalistic ideology. Also enforcing this view of culture was the tendency of German scholars to equate Civilisation with the materiality of human existence. Civilisation is a shell or husk that is the externalisation of spiritual activity, being what George Simmel would have called objectified spirit. 99 In this way Kultur is blatantly in Manichean relation with Zivilisation; as spirit fighting matter within society itself, and the progress of civilisation stifling the life of Spirit through mechanical and heartless forces.

Nietzsche therefore employs the Ideal of Cultivation belonging to the Aufklärung: the Bildung ideal elaborated by Goethe's Weimar circle. Here culture is not a localised manifestation of custom and sentiment but a potentiality for which all mankind is endowed. It is located in the formation of personality, not in the shared habits of a community. It is an activity, not simply the residue of activity. It proposes, in the words of Goethe, the harmonic wholeness of the individual by bringing "alle Manifestationen des Menschlichen Wesens, Sinnlichkeit und Vernunft, Einbildungskraft und Verstand zu einer entschiedenen Einheit." 100

For Nietzsche culture is the personal activity and the social organisation that makes the synthetic individual possible. Civilisation needs the individual as a unit in the material processes of state and community and therefore diminishes the integrated personality. After Nietzsche, Max Weber expresses the same presuppositions in his explorations of bureaucracy. Plainly cherishing the values of Bildung, he sees in the enveloping rationalisation of modern life, in the bureaucratic forms of the modern state and commercial enterprise, the degeneration of higher spirituality in the synthetic individual, and his replacement by an order of specialists. At the final stage of the development of this future iron cage it might be said: "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilisation never before achieved." 101

Elsewhere, Weber alludes to this eventuality as Egyptionism - and equates the etiolation of civilisation with life patterns in the late empires of the Orient. By the late nineteenth century it was commonplace in German scholarship to distinguish the Orient and Occident as the material examples of two antagonistic principles of social organisation. Orientalism indicating servilism to a despotic who, shadowed by a ministry of eunuchs, tyrannises an abject population into indolence and semi-barbarism; Occidentalism signifying principles of robust independence found in archetypes such as the republics of Greece and Rome or even the unruly ancient German tribes.

This stock idea of German scholarship is once again prefigured by a Greek. Aristotle, in a famous passage in the Politics, distinguishes between two different types of barbarism: "The races that live in the cold regions and those of Europe are full of courage and passion but somewhat lacking in skill and brain power; for this reason, while remaining generally independent, they lack political cohesion and the ability to rule over others. On the other hand the Asiatic races have both brains and skill but

98 WP. ai21.
99 See Georg Simmel, The Sociology of Georg Simmel, tr. ed. and with intro. by Karl H. Wolff, New York and London, 1950, p.421. In the essay The Metropolis and Mental Life, Simmel advises that "...the development of modern culture is characterised by the predominance of what one may call the 'objective spirit' over the 'subjective spirit'...",
are lacking in courage and will-power; so they have remained enslaved and subject.\footnote{102} The Greeks, on the other hand, combine the best qualities of both the European and the Asiatic barbarians; being both high-spirited and intelligent, they are capable of ruling the world.

To use equivalent terms of German scholarship, we would call the northern Europeans barbaric, the Asiatics civilised and the Greeks cultured. These three broad categories - barbarism, civilisation, and culture - each connoting a fundamental possibility for human existence, can be perceived in all of Nietzsche's works. He adapts and assimilates them into his thought early on, and they change only in nomenclature. In his earliest writing the merely civilised existence is called Orientalism or Alexandrianism. (Once again, there is a strong tendency to associate the enfeebled element of a late imperial mores. Ortega Y Gasset, a brilliant student of German literature, also uses the metaphor of a late empire when he offers a succinct statement of this opposition: "Uncultured life", he says, "is barbarism, devitalised culture is byzantinism."\footnote{103} Later on Nietzsche equates Christianity with Orientalism. Different terms designate the same undesirable qualities in different historical locations but the dialectic between these hostile forms produces the tension in his world historical narrative.

Nietzsche's World-History

The great political narrative returns us to sixth and fifth century Greece B.C., where for the first time in the history of the West and Near-East, culture becomes a possibility for human existence. It is conceived almost immediately on the grandest dimensions: so formidably that mankind hitherto or since has barely aspired to duplicate it. For Nietzsche its documents are Attic tragedy before and shortly after the Persian wars; particularly the works of Aeschylus. The pervasiveness of a tragic view of existence reflects the height culture has attained at any moment; therefore Greece is at her cultural zenith for the time in which tragic poets and philosopher statesmen are influential. The inescapable fact of this duration however, is its brevity. The ideal ensemble of conditions that had permitted the culture-forming elements to dominate crumbles quickly against intractable historical forces.

First symptom of decline is the extinction of the tragic outlook, being supplanted in drama by the dialectics of Euripides and in philosophy by the optimistic rationalism of Socrates. The Persian threat places intense stress on the Hellenic city-states and this is followed by the devastation and waste of the Peloponnesian wars, fought not against a common foe but by Athens and Sparta for dominance of the Greeks. The internal strife of the poleis that accompanies this is no less destructive.\footnote{104} By the close of the fourth century a return to the original equilibrium is increasingly remote: reformation of Greek culture no longer conceivable. Nietzsche laments that "this reformation of Hellenes would, as I envision it, have become a wonderful soil for the production of geniuses, a soil such as there had never been before. That would be something to describe! We lost something expressible then."\footnote{105}

The next stage in the world historical narrative is the Macedonian kingdom's conquest of the city states to form an Hellenic empire under Macedonian hegemony that extends to India. Alexander’s empire spreads Greek literature and manners over much of the East, North Africa and the peoples of the Mediterranean. But just as Hellenic culture is dispersed and extended to non-Greeks, Greece itself - the heartland of the independent republican polis and single most important fact for production of that culture - is now incorporated into an amorphous power bloc and is divested of its active spirit: the politics of Greece becomes orientalised. 'The Hellenising of the world and to make this possible, the Orientalising of Hellenism - that double mission of Alexander the Great, still remains the most important event... The rhythmic play of those two factors against each other is the force that has determined the course of history heretofore."\footnote{106}

In the world-historical war between culture and civilisation, between Hellenism and Orientalism, no end has been reached. Mankind has dallied, gone forward, strayed, stepped backward; at no point is there any evidence of world process at work; no outcome ineluctable, and history without intrinsic aim other than that given it by men. Through nature, mankind has evolved from the ape but he might just as easily return there.\footnote{107} Advance toward culture is only the result of the most protracted endeavour and is maintained if exceptional circumstances do not intrude. There is no necessity for the growth or decline of civilisation as Spengler presents it, other than what a population allows. In this war a blow may start a rout, a retreat may prepare a victory.

With the greatest creative episode of the Greeks at an end, and the Alexandrine empire fragmenting almost at the moment of its founder's death, the next metamorphosis of the great politics occurs with

\footnote{104} See SSW, PAT, p.132: "How did the age perish. Unattractively. What are the seeds of corruption. He blame the "flight from the world" by the best people: "the individual began to take himself too seriously." The plague at Athens increased the dilemma and everything was finally destroyed by the Persian wars: "The danger was too great, and the victory was too extraordinary." Also, SSW, PAT, p.134: "...the Greeks were evidently on the point of discovering a type of man still higher than any previous type when they were interrupted by the stop of the shears."
\footnote{105} SSW, PAT, p.140.
\footnote{106} TOS II, IV, p.121.
\footnote{107} See AC, 64.
the fateful conquest by the Romans of the Mediterranean world. Lacking the intellectual brilliance of Greeks but surpassing them in political and military virtue, Latin civilisation rises piecemeal by conquest. One city meets every challenge. Politics is conceived on a scale previously unknown.

With the military success of the Scipio's in Spain, Carthage and Syria something new appears: an enduring empire across three continents. The Greek Polybius, enslaved by the Romans and deeply impressed by their rapid ascent, announces that he is the first to write history on a world scale. The salient feature of Roman conquest is embodied in the great Scipio Africanus. He himself assimilates many of the essential elements of Hellenic culture to present a form of Graeco-Roman civilisation. This interpenetration of Greek and Latin culture makes Hellenism or the classical style a possibility even for the barbarians of Europe, which moreover, is conceived as a political entity for the first time once Rome expands into France and Britain.

Early in his life Nietzsche is unimpressed by the Roman achievement: where the energies of Hellas went into creating genius, Latium expended itself in world domination and the perfection of its state. He complains that "the world-wide empire of the Romans is nothing sublime compared to Athens. The strength that really should go into the flower here remains in the leaves and stem, which flourish," but Rome did not make the decisive step toward the deliberate cultivation of genius, and whenever it did so it was only derivative of the patterns set by the Greeks.

When the Romans adopt the aesthetics of the Greeks it remains purely decorative, coarsened and inferior. There is no unity between the classical style of the Romans and their mores. Later in his life, he values Roman virtues and honours their achievement, if not as a flowering of culture, then as a base on which a great culture could grow: a base that would hold every promise of enduring. The immense conception of the Imperium Romanum with its "grand organisation of society might be the supreme condition for the prosperity of life"; a structure that could house a culture capable of withstanding every blow of fortune and so evading the fate of Greek culture which was extinguished through political disintegration. The Imperium Romanum which we know, which the history of the Roman province teaches us to know better and better, this most admirable of all works of art in the grand style, was a beginning, its structure was to prove itself by millennia - sub specie aeterni has never been so much as dreamed of... the tremendous deed of the Romans in clearing the ground for a great culture which could take its time... But he speaks here in the subjunctive; the long preparation does not produce an equivalent of the

The values and spirit of Christianity undermine the empire from within. Like a sickness it weakens the empire’s political and military organs leaving it incapable of resisting the external threat. This assertion - not without precedent if we consider the assessments of Gibbon and Machiavelli - is qualified elsewhere. Christianity, which placed itself in explicit opposition to the classical Ideal of Cultivation, would not have conquered antiquity without a fertile soil for its growth; and this may be blamed as much on the ruling classes as anyone else. "The degeneration of the rulers and the ruling classes has been the cause of the greatest mischief in history! Without the Roman Caesars and Roman society, the insanity of Christianity would never have come to power."

Elsewhere he suggests that Christianity only took up in more rigorous fashion the fight that had already begun in antiquity against "the classical ideal and the noble religion" - i.e. Hellenic culture. Christianity accommodated itself to the existing antipaganism of the cults and religions of "the lower masses, the women, the slaves, the non-noble classes". High culture is explicitly linked with an aristocratic milieu; the new religion - the natural heir of Orientalism must, of necessity, find its following among the slaves and the disaffected of an empire neglectful of its worldly duties. The parallel between Christianity and Orientalism is drawn early in his career in the fourth essay of the Untimely Meditations where he writes that "...Christianity appears, for instance, as a product of Oriental antiquity, which was thought out and pursued to its ultimate conclusions by men with almost intemperate thoroughness."

The systematisation of Orientalism into a world religion has profound implications for mankind and throughout his entire opus we hear the regretful sigh that Goethe once expressed in conversation: Had we never come to know the melancholy of the Orient, had Homer

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99 Cf. SSW, PAT, p. 133: "Enfeebled Hellenism became Romanised, coarsened, and decorative, and then as cultural window dressing, was accepted as an ally by enfeebled Christianity and was forcibly disseminated among uncivilised peoples: this is the history of occidental culture."
100 AC, a58.
101 AC, a58.
102 AC, a58.
103 WP, a874.
104 WP, a196.
105 TOS II, IV, p. 121.
remained our Bible, how different a form would mankind have achieved.\(^{116}\)

In his analysis of Christianity's world-historical role Nietzsche carefully distinguishes its organisation from the spirit of the teachings of Jesus. The way in which the founder of Christianity lived resembled the naïve beginnings of a Buddhist peace movement. The organisation of religion, the church, was precisely what Jesus was disposed to preach against.\(^{117}\) If carried through to the letter the effect of his teachings would have been to quell resentment against the noble culture even though it would not have been capable of invoking the spirit of Hellenism.\(^{118}\) Instead, "...Christianity has become something fundamentally different from what its founder did and desired. It is the great antigian movement of antiquity, formulated through the employment of the life, teaching and "Words" of the founder of Christianity but interpreted in an absolutely arbitrary way after the pattern of fundamentally different needs: translated into the language of every already existing subterranean religion... Its mortal enemy is the Roman just as much as the Greek."\(^{119}\)

It is Paul who turns Christianity into a purified Orientalism and re-directs its principles to promote other-worldliness, a circumstance already made attractive in antiquity by Platonic philosophy and its transcendental world of Ideas. Orientalism represents a denial of the life Greek tragedians were prepared to affirm even in the face of deepest suffering. Christianity reverses all that had been deemed good hitherto and calls it evil. As it advances Hellenism retreats.

Although its theoretical disposition is to turn from the world, in practice it begins to resume step by step everything that it had professed to negate.\(^{120}\) When the Christian becomes soldier, priest, merchant, citizen, scholar, and merchant i.e. worldly, the ground is cleared for the seizure of the secular apparatus of the imperial state. In both the eastern and western empires Christianity is sanctioned as the official state religion and so begins a momentous era in the history of great politics. Fashioning itself on the ruins of imperial civilisation after the barbarian invasions and imposing itself on the mores of the semi-civilised peoples of Europe, the Church in both imperial hemispheres strives to attain as comprehensive a status as its secular predecessor.

Christianity eliminates rival beliefs or subsumes them into its doctrine, thereby schooling the European mind in absolutes. Although its ethical domination is total, its political success is various. The Church’s occasional quest for secular dominion is at odds with the will of secular rulers who resent the cloister dictating to the crown. So sometimes doctrine complies with imperial will and sometimes it fights doggedly to overcome it. In any event the Christian church serves to centre and consolidate an identifiably universal world-view for hundreds of years. Under its tutelage European multiplicity is endowed with a potential unity. There are moments when Nietzsche concedes a modicum of respect for accomplishment, that is, for the Church as a form of spiritual organisation, requiring a degree of refinement above the cruder administrative arrangement of the State.\(^{121}\)

In general however, his antipathy is transparent. There is no Romantic nostalgia for the Middle Ages, the high point of Christian civilisation. This, he says, is a period of barbarism and unculture. Not only does the Church suppress and check the revival of classicism in Europe but, through the agency of the Crusades, it wages a great political war against the superior culture of Islam.

The Crusades robbed us today of "the harvest of the culture of Islam"\(^{122}\) which had arrived at a nobility and enrichment of manners during the Moorish occupation of Spain. In similar fashion the church grimly fought the imperial genius of Friedrich the Second (whom Nietzsche identifies as "the first European according to my taste".\(^{123}\)) who had sought rapprochement with Islam. Only when the Church relaxes its grip on the nascent elements of culture in Europe, when it becomes most corrupted and the possibility arises of the papacy becoming a purely secular instrument of power in the hands of the Borgia,\(^{124}\) does the rebirth of Hellenism in Europe once again become realisable.

The waning of the Middle Ages (if not of Christianity) is punctuated by an interlude of Hellenism and retrieval of the spirit of antiquity known as the Italian Renaissance.\(^{125}\) Thus, "is it at last understood...

\(^{116}\) Goethe, Conversation, 1792.

\(^{117}\) See WP, a167. "This is the humour of the situation, a tragic humour: Paul re-elected on a grand scale precisely that which Christ had annulled through his way of living at last when the church was complete, it sanctified even the existence of the state." Also WP a211: "Christianity is possible as the most private form of existence; it prosupposes a narrow, remote, completely unpolitical society - it belongs in the conventicle. A Christian state, Christian politics on the other hand, are a piece of impudence, a lie, like for instance a Christian leadership of an army, which finally treat the 'God of Hosts' as if he were chief of staff. The papacy too, has never been in a position to carry on Christian politics; and when reformers indulge in politics, as Luther did, one sees that they are just as much followers of Machiaveli as any immoralist or tyrant."

\(^{118}\) See WP, a155.

\(^{119}\) As the most private form of existence; it prosupposes a narrow, remote, completely unpolitical society - it belongs in the conventicle. A Christian state, Christian politics on the other hand, are a piece of impudence, a lie, like for instance a Christian leadership of an army, which finally treat the 'God of Hosts' as if he were chief of staff. The papacy too, has never been in a position to carry on Christian politics; and when reformers indulge in politics, as Luther did, one sees that they are just as much followers of Machiaveli as any immoralist or tyrant."

\(^{120}\) See WP, a195.

\(^{121}\) See WP, a213.

\(^{122}\) See GL, a358.

\(^{123}\) AC, a60.

\(^{124}\) BERGE, a200.

\(^{125}\) In The Anti-Christ (a64) Nietzsche states: 'I see in my mind's eye a possibility of a quite unearthly fascination and splendour. I beheld a spectacle at once so meaningless and so strangely paradoxical it would have given all the gods of Olympus an opportunity for an immortal roar of laughter - Cesar Boregas as Pope?! Am I understood?! Very well, that would have been the only kind of victory I desire today - Christianity would thereby have been abolished!' Undoubtedly this possibility was suggested to him by Burke's account in The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, tr. S.G.C. Middlemore, New York, 1960, pp.70-73.

\(^{126}\) See GM, I-16, where he observes that "there was, to be sure, in the Renaissance an uncertainty and glittering reawakening of the classical ideal, of the noble mode of evaluating all things."
what the Renaissance was? The revaluation of Christian values, the attempt, undertaken with every expedient, with every instinct, with genius of every kind, to bring about the victory of the opposing values, the noble values... up till now this has been the only great war... neither has there been a form of attack more fundamental, more direct, and more strenuously delivered on the entire front and at the enemy's centre!" 126

In the perilous jungle of Renaissance Italy, the Man-plant again grows vigorously and the vision to build on a grand scale is everywhere at work, finding expression through the state-craft of the condottieri, the brushes and chisels of the artists or the quills of the poets and the learned. Europe becomes pregnant with the energy and curiosity of the uomo universale. The individual as an autonomous and self formative unit again asserts itself as it had in Greece, not because freedom has been legislated on its behalf but because it has learned to survive and flourish in the harshest circumstances. It is humanity's loftiest moment since the tragic age of antiquity whose example is such that "with all the tensions of the past three hundred years we have not yet reattained the man of the Renaissance." But it must be qualified: Nietzsche still considers the man of that era to be, in turn, "inferior to the man of antiquity." 127

As occurred in Hellas the bloom of culture is brief; its flowering is quickly checked as Christian doctrine strenuously reasserts its hegemony in Europe. In the north of the continent Protestantism rises against the corrupted Renaissance church, but this in turn triggers a Counter-Reformation in the south; the church falls with a vengeance upon heretics of all types and forces stricter control over knowledge, art and every other detail of life. In north and south the advances made by European culture are eclipsed by the competing claims of Catholic and Protestant fanaticism, the very existence of which bespeaks the waning power of Christianity. The significant Teutonic contribution to the Reformation leads the later Nietzsche to one of his most vicious anti-German diatribes. 128 His final estimate is that "the German Reformation is a recrudescence of Christian barbarism." 129 At other times Nietzsche employs a physiological metaphor to explain the eclipse of the Renaissance; he sees it as an epoch which, after an explosive outburst of long assembled energies, quickly exhausts itself: "...the great human being is a terminus, the great epoch, the Renaissance for example, is a terminus... The danger which lies in great human beings and great epochs is extraordinary; sterility, exhaustion of every kind follow in their anti rioty." 130

With the Renaissance at an end the history of European great politics grows darker, more uncertain as the war between Orientalism and Hellenism takes new directions. In the aftermath of the Reformation, there are brief, localised blooms of Hellenism, such as in the France of Louis XIV, or in exceptional individuals such as Goethe, whom Nietzsche describes as a "return to nature, through a going up to the naturalness of the Renaissance." Seventeenth century Europe has a harder and more robust culture than the ensuing century which descends into sentimentalism. 131 Goethe's greatness lies in his attempt to overcome the sentimentalism of his time and show, by the example of his own life, the path toward the strong and well constituted human being. 132

At the dawn of the modern era new forces emerge that are as opposed to the old medieval order as they are to production of culture. As ardent as Nietzsche's hopes are for German culture in his youth, he is bitter and reproachful in maturity. His unshaken conviction is that the rebirth of Hellenism in Europe can only be assured by the political unity of the continental powers. The Imperium Romanum, the earliest promise of that unity, may have collapsed, but its example is never completely forgotten. It is recalled in clumsy fashion in the Carolingian epoch, in the consolidation of a Holy Roman Empire, even in the mere fact of Catholic Christendom as a loose confederation of European provinces under Papal dominion.

But with the onset of the modern era that promise is shattered by the accumulating power of the centralised, organised nation state. The nation state has its own pressing claims on human life; in this respect opposed to Christianity as well as culture, exclusive as well as expansionary, hostile to external powers, determined to exert complete control over the populations within its boundaries, it dispenses with the idea of a European commonwealth. Hitherto the great European struggle was between emperor and church, with the exception of the independent attitude of the recalcitrant Italian city states, it was a struggle between two centralising powers. With the advent of the nation-state however, the great struggle takes on a new form; that is, a struggle between European unity and European regionalism.

The labours of Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, to assert his supremacy over Francis I of France and the German Protestants mark the last active attempt by a medieval ruler to reassert the tradition of a politically and spiritually united Europe. His abdication, following a futile campaign against Francis

126 See TI, pp.102-104.
127 AC, a61.
128 WP, a881.
129 See AC, a61.
130 WP, a90.
131 See TI, p.44 and WP, a93.
132 WP, a96.
I, is symbolic of what is to occur in the centuries to come. By the nineteenth century the dissolution of Europe has a perilous momentum. Fragmenting within itself, its parts in perpetual contention, Europe's energies, which should be claimed for the greater goal of the leadership of humanity, are dissipated in provincial strife and disorder. Nationalist politics, necessarily antithetical to great politics obscure its cultural mission: "this nevrose nationale from which Europe is suffering acutely, this eternal subdivision of Europe into petty states, with politics on a municipal scale: they have robbed Europe itself of its significance, of its reason - and have stuffed it into a cul-de-sac."\textsuperscript{133}

Every gesture by an individual or people to transcend this particularism is an advance. Goethe is such an advance. His life and works are of European rather than purely national significance, and he refuses to be stirred by German hatred of occupying Napoleonic armies. But by far the single most important datum of the modern era is the political will and vision coalescing in the superhuman and inhuman recesses of Napoleon himself. Not a modern, but an atavism, a return to the Renaissance, his one abiding aim: "...to consolidate Europe and to convert it into a political and economic unit, with the object of ruling the world..." would once again have made good the promise of the Romans and founded a grand organisation of society on which a future culture may build.\textsuperscript{134}

Napoleon’s failure leads to an uprising of petty nationalism, ironically encouraged by his own conquests. The peace achieved by the great powers at the Congress of Vienna after his defeat is illusory. For Nietzsche, the virus is already at work: in Germany, in Italy, and among half a dozen other European peoples, the siren call of national statehood finds willing ears. Liberal and nationalist rebellions are repeatedly repressed by the great imperial powers but Europe inevitably takes on the appearance of an armed camp. At the moment at which German and Italian unity is finally realised Europe becomes a crucible of national hubris and militarism.

Secularism and the modern crisis of values

As the nation state grows more powerful, Christianity or more precisely, the settled order of the Middle Ages falls into decay. Older and younger Nietzsche assess the decline differently, but both await it with a mixture of hope and dread. The nineteenth century is not lacking in energy or potential; enormous forces are simmering below which might explode through the slightest fracture. Once free predicting the future is best left to a dice throw. Europe is on the threshold of a new dawn or unparalleled barbarism. Its danger is precisely in its uncertain transition: there is no clear image of its destiny as it breaks free of the past. In a key passage of the third Untimely Meditation the young Nietzsche shows profound alarm as modernity swirls into the vortex of Atomism.

Barbarism is imminent. "For a century," he says, "we have been ready for a world-shaking convulsion; and though we have lately been trying to set the conservative strength of the so-called national state against the great modern tendency to volcanic destructiveness, it will only be, for a long time yet, an aggravation of the universal unrest that hangs over us. We need not be deceived by individuals behaving as if they knew nothing of all this anxiety; their own restlessness shows how well they know it. They think more exclusively of themselves than men ever thought before; they plant and build for their little day, and the chase for happiness is never greater than when the quarry must be caught today or tomorrow; the next day perhaps there is no hunting. We live in the Atomic Age, or rather in the Atomic Chaos. The opposing forces were practically held together in Medieval times by the church, and in some measure assimilated by the strong pressure which she exerted. When the common tie broke and the pressure relaxed, they arose once more against each other. The Reformation taught that many things were 'adiaphora' - departments that needed no guidance from religion: this was the price paid for its own existence. Christianity paid a similar one to guard itself against the far more religious antiquity and laid the seeds of discord at once. Everything nowadays is directed by the fools and the knaves, the selfishness of the moneymaker and the brute forces of militarism. The state in their hands makes a good show of relating everything and of becoming the bond that unites the warring elements, in other words, it wishes for the same idolatry from mankind as they showed to the church. And we shall yet feel the consequences. We are even now on the ice floes in the stream of the Middle Ages; they are thawing fast, and their movement is ominous; the banks are flooded, and giving way. \textsuperscript{135}

Young Nietzsche is circumspect about the decay of the Christian civilisation of the Middle Ages. Europe has been swept around in the whirlpool of Christianity for two millennia, but has now launched itself away into new hazards. To avert the dangers posed by anti-religious elements overreacting he commends considerate abstention: "If thereby honour religion, though it is dying. \textsuperscript{136} We must not disfigure the corpse but treat it gently so that the transition is not too painful to the mourners. The task of one concerned with the health of culture is to soothe those who suffer at religion's

\textsuperscript{133} EH, III, COW-2.
\textsuperscript{134} EH, III, COW-2.
\textsuperscript{135} TOS II, III, pp.137-138.
\textsuperscript{136} PHT, FAT p.103.
passing.

The young philosopher bears great hopes for religion’s unlucky hour. Orientalism has ruled long enough and must now make way for rejuvenated Hellenism. "The earth which, up to the present, has been more than adequately Orientalised, begins to yearn once more for Hellenism." His optimism hinges on the congruence between the circumstances that produced Attic tragedy in antiquity and that existing in modern Germany. Nietzsche considers Richard Wagner to be the greatest herald of this rejuvenation. He is German’s Aeschylus, and will lead Europe to restore the spirit of antiquity.138

As Wagner’s acolyte, Nietzsche expresses exuberant hopes, but part of him resists the great artist’s personality as he contemplates the disproportion between ancient and modern achievement. There is potential for genius to be sure, but its emergence is broken on contact with modernity. Cultural leadership falls daily into the hands of Philistines, who profess concern for culture but are actually its deadliest enemies as they prefer mediocrity to genius, flatter inferiority and stifle seriousness.

Later he is less inclined to display disappointment and therewith idealism and introduces new elements into his analysis of the modern malaise. Christianity has transfigured itself into secular forms of its original impulse. Though it can no longer exert the same claims as religion, its principles remain and, pruned of eschatology, push the growth of modern ideas - the most recent metamorphosis and mask of Orientalism.

During the sentimentalist eighteenth century modernity rejects Christian doctrine but unconsciously engorges its values. The fanatic Rousseau inspires an incipient revolutionary doctrine consisting of the democratic spirit and distaste for aristocratic values. It is a recrudescence of the primitive spirit of that religion, arising once again out of the disaffected lower orders, fired by the concept “equality of souls before God”, which finally becomes "...revolution, modern ideas and the principle of the decline of the entire social order;"139 The French revolution with all its implications for the modern world is simply the “continuation of Christianity”.140

The modern decadence movement lives off the corpse of religion, even though it is explicitly anti-church, so by its nature it is antagonistic to every advance of culture. Because essentially religious values still affect this-worldly politics, political creeds as disparate as socialism or conservatism look backward to an idyllic Christian society, primitive or medieval. It is for this reason that Nietzsche abandons his hitherto polite abstention and waves vigorously the banner of Anti-Christ. He dwells, in later analysis of Christianity, on how long it has influenced European values. The displacement of religion from the centre of individual existence and social organisation seems to reveal a cavernous vacuum in each. "The time has come when we have to pay for having been Christians for two thousand years, we are losing the centre of gravity by virtue of which we lived; we are lost for a while. Abruptly we plunge into the opposite valuations, with all the energy that such extreme overvaluation of man has generated in man."141 The spectacular advance of modern science has promoted the nihilistic consequences of this loss of the centre of gravity: "Since Copernicus man has been rolling from the centre toward X."142

In what does nihilism consist? European man has been instructed to value himself and estimate his own significance in the house of Christianity. This protracted tutelage has led him to suppose only these beliefs to be true, and when finally they no longer seem true it is assumed that existence itself is without worth. Rigorous logic pushes awakening doubt toward radical nihilism and draws Nietzsche to assert the antimony: "Insofar as we believe in morality we pass sentence on existence".143 Nihilism is an altogether necessary phenomenon, an inevitable manifestation of a period in transition, which will bestow on Europe the character of its next two centuries.144

The most intelligent recourse is not to avoid or ignore nihilism, as if this were possible, before new values can be determined it must be experienced openly and plumbed to its depths. A radical scepticism is the first stage of a grand revaluation of all values. "For why has the advent of Nihilism become necessary? Because the values we have had hitherto thus draw their final consequence, because nihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideas - because we must experience nihilism before we can find out what value these "values" really had. We require, sometime, new values."145

The decay of Christianity, like rotting fruit, spreads to everything around it. The degeneration of one set of values endangers all others, even belief in the Ideal of Cultivation. The radical secularising of the world in the nineteenth century means the great competitor to high culture is no longer other-

137 TOS II, IV, p.122.
138 loc. cit.
139 AC, a62.
140 WP, a84.
141 WP, a30.
142 WP, a1.
143 WP, a6.
144 WP, Pref 2.
145 WP, Pref 4.
worldly religion, but empty and vulgar secularism that promises to uproot the foundations on that culture. Changing political structures, in which democracy is everywhere victorious, are bringing about a decline in taste and l'esprit that had once distinguished the ancien régime. The aristocratic remnants, grown decadent and lacking all former robustness, cannot stall this development. Accordingly Europe has grown gloomier and more vulgar, but also more natural and realistic.

Nietzsche now sees decay as the necessary counterpart to every forward movement of culture. Using physiological metaphors, he suggests that decadence in social organisation might simply be the consequence of great tensions that some elements are less able to endure. The decline and even extinction of these elements represent a natural wastage. The violent tensions in which the century abounds may provoke the happiest effects. "There is an element of decay in everything that characterises modern man, but close beside this sickness stand signs of an untested force and powerfulness of the soul. The same reasons that produce the increasing smallness of man drive the stronger and rarer individuals up to greatness." \(^{146}\)

That democracy is wiping away the vestiges of aristocracy is the integral fact on which he bases his visions of a politics of cultivation. It also impedes the possibility of Hellenism, based on the proposition that "every elevation of the type 'man' has hitherto been the work of an aristocratic society."\(^{147}\) Only in a society that "believes in a long scale of orders of rank and difference of worth between man and man" can the higher type of man become recognisable and appreciated. The equalising trend of democracy can only result in the very opposite to culture - mediocrity and hostility towards excellence. This is not a demand for a return to the ancien régime. The old aristocracy of Europe has outlived its worth: "the rotted ruling classes have rained the image of the ruler ".\(^{148}\) If Nietzsche despises the idea of democracy, eventually he greets its reality with ironic approval. Democracy may provide the groundwork for a favourable development. The trend to homogeneity creates a large, intelligent, but essentially pliant, mass of people, happily disposed to slavery.

It is not meant that we will put on chains and submit to live in coal pits. He supposes rather, that democracy will make us easier to lead, reader to bend to a more powerful will. It deepens the gulf between rulers and the ruled. To this end the homogenisation of Europe might even be hastened, for it will stimulate an experimentation of precisely the opposite kind; one that will make use of the herd for its own purposes. Democratic Europe could become an instrument for a new class of Caesarian spirits. "A question constantly keeps coming back to us, a seductive and wicked question perhaps, may it be whispered into the ears of those who have a right to such questionable questions... is it not time, now that the type 'herd animal' is being evolved more and more in Europe, to make the experiment of a fundamental, artificial and conscious breeding of the opposite type and its virtues? And would it not be a kind of goal, redemption, and justification for the democratic movement itself if someone arrived who could make use of it - by finally producing besides its new and sublime development of slavery (that is what European democracy must become ultimately) a higher kind of dominating and Caesarian spirits who would stand upon it, maintain themselves by it and elevate themselves through it?"\(^{149}\)

Nietzsche sees qualities in the nineteenth century which may make breeding of genius a political reality. The temper of his reflections is experimental. The economic unification of Europe he says is coming of necessity.\(^{150}\) Once unified, or in process of unification, he envisages Europe in monumental struggle with other continental powers for the lordship of the Earth. He does not only mean by this political rule which exists for its own sake, but the ethos which a certain type of political rule will bring. The form of culture which must come to dominate humanity and through which humanity as a whole must realise itself will, in the final instance, very likely be decided by political and military conquest. He indicates clearly the possibilities he finds distasteful: "Keine amerikanische Zukunft," and "England's Klein-Geisterei ist die grosse Gefahr jetzt auf der Erde."\(^{151}\)

Europe must oppose the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon world with its high capitalism and democratic politics. On occasions he sees alliance with Russia to combat its dominance. "Wir brauchen ein unbedingtes Zusammengehoren mit Russland und mit einem neuen gemeinsamen Programm welches in Russland keine englischen Scheinwesen zur Herrschaft kommen lässt."\(^{152}\) In Russia there is a greatness of spirit and a promise of durability; "the only power today which has durability in it... which can still promise something - Russia, the antithesis of that pitiable European petty state politics..."\(^{153}\) At other times he sees Russia as a formidable foe and welcomes an increase in the Russian threat "that Europe would have to resolve to become equally threatening, namely to acquire a single will by means of a new caste dominating all Europe, a protracted terrible will of its

\(^{146}\) WP, a109.
\(^{147}\) BGE, a257.
\(^{148}\) WP, a750.
\(^{149}\) WP, a754.
\(^{150}\) WP, a748.
\(^{151}\) WP, a749.
\(^{152}\) NF 1884, KG VIII2, p.236.
\(^{153}\) NF 1884, KG VIII2, p.237.
\(^{154}\) TL, p.93.
own which could set its objectives thousands of years ahead..."154

The politics of Europe may be subject to a variety of outcomes, but all in some sense are founded on the certain advent of war. He speaks of a party of peace arising "without sentimentality, that forbids itself and its children to wage war; forbids recourse to the courts, that provokes struggle, contradiction, persecution against itself: a party of the oppressed, at least for a time; soon the big party. Opposed to feelings of revenge and resentment." Then he sees, developing in the opposite direction, a "war party, equally principled and severe toward itself."155

The most persistent of these fantasies is that a new day of Hellenism is dawning when politics becomes an art form practiced by a few over the masses, which are their plastic medium. Democratic humanity will provide expression for the boldest visions of artist philosophers and statesmen. The time is at hand when "...a new, tremendous aristocracy, based on the severest self-legislation, in which the will of the philosophical men of power and artist tyrants will be made to endure for millennia - a higher kind of man who, thanks to their superiority in will, knowledge, riches, and influence, employ democratic Europe as their most pliant and supple instrument for getting hold of the destinies of the earth, so as to work as artists upon man himself. Enough: the time is coming when politics will have a different meaning."156

Nietzsche evaluates on the basis of attachment to a specific type of the Ideal of Cultivation. Much of his work is an attempt to justify this standpoint from first principles.

154 RG2, a208.
155 WP, 2748.
156 WP, 4960.
5 - The Problem of Value

Nietzsche’s world was suffering a crisis of indecision about the values we should live by. This doubt resulted in a tendency, known as nihilism, to deny the possibility of all values. He too suffered from this tendency, and thought through its implications, but could not help valuing everything from the standpoint we call the Ideal of Cultivation.

So although Nietzsche wanted to clear the ground of all values and start anew, it was only in order to affirm and justify from first principles the values he already held. The fact of nihilism remained and could not be thought away. But that doesn’t matter. Life goes on all the same.

Value and Becoming

Nietzsche’s crisis of value may have been attributable to two modern trends: the decline of Christianity, and the decline of Bildung. Such a crisis may be triggered by events in a specific place and time, but there are also eternally valid reflections, that apply in any place and time in which the order of things is considered. Anyone, anywhere might suppose that the universe is in eternal purposeless coming-to-be and passing-away. This cosmic indifference to our well-being would not be a problem in itself, were it not for the fact that we actually need values and need to evaluate; that is, we humans want to “impress upon becoming the eternal character of being.”

To this end we classify all the objects in the world as significant and insignifican. In value we see redemption of our past and a justification for our future. Value salvages everything lost and reaches for everything not yet attained. It pushes everything extraneous aside and away from itself. It wants to stand alone. That which is valuable: an object, an action, a thought has to be immutable, fixed in one place forever. It compels our closest attention, not by its mere utility but by its capacity to resist nothingness, to resist the banality of the many things that appear and drift away in the waters of becoming.

When value is conferred on something it is raised above all else that is common. When the Greeks spoke of their most valuable men, their heroes, they called them andres epiphaneis; which is to say, men who are conspicuous or outstanding. The same sense of resistance and reinforcement appears in the word “value” derived from the Latin Valere, meaning to be strong. The valuable thing holds fast and won’t be eclipsed. By its prominence and depth it represents the negation of nothingness.

Value and wisdom

Nietzsche sees the task of discovering, recognising and communicating knowledge about value as belonging to philosophy, which in Greek means the “love of wisdom”.

Wisdom is the art of distinguishing what is valuable. He notes that the word in both Greek and Latin (sophia and sapientia respectively) relate to a root verb meaning “to taste.” A keen sense of taste enables you to separate, distinguish, discriminate. A wise man or philosopher is one gifted in assessing the things that have value. In its primitive form philosophy is the love of value in itself. It is not, as sometimes believed, concerned with knowing a great deal or finding some universal truth. In a later aphorism, Nietzsche declares: “Wisdom sets bounds even to knowledge” clearly marking, in his opinion, the more essential activity.

Wisdom looks to what is essential for living. Knowledge for its own sake must be subordinate. Other ways of evaluating, such as morality, are unconscious and based on tradition or custom. Morality is a way of evaluating based on the constraints a group places on its members. It regulates behaviour without questioning but wisdom is self-conscious and exploratory. Morality is received by fiat; wisdom seeks self-reliance and obeys no authority other than nature, whom nobody can disobey. It is therefore our duty to transform ourselves from “a moral to a wise mankind”.

In his youth Nietzsche tries to imagine the original impulses of philosophy in Greek antiquity. He traces the development of Pre-Socratic thought, and hopes to reclaim what was lost with those early philosophers. In its zealous lust for knowledge the modern world has lost that original capacity to distinguish what is essential and valuable. Early Greek philosophy too, he believes, was troubled by a tremendous struggle between wisdom and scientific knowledge; in effect, between the perception of

157 WP, a6:17.
158 Cf. HAH I, a170, and PTAG, a3, where he states that “das griechische Wort, welches den ‘Weisen’ bezeichnet, gehörte etymologisch zu sapio ich schmecke, sapiens der Schmecken, sisyphos der Mann des scharfsten Geschmacks…”
159 TL, p.23.
160 HAH I, a107
value and a limitless omniscience that obliterates distinctions of significance; between a knowing that desires to regulate and shape a life, and a knowing that is prostrate before boundless data.

This antagonism afflicted the inner life of the young philosopher who also suffered a considerable drive for knowledge. It spills over in the critique of historical knowledge that he delivers in the second essay of the Un timely Meditations, the attack on Socrates in the Birth of Tragedy, and various unfinished works from the same period. What is significant is that this friction between his need for knowledge and his belief in its ultimate futility sets him on a process of doubt that culminates in a radical nihilism with few precedents in western philosophy.

Nietzsche's experience of nihilism

Nihilism, in this instance an extreme epistemological scepticism that places the enterprise of knowing in jeopardy, is characteristic of Nietzsche's philosophy throughout his life. It holds that endless and aimless change in nature makes futile any attempt to find a master "truth". His keen awareness of the anthropomorphic origins of perception and action leads him to conclude that all attempts to understand the world betray our limited and provincial needs.

Whenever we look at nature we see there only another reflection of our own needs and not the actual formless character of nature itself. "The total character of the world, however, is in all eternity chaos - in the sense not of a lack of necessity but of lack of order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom and whatever names there are for our aesthetic anthropomorphisms... None of our aesthetic and moral judgements apply to it. Nor does it have any instinct for self preservation or any other instinct; and it does not observe any laws either. Let us beware of saying there are laws in nature. There are only necessities: there is nobody who commands, nobody who obeys, nobody who trespasses. Once you know that there are no purposes, you also know there is no accident; for it is only beside a world of purposes that the word "accident" has meaning... There are no eternally enduring substances; matter is as much of an error as the God of the Eleatics..." 162

This scepticism is already apparent when he was studying at Leipzig, when in a letter of August 1866 to Von Gersdorff, he mentions his great esteem for Lange's Geschichte des Materialismus, and compares its effect on him with that of Schopenhauer's works. He says that Lange, whom he describes as "einen höchst aufgeklärten Kantianer und Naturforscher," arrived at three conclusions concerning truth and our perception of it: first, he says, the world of the senses has been demonstrated to be the product of our organisation; second, our visible organs are, like all other parts of the world of appearances, only pictures of unknown objects; third our actual inner nature remains unknown to us like the actuality of the exterior world and we have always only the product of both before us. The actual nature of the thing-in-itself is not only unknown, but is also nothing less than the idea produced by our organisation and we can never know if this had some meaning outside of our experience. Lange is led to declare that the domains of philosophy, art and ideas are free of obligation to truth. Who, he says, will refute a piece of Beethoven or demonstrate a painting of Raphael to be an error?

This "Truth" is the absolute sense the word still had in the nineteenth century. Today we concur with his comment that "the entire domain of 'true-false' applies only to relations, not to an 'in-itself', or even take this for granted. The nineteenth century still cleaved to the Platonic distinction between a world of appearance and an eternal immutable realm of essence existing behind phenomena.

On reading Schopenhauer, young Nietzsche grew aware of the Kantian presentation of this distinction: of an apparent world and a concealed, inaccessible Ding an sich. The 'real' character of the world is in the nature of the thing-in-itself; the search for truth is a cutting through the veil of

162 The idea of nihilism is a complex matter which, outside of the limits of this essay, would require an extensive discussion in its own right. It will suffice here to note that nihilism in Nietzsche's work does not simply refer to epistemological nihilism, an extreme scepticism which posits that nothing can be truly known, including the knowledge of the best way in which to live, i.e. ethical knowledge. The impossibility of establishing value therefore stems from this intellectual position: During the later work he links the condition of nihilism itself with the vicissitudes of will to power in individuals, distinguishing between healthy, strong individuals or decadent, declining ones. At one point he actually makes a distinction between what he calls “active” and “passive” nihilism. The former represents a tendency to deny values through a need for freedom which breaks all moral constraints. It would be characteristic of one who has no need for certainty or faith but is happy to "dance near abysses" (GS a247). Passive nihilism however, issues from one whose capacity to will has degenerated to the point where he cannot endure the severe moral injunctions of a strong culture but denies them in order to embrace religious, moral, political or artistic beliefs which provide consolation and hope. Therefore, one denies values out of strength of will, the other out of weakness. See WP, a22. Stanley Rosen in his preface to Nihilism, A Philosophical Essay (New Haven, 1989), states that Nietzsche "defines nihilism as the situation which obtains when 'everything is permitted.'" Not only does Nietzsche never define nihilism in these terms, but on the two occasions in which this phrase occurs in his work, he frankly presents it as another's coinage, namely that of the Ishmaeli sect, the Assassins. (see GM, IB-24, and WP, a625.) This would seem a rather poor start to a polemical work apparently designed to combat nihilism by defining "reason". It is all the more remarkable insofar as epistemological nihilism clearly has been an outcome of the categories of reason itself, as a process of thinking through to its final conclusions. The same tensions are at play in Schopenhauer's attempts in this area. Only, as Nietzsche recognised, the philosopher of Königsberg managed to leave the back door open widely enough to let in what he needed in the way of ethical justifications. This, after all, is what the 'categorical imperative' amounts to. Nietzsche himself would have sneered at any rational attempt to "disprove" nihilism.

163 GS, a109.
164 SL, to von Gersdorff, August 1866.
165 It is impossible to underestimate the influence of Lange's great work on Nietzsche's intellectual development. While Schopenhauer became of less significance to him as he matured, Lange's influence seemed to overwhelm him, though he seldom acknowledged this. This point has been soundly demonstrated and documented by George J. Stuck in Lange and Nietzsche, Waver de Gruyter, Berlin/New York, 1983.
166 WP, a625.
phenomena to the source, which is for all time, truth. The inaccessible quality that Kant assigns the Ding an sich contributes to his early doubts about the value of knowledge. How the older philosopher deals with this distinction is a familiar aspect of his thought, most cogently presented in the *Twilight of the Idols* where he states that if no "true" world can be located then it becomes meaningless to posit the existence of an "apparent" one. Both categories are thereby abolished: "We have abolished the real world: what world is left? the apparent world perhaps... But no! with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world!"  

Early on Nietzsche sees knowledge as something from human mediation with universal chaos, where necessities at work in chaos define the forms that knowledge can take. Every human perception, from primitive sensations to the most abstract thought structures, result from the need to struggle with and master the environment. In the process certain species of perception are continually more successful because they recognise, directly or indirectly, a pattern of necessity. Out of reverence for these successful perceptions we call them truth and take them to be universal, even though they are no more than life preserving errors. Because living things inevitably mediate with their environment, knowledge always carries the imprint of its transference and transferability: that is, it is always metaphorical: *a carrying across*, which is shaped by the living thing’s receptive capacities and requirements. When a “knowing” being tries to apprehend the whole universe, it becomes the “infinitely fractured echo” of one sound; the “infinitely multiplied copy of one original picture”-man, who “proceeds from the error or believing that he has these things (with he intends to measure) immediately before him as mere objects. He forgets that the original perceptual metaphors are metaphors and takes them to be the things themselves.  

We cannot speak, think, listen, see or act, without betraying this universal mendacity. It is essential to our makeup. Mendacity has formed in us because of its life-preserving power, and similarly the presupposition that we always reckoning the truth. ‘Thus knowledge became a piece of life itself, and hence a continually growing power - until eventually knowledge collided with those primeval basic errors: two lives, two powers, both in the same human being. A thinker is now that being in whom the impulse for truth and those life-preserving errors clash for their first fight, after the impulse for truth has proved to be also a life preserving power. Compared to the significance of this fight, everything else is a matter of indifference...’  

At times Nietzsche calls this conflict tragic, because it occurs to the thinker that the "noble and heroic" quest for truth in a mendacious natural order is "possible only in a very relative sense".  

When that quest is undertaken without tragic irony, as a "theoretical optimism" confident that it can fathom the universe and unveil an eternally valid order apart from man, he describes it as naïve. The scientific optimist's hope of discovering an extra-human certainty by unravelling immense concatenations of causality and logic, is not only utopian it is dangerous. And ultimately, science itself shows how delusion and error are the condition of intelligent and sentient existence.  

Ironically science excavates beneath its own foundations, and demonstrates the futility of its goal. Knowledge, a primitive type of human creativity, keeps good faith with itself only so long as it is innocent of it troubled origins and believes it can find a world free of human taint. But when science examines itself, as inevitably it must, it sees itself founded on error and, losing all hope of truth, despairs of life itself. The man of knowledge loses his reason to exist and gives himself up to disgust. What begins as good faith toward knowledge ends as bad faith toward life. In this way, as both the younger and older philosopher agree, “it has proven impossible to build a culture upon knowledge” (meaning the exclusive pursuit of knowledge).  

In the *Birth of Tragedy* the younger Nietzsche muses that the only remedy to such discords is that art become the primary activity of man, since it is "only as an aesthetic phenomenon” that existence and the world are eternally justified. Only through art, which is a conscious creativity, an unabashed type of fabrication, with no claims for truth and therefore well preserve to itself, can value and wisdom be reinstated to their central position in culture. "But science, spurred by its powerful illusion, speeds irresistibly towards its limits where its optimism, concealed in the essence of logic, suffers shipwreck. For the periphery of the circle of science has an infinite number of points: and while there is no telling how this circle could ever be surveyed completely, noble and gifted men nevertheless reach, e'er half their time and inevitably, such boundary points on the periphery from which one gazes into what defies illumination. When they see to their horror how logic coils up at these boundaries and finally bites its own tail - suddenly the new form of insight breaks through, Tragic insight which, merely to be endured, needs art as a protection and remedy,"  

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164 *TI*, p.41.  
165 *TI*, *LES*, *PAT*, p.86.  
166 *GS*, a.110.  
167 *PT*, *PAT*, p.28.  
168 *GS*, a.107.  
169 *PT*, *PAT*, p.28.  
170 BT, a.7.  
171 BT, a.15.  
48
The remedy of art substitutes for an impossible metaphysics: it consoles, heals, weaves a mythic atmosphere and protective veil of illusion around us, and without which culture is exposed to the most destructive tensions. The innocence of illusion allows us to believe in what we do.

In the work that appears after Human all too Human he deals harshly with these earlier sentiments. He appends to later editions of the Birth of Tragedy an Attempt at Self Criticism where he describes the “aesthetic of consolation” as an example of the worst Romantic narcotic. He also adds that he had since dispatched the metaphysical comforts of art “to the devil”.

**Toward the revaluation of values**

In the middle period Nietzsche's enters a positivist phase intending to investigate methodically how the basis of how we evaluate. In The Antichrist he calls this project the revaluation of all values, a slogan that he also intended as the title of a systematic work he was planning to write.\(^7\)

The slogan belongs to his later years, but the demand for a scientific assessment of morality and value makes up most of the material in the books from Human all too Human to the Genealogy of Morals. A now benign disposition toward science, disposes him to praise its utility in extending our awareness of necessity. Science helps us know what can or cannot be changed. Understanding of nature, no matter how fictively presented, gives us dominion over our environment and, more importantly, our own nature. With this knowledge we are empowered to create.

Science offers a more discriminating sense for what is more actual, more probable and in so doing allows us to humanise the world more effectively. “This compulsion to form concepts, general forms, ends and laws (one world of identical cases) should not be understood as though we were capable through them of ascertaining the true world, but rather as a compulsion to adapt to ourselves to a world in which our existence is made possible. Thereby we create a world that is calculable, simplified, understandable etc. for us.”\(^12\) Science organises and humanises the world and gives us tools for our artistic-creative faculties. “We, however, want to become those who we are - human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves. To that end we must become the best learners and discoverers of everything that is lawful and necessary in the world; we must become physicists in order to be able to be creators in this sense - while hitherto all valuations and ideals had been based on ignorance of physics or were constructed so as to contradict it. Therefore; long live physics! And even more to that which compels us to turn to physics - our honesty.”\(^17\)

Nietzsche's begins this task with scientific investigation of the origins of morals, ideals, and judgements concerning life. Science enables us to understand the conditions that produce certain types of evaluation and assists the philosopher whose task it is to judge these evaluations and rank their worth. “All the sciences have from now on to prepare the way for the future task of the philosopher, this task understood as the solution to the problem of value, the determination of the rank among values.”\(^17\)

Judgements of worth reflect the conditions of life or expressions of the powers of an individual, a class, or an entire people. Values are self-reflections of how we live. When we reflect on how we behave or what we do, we see the outlines of what we value. Good is any activity that enhances our self-esteem, power, or keeps social bonds firmly in place; this self-realisation purifies and intensifies the form of life from which it derives. No "should" or "ought" exists prior to behaviour: the "ought" is simply an afterthought. "When we talk of values we are speaking under the inspiration or optics of life: life itself compels us to set up values; life itself values through us whenever we posit values."\(^17\)

As existence shapes itself in many ways, a multitude of value judgements arise, each bearing the stamp of its class, caste, or national origins. An aristocratic class for instance, which is materially dominant, has radically different self-estimations and expectations of life than its servants. This is the basis of Nietzsche's dichotomy of master and slave morality. Even so, moral codes are not just strict oppositions, but gradations along a spectrum; morals can be graded like fruit or wine, according to quality and an order of rank.

Although natural human drives are responsible for producing systems of value, oftentimes "anti-natural" moralities can occur, which arise out of fear of human drives and whose explicit intention is to subdue them. Nietzsche also seeks to understand the processes of "sublimation" by which primitive urges are transformed into complex forms of moral behaviour.

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\(^7\) See Te, pp 15-16.
\(^12\) WP, s521.
\(^17\) GW, a335.
\(^17\) See BE, a211.
\(^17\) TI, p.45.
Stratagems for justifying value

The project of revaluating values requires more than preliminary surveillance. In an 1886 preface to *Human all too Human*, he states that it also involves the “problem of the order of rank.” Values have to be judged by some criterion and this does not involve absolute or immutable statements about truth, since “judgements, value judgements concerning life, for or against, can in the last resort never be true.”

Science may refine our thinking about values or ideals, and can even help us prepare the grounds for them. It cannot tell us what they are or should be. Value does not inhere in nature and therefore cannot simply be discovered by research. Values do not exist on their own anywhere, except in beings with hypertrophied cerebra. The plain fact is that mankind creates value *ex nihilo*, as it were, by his own thought and actions. “Whatever has value in our world now does not have value in itself, according to its nature - nature is always valueless but has been given value at some time; as a present - and it is we who gave it and bestowed it.”

By stripping nature of meaning, he puts the weight of creating value on man. The activities of science, wisdom, and art are, in the later period, entirely complementary if is understood that our “salvation lies not in knowing but in creating”. In each of these activities mankind is giving form to the chaos or raising prominences from the universal flatness of nature; from stone, sound, pigment; from the life of an individual, a group, or an entire people.

Just as he disqualifies truth as a basis for ethical judgements, he demands that we not see a judgement’s falseness as a reason for objecting to it. Knowing that all values are inescapably anthropogenic it would be absurd to say that one is “truer” than another. Values are made by us in response to our circumstances. What has survival to do with truth? “The falseness of a judgement is for us not necessarily an objection to a judgement; in this respect our new language may sound strangest...we are fundamentally inclined to claim that the false judgements... are the most in dispensable for us; that without accepting the fictions of logic, without measuring reality against the purely invented world of the unconditional and self identical, without a constant falsification of the world by means of numbers, man could not live - that renouncing false judgements would mean renouncing life and a denial of life. To recognise untruth as a condition of life - that certainly means resisting accustomed value feelings in a dangerous way; and a philosophy that masks this would by that token alone place itself beyond good and evil.”

Since all values, in their falseness and variety, sustain many ways and types of life they still cannot tell us anything about the value of life in itself. Thus, “...the value of life cannot be estimated. Not by a living man, because he is a party to the dispute, indeed its object, and not by the judge of it; not by a dead one, for another reason.”

Even though the later Nietzsche is happy that values are entirely anthropogenic, he still wishes for a way to hold them in higher regard. But if the value of values cannot be estimated in any honest way the intellectual impasse is formidable.

So rather than ignoring the problem or wishing it away, he simply thinks around it. In response to the nihilist impasse he employs simultaneously throughout his life two separate intellectual stratagems that are in explicit contradiction. The first of these more honestly accommodates the facts of nihilism, but is no more than an intellectual showpiece, neither deeply felt nor considered a basis for his values; the second is less honest, furtively sidesteps the sinkhole of total scepticism and creeps to a solution that is classical in its outline and procedure. For these same reasons, it can be said to arise from his deepest intellectual instincts and needs.

The first stratagem paradoxically uses the reality of nihilism, the destroyer of all values, as a positive foundation of value in itself. Since there is no way reason can penetrate this impasse, might not nihilism itself, the problem in question, be the criterion? This occurs to him in his youth in his famous depiction of the Greeks “Tragic” or “Dionysian” attitude to life in *The Birth of Tragedy*. and in the later period he associates the tragic view with ideas about eternal recurrence and amor fati. The tragic view begins by recognising that it is futile to refute nihilism. Not only must we live with the reality that nothing is true or truly valuable, we must accept the most unbearable and paradoxical aspects of existence. We must not attempt to conceal from ourselves life's meaningless or the arbitrary sufferings imposed on us, but should meet them in a state of extreme wakefulness.

Because we must live by endowing all things with significance, nihilism is a difficult thought to bear.

179 MAH I, Pref.
180 TL, p.30, also cf., TI, p.45.
181 GL, a301.
182 Cfr. WP, a602, and a605.
183 TP, PAT, p.33.
184 BGE, a4.
185 TL, p.30.
That we suffer misfortune for no apparent reason even more so and, in such circumstances, we might wish to comfort ourselves with dreams of after-life or other redemptions. So what sternness of spirit we must need to live without consolation and suffer in clarity the fact that no hope is given? Would this not be a way to measure a person’s strength and therefore their worth? That the Greeks could do so was their supreme achievement and a model for high culture itself. Uncompromising endurance of nihilism makes you wholly worthy of existence, for you accept life with all its blemishes. Like value itself, you resist nothingness. Your very being is a gift to existence. This is the Dionysian affirmation of life, characterised by Nietzsche as “strong” or “overflowing”. Those who seek comforts and conceal from themselves ugly necessities he dubs “weak,” “parasitic”, “unproductive”. Those who need excuses in order to live take value from life and give nothing back to it.

Later, when toying with the idea of eternal recurrence, he decides that it might be prove a perfect and terrible nihilistic utterance: what more futile than a universe revolving without aim or end in identical cycles? Would not the idea breed a stronger human being? Would it not compel us to be benignly disposed toward existence if we are to suffer every indignity, misery, and mendacity for eternity? Would it not demand amor fati, the acceptance that nothing should be otherwise? Would it not require an exultant acceptance of creation and destruction? Would it not subsume the fact of nothingness without being itself consumed by the spirit of negation? The secondary Nietzsche literature abounds in discussions about the “dionysian affirmation” or “tragic” attitude, particularly in view of its quasi-religious tensions.

But we cannot assume that the problem of value is thereby settled. The Dionysian attitude may be a “laudable” response to nihilism, but it does not provide the foundation he needs. The paradox of Dionysian acceptance is that you must be a nihilist who cannot accept intellectually the validity of any value, before you realise you have to utter an unconditional “yes” to existence. And even then, to joyfully embrace nothingness rather than howl about it, is very well, but what need has the cosmos of our cuddliness? The acceptance by a living thing of an indifferent universe is not mutually engaging. One multiplied by zero still equals zero. You can stand on mountain tops and scream your affection, but the cosmos will not listen, and when you have screamed enough and go back to work what is different? To say yes to nothingness does not tell us how to live, or what to value. It does not aid Nietzsche’s task as a philosopher, which is to discover value and exhort others to honour it.

The chasm between value and nothingness is one that philosophy, springing as it does from a powerful need for solidity, has always found intolerable and always sought to bridge. The philosopher abhors all that is arbitrary, fleeting, or relative, and feels he must secure his judgements by chaining them to some immovable or eternal rock that exists behind the curtain of appearance. The rock provides a reason or explanation for, or a justification for a belief and whether he calls it God, Reason, Happiness, Nature, History, or, Society, is immaterial, so long as it serves his purpose. In justifying a belief he wishes to put something behind it so that it cannot be knocked over, since he has a powerful attachment to it and wished to defend it from attack. He puts outworks around it and calls these “first principles”: ideas all of us might agree are solid and dependable and cannot be reduced. He might also call first principles a “groundwork” or “foundation”, to hold a mighty edifice that remains to be built.

The words differ but the metaphorical structure is the same: that of a solid immovable mass supporting a set of vulnerable or intricate constructions. Nietzsche’s Pyrrhonianism, does not preserve him from the same habits: “...life is a unique case; one must justify all existence and not only life - the justifying principle is one that explains life too.” The principle for justification must be large, as big as the universe, and must lie within the heart of all being. If you grasp what this is, then you can explain value, albeit that you have to assume the universe to be somehow explicable and not entirely chaotic. Nature has to have some definable characteristic, some immutable foundation to which you can attach judgements. Your values can then accord with the cosmos itself. By holding valuable the principle of movement of nature, you can consciously work to perfect that movement.

This of course is the idea of physis: the stratagem for justifying value that Nietzsche utilised throughout his life, as it has always had in western thought. Consistent nihilism would make such a construction invalid. But instead, in the later stages of his life, he plans to develop a philosophical system based on a new understanding of nature that he calls will to power. Our next task is to show how he uses this idea of physis to justify an Ideal of Cultivation in his earlier and in his later work.

189 The phenomenon can have more embarrassing manifestation which cannot be obscured by declaiming about the dire seriousness of ethical discourse. There is a downright childishness about the way philosophers have approached the task of justification, insofar as this has amounted in some cases to little more than a seeking-of-permission. In paraphrase, these philosophers are stating no more than that “I can behave in this way, or believe this, because God, or the universe (or some other cosmic authority) says I can.” Anglo-Saxon discourses on ethics since the eighteenth century have been particularly afflicted by this Sunday-school mentality, and it is still very much with us today.

189 Wp, 2766.
6 - The idea of *physis* and the younger Nietzsche

**The Idea of Physis**

As we have seen, the idea of *physis* varies in Greek antiquity and after but is always instantly recognisable. Its first assumption is that the world is inherently lawful and that nature operates under a regulated and predictable regime. All things have inner laws of development and the phenomenal world is attributable to natural rather than divine causation. Its second assumption is that mankind belongs to that lawful order, and that his consuming interest should be to go with nature and enhance its inner character. In antiquity the earliest and most consistent metaphor to describe this relationship with nature was agriculture, which makes nature more productive and causes useful plants to grow better. Its final assumption is that the same process can be applied to humanity, and that individuals can improve themselves through bodily exercise, perfecting their speech, and by elevating and broadening their mind.

For the Greeks the word *physis* denotes the sum total of reality in the way the English word "nature" does today, or the sense of *process*, in which nature was considered to have a certain *way of growing.* But by the time of the Greek "enlightenment" the word is used increasingly in ethical debate to refer not just to the universe, but to humankind, to human nature and the nature of individuals. It accompanies the belief that perfecting human nature does not simply improve bodily or mental efficiency, but also our behaviour and the principles by which we live. By acting in conformity with universal principles each individual perfects his own nature, and endows their actions and motivations with a higher authority.

In this sense *Physis* does not mean that you are subject to nature, but that you are liberated from arbitrary social and political institutions. *Physis* was used in ethical and political debate explicitly to oppose the idea of *nomos*, meaning behaviour sanctioned by the authority of divinities, of custom or widely held beliefs. The idea of *nomos* could not withstand critical reason that undermined belief in the divinities and denied mythology as a justification for social organisation and law. So philosophers and poets who argued against *nomos* hoped that *physis* would better support morality. This parallels every other *enlightenment* in the west (enlightenment as Kant defines it "an exodus from a self-imposed tutelage") where critical reason has placed traditional structures under scrutiny. Every time are attracted to the capacity of *physis* to pose an internal origin for right action, whereas mythologically-based ethics always imply external compulsion and that "we must act in this way because we are told that we must."

*Physis* gives you a certain guide for behaviour which is gained by examining and comprehending your own inner laws of growth, and studying the laws of nature that exist throughout the world. By acquiring self-knowledge you discover a basis for independence from the tyranny of tradition without forsaking the claims of right conduct. Another advantage of *physis* is its promise to unite thought and action and theory and practice. Knowledge of the laws of growth reveals what can improve or retard our development. Investigating human and universal nature yields results we can use in shaping our behaviour. Finally, if it is supposed that *reason exists within nature*, given the apparent lawfulness which it exhibits, then to obey nature would be to behave *rationally* too.

Thucydides, writing in the period of Athenian imperialism, when the *polis* is in full vigour, and confident and candid about its designs, illustrates strikingly how the idea is put into practice. In the famous *Melian Dialogue* he records how an Athenian delegation justifies their subjugation of the Melians, descendents of a Spartan colony, by appealing to laws of nature that apply to both men and gods. The Athenians state that their "opinion of the gods and knowledge of men" lead them "to conclude that it is a general and necessary law of nature to rule whatever one can. This is not a law that we made ourselves, nor were we the first to act upon it when it was made. We found it already in existence, and we shall leave it to exist for ever among those who come after us. We are merely acting in accordance with it, and we know that you or anybody else with the same power as ours would be acting in precisely the same way."

In the new Hellenistic world, when Athens is itself defeated and subjugated, the stoic philosopher Zeno frames the idea of *physis* rather differently. Himself a former slave, he introduces a negative twist, declaring that the reason existing in nature forbids, rather than encourages certain actions. "The end may be defined " he says, "as life in accordance with nature, or in other words, in accordance with our own human nature as well as that of the universe, a life in which we refrain from every

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188 Thucydides, op. cit., Book 5,105-106.
action, forbidden by the law common to all things, that is to say, the right reason which pervades all things and is identical with Zeus, lord and ruler of all that is.\textsuperscript{393}

Zeno still calls on the authority of Zeus, but the god evidently obeys the same laws. Both Thucydides and Zeno show how human action, though formally inviting divine imprimatur, actually finds it unnecessary. The gods themselves are embedded in the matrix of nature and also abide by its laws.

The German Idea of Physis

For post-Socratic Hellenistic philosophies like the Stoics, Cynics and Academicians, it is the sage who shows the highest level of independence, because all he does and thinks is based on universal principles and informed by constant search for self-knowledge. This idea of physis resembles that of the eighteenth century German philosophers, who introduced some significant novelties to the idea.

One of these novelties was to see mankind as a brilliant event in the history of living things, in which Nature could, through human reason, begin for the first time to think. Human consciousness allows Nature to accomplish in deliberate fashion what it has for too long gained by blind travail. Mankind thereby elevates and justifies himself as Nature’s tool for understanding itself.

This is the mighty abiding theme of German philosophy. In Hegelian terms, it is the process of Being attaining its perfection in the form of Absolute Consciousness. The theme can be heard most clearly in all major philosophical successors to Kant: Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and Schopenhauer and even, in the final outcome, Nietzsche himself. After Kant, and particularly in the speculations of theoretical artists like Schiller, there is also an ancillary theme, namely that it is not merely consciousness itself but the conscious guidance of the artistic formation of nature by mankind that represents his true justification. Man is a new creator, who consciously imposes form upon becoming.

The second novelty of the German philosophers, and one to play a part in Nietzsche’s speculations, was their belief in the perfecting of the species, even in extending beyond the species, and in the leadership to this outcome being the prerogative of extraordinary individuals or geniuses. At first, the German Ideal of Cultivation wavered between harmonic and open-ended ideas of perfection, but there was a decisive shift from the first view to the second towards the end of the Aufklärung. It was during the eighteenth century that the principles of evolution of species were being worked out, at least philosophically if not scientifically as Darwin was to do. Speculations of the sort Goethe entertained, that nature was in process of development, naturally led to suppositions that, just as mankind was currently at the apex of lower species, it would be possible to extend beyond his present limitations to the status of seraphim. It was possible that mankind, as a species, could continually perfect itself to the point of divinity.

The habit of the later Aufklärers to see perfectibility as something open-ended was handed on to the Romantic generation who, with their adoration of the infinite, were not hesitant in entertaining blasphemies. If it is man’s duty to perfect himself, he can do so both as an individual and as a member of a species and become far more than what he actually is. It is against this view that Herder reacts, when he insists that it should only be the laws of nature as it is that one should obey,”Alle Ihre Fragen über den Fortgang unseres Geschlechts; die eigentlich ein Buch erforderten, beantwortet, wie mich dünkt, ein einziges Wort: Humanität, Menschheit. Wäre die Frage, ob der Mensch mehr als Mensch, ein Über-, ein Außer-mensch werden könne und solle, so wäre jede Zeile zuviel, die man deshalb schriebe. Nun aber, da nur von den Gesetzen seiner Natur, vom unauslöschlichen Charakter seiner Art und Gattung die Rede ist, so erlauben Sie, daß ich sogar einige Paragraphen schriebe...Vollkommenheit einer Sache kann nichts sein, als daß das Ding sei, was es sein soll und kann.Vollkommenheit eines einzelnen Menschen ist also, daß er im Kontinuum seiner Existenz er selbst sei und werde, daß er die Kräfte brauche, die die Natur ihm als stammgut gegeben hat, daß er damit für sich und andre wuchere...”\textsuperscript{394}

Perfection would only complete the potential that is already within mankind, and realise in practice the idealised image that is immanent within him; it would not go beyond what mankind is and create something extra-human, an über- or außer-mensch. An outright romantic like Schlegel however has no qualms in demanding that humanity extend beyond itself; a need that he believes can be found inside human nature: “It is characteristic of humanity,” he advises, “that it must raise itself above humanity”\textsuperscript{395}

\textsuperscript{393} Diogenes Laertius, op. cit., Zeno 86-88, pp.195-197.


\textsuperscript{395} Klückhohn, op. cit.
The German Idea of Nature as Will

A third novelty of the German understanding of physis also figured in Nietzsche's work. This was the idea of an active principle called "Will" (Wille) that underlies all being. Heidegger usefully observed how the idea of Will was integral to German Idealism from Leibniz to Hegel, Schelling and of course, Schopenhauer. German Idealists, seeking like all idealists a permanent transcendental world behind this one, always situated Will, the impulse to activity, the being of all beings, behind appearances. Thus Will always throws up "ideas", "representations", or "reason" appropriate to its character.

Leibniz's concept of activity (agere) is a paradigm for the dynamic philosophies that follow, and for which energy or force are the basic substance, rather than matter as res extensa in the Cartesian and later, the Newtonian sense. "Activity" is therefore "the characteristic of all substances: extension, on the other hand, is nothing but a continuation or diffusion of a substance already presupposed, which thrives, withstands, that is resists, and can therefore never of itself constitute substance." The indivisible substance of spirit which he calls the monad is itself the unity of perceptio, that is, idea or representation, and appetitus - an inner compulsion and striving.

Kant stands outside this tradition to some extent, but places will at the centre of ethical philosophy and this has consequences in Nietzsche's thought. If Will does not represent for Kant a universal dynamism, it is a special type of causality that is active in man. It is something natural but distinct from inclinations or desires. Will always operates through man's "practical reason" (in the ethical sphere sovereign over speculative reason). Kant separates morality from ontological first principles; that is, he does not believe statements about nature can support ethical judgements, nonetheless he believes in the rational order of nature in which man can participate through his faculty of reason. Kant's ethics remain to a large extent tied to the idea of physis. "Everything in nature works according to laws. Rational beings alone have the faculty of acting according to the conception of laws ...i.e. have a will. Since the deduction of actions from principles requires reason, the will is nothing but practical reason." Kant, attempting to work his way between rationalism and empiricism and to establish the limits of human perception, reflected on the active or creative elements of subjectivity and left behind him a dualism between willing and perceiving. Many successors sought to overcome this problem by using the principle of physis as will.

Fichte's Higher Morality sees an eternal supersensuous Being behind all appearances, which is actually an "Eternal Will" that manifests itself in everything and in each of us. Those who will what they actually are in this supersensuous sense attain the sumnum bonum.

Hegel, in the Phenomenology of Mind, also fuses ontology and ethics by making the immanence of Spirit the active agent behind phenomena. Individuals as subjective, self-interested beings are necessarily set in otherness to the process of Spirit. They do not see it acting behind them and are thus alienated from it. In Hegel's ethics the highest act an individual can perform, is to apprehend this spirit and transcend his limiting subjectivity through self reflection. This in itself is an act of willing. Merely to think with the world-spirit is to act with it. Schelling also uses the idea of evolving Geist or spirit and sees perception and consciousness existing in primitive organisms; nature itself is unconscious spirit, and spirit is a conscious form of nature. But what is the motor for all this activity? At the conclusion Of Human Freedom, he adduces that in "the final and ultimate instance there is no other Being at all than Willing. Will is the Primal Being." Here will, understood as either a rational human act, or as the ground of being, supplies the causation between a subject and its effects. The gap between the first and final state of an action or object - how X arrives at A from B, is filled by an agent of activity. Change may simply be a spatial displacement, or a transmutation of quality, but Will makes it happen! Will allows us to suggest that activity is an internal inclination of all things, living or dead, which makes becoming comprehensible. More than this, all things are this internal inclination and nothing else. Hence whenever will is made the ontological ground i.e. as the "thing-in-itself", the idea of matter as an impermeable and durable substance extended - according to the medieval formula - into space, is repudiated. Instead, movement, force, activity, is the actual quality of being and the appearance of solidity is merely a momentary equilibrium or representation of will.

Although there are clearly enough precedents in German philosophy it is Schopenhauer and his variant of the idea of Will that influences young Nietzsche profoundly. From Schopenhauer he receives his first forceful introduction to philosophy itself after picking up Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung in a bookstore. He is immediately impressed by the concept of Will as an oceanic force.

194 Leibniz, Specimen Dynamicum, Part I, a.
195 Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy, tr., ed. and intro. by Lewis Beck White, Chicago, 1949, p. 72.
underlying and producing all phenomena. This Will is blind striving, fluid and inchoate, without end or purpose, yet constantly objectifying itself in infinite forms, pressing itself into shapes that appear to us as phenomena.

Once again the idea of formation is tied to a concept of representation. Each form into which Will presses itself is preserved as an Idea in the Platonic sense: as a mold into which the forming substance solidifies itself. An idea is the crystallisation of Will, which at its simplest, is merely a play of natural forces like gravitation and electricity. Thereafter it develops in complexity through the elements of matter, to chemicals, to lower organisms, plant life, the various animal species and finally to the apex of the hierarchy which is mankind. "Everything presses and strives toward existence, if possible organised existence i.e. life, and after that to the highest possible grade of it." 199

Schopenhauer's depiction of Will depends upon a concept of nature - the "great chain of being" that was disintegrating even as he was writing. According to Lovejoy, who gave it this name, this idea was succumbing to the emerging historicism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Schopenhauer's will is more a "will to live" than elemental force and is more organised. Schopenhauer grades the forms and "ideas" of the will to live by the degree of consciousness they exhibit. Less complex animals have sufficient and immediate perception for their mere existence. Living things capable of intellect have a still higher degree of organisation. Man, however, has an intellect that enables him to see that he himself is a product of Will and an objectification of it. To see this is to see the secret of existence. The increase in intellect means a wider separation between the reflective being and the striving will that underpins it.

Intellect is a liberation from Will but between individuals there are vast differences in intellect. The highest creature in Schopenhauer's chain of being is, not man as such but the genius, in whom the powers of intellect are concentrated to such intensity that they actually exist almost in opposition to Will. Hence, "...the ever wider separation of the will and the intellect, which can be traced in the whole series of existences. This reaches its highest grade in genius, where it extends to the entire liberation of the intellect from its root the will, so that here the intellect becomes perfectly free, whereby the world as idea first attains to complete objectification." 200 Although genius develops "unnaturally" by severing itself from direct service to will, as intellect "which has become untrue to its destination" 201 it affords us in a way never before possible a glance "into the interior of nature, in as much as this is nothing else than our own inner being, which is precisely where nature, arrived at the highest grade to which it is striving could work itself up; is now by the light of knowledge found directly in self-consciousness." 202

In Schopenhauer's work the idea that there is a goal in nature constantly breaks through with the implication that it is the genius who justifies the processes of nature, and if not redeeming the world's suffering, at least makes the cause of that suffering explicable. Thinking, which is the purest human activity, establishes a bond between humanity and nature, so that "when I think, it is the spirit of the world which is striving to express its thought: it is nature which is trying to know and fathom itself." 203 This enables Schopenhauer to place an Ideal of Cultivation as the base of value, since it is only through the serenity of thought - through the vita contemplativa - that the blindness implicit in the Will's objectifications and in the need to survive are surmounted, and the suffering of the world clearly apprehended. Only the thinking being, the philosopher, the saint, the artist (who gazes upon and reproduces the eternal ideas through art) can achieve this salvation by denying the will to live.

Nature and Consciousness in the younger Nietzsche

Schopenhauer impresses the younger Nietzsche by the way he can show that an Ideal of Cultivation is rooted in nature's essence. Von Stein reports that in conversation, Nietzsche told him that "Schopenhauer lehrt mich, der mensch kommt von diesem saugenden Polypenwesen der Natur los, über sich hinausgelangend." 204 In short, it was Schopenhauer's idea of physis that was most instructive. In the period leading to publication of the Un timely Meditations, he alludes to this idea repeatedly, sometimes barely transposing it from the metaphors in which it was originally expressed. In the essay Schopenhauer as Educator, for example, he declares that "if universal nature leads up to man, it is to show us that he is necessary to redeem her from the curse of the beasts of life, and that in him existence can find a mirror of itself wherein life appears, no longer blind, but in its real

200 ibid., vol. III, p. 107
201 ibid., p. 147
202 ibid., p. 151 - it nonetheless furnishes a grander significance to nature as a whole; the task of understanding itself.
203 ibid., p. 109
204 Schopenhauer, On Men of Learning, 1.
205 Heinrich Von Stein reported this following a conversation with Nietzsche. Cited in 'The Role of Heinrich von Stein in Nietzsche's Emergence as a Critic of Wagnerian Idealism and Cultural Nationalism' by R. Stackelberg. Nietzsche Studien, Internationales Jahrbuch für die Nietzsche-Forschung. Walter de Gruyter, Berlin and New York, Band 5, 1976, p.188.
This paraphrase of Schopenhauer shows his belief that humanity's purpose is to justify nature by making her conscious, and that this task is clearly the true aim and province of culture. Cultivation improves and perfects human nature and therefore the whole of nature itself. The actual equation between the terms - culture and physis occurs in this essay as well as in the second Unmittelte Meditation, the Use and Abuse of History where he acknowledges it to be a fundamental idea of the Greeks. Whoever, he says, strives after a true culture, will discover the Greek idea as opposed to the decorative Roman idea of culture, namely, "the idea of culture as a new and finer nature (Physis)."206

In all of Nietzsche's youthful work the theme of consciousness or wakefulness - the quest to escape nature's blindness - is identical with the theme of culture. Wakefulness serves nature to know itself, and occurs in pure form in the art of the Greek tragedians. The tragic artist is "the only wakeful one, the only being really and truly conscious, among a host of confused and tormented sleepers."207

Nature therefore, in its quest for self-consciousness, must produce special types of humanity if it is to receive the kind of unblinking vision it needs. Not any human being will do. Only culture can justify nature but it can only truly exist in its highest practitioners, the geniuses who as artists, saints, or philosophers bring it to perfection.

Only geniuses can accomplish these ends because their activities are grounded in the foundations of being. They, above all, are concerned with what lies behind nature's striving. "The philosopher is a self revelation of nature's workshop, the philosopher and the artist tell the true secrets of nature."208

In order to perfect nature, culture must look for ways in which to bring forth genius wherever it can: "...culture... can put as single task before each of us - to bring the philosopher, the artist, and the saint, within and without us to the light and strive thereby for the completion of nature. For Nature needs the artist, as she needs the philosopher, for a metaphysical end, the explanation of herself, whereby she may have a clear and sharp picture of what she only saw dimly in the troubled period of transition - and so may reach self-consciousness."209

The problem of theory and practice

Artist, philosopher, saint... thus far Schopenhauer's idiom and trinity of genius is preserved by the younger Nietzsche except in one respect: Schopenhauer's ideal is deeply apolitical, passive, and literally Buddhistic, whereas Nietzsche's is ferociously activist. For Schopenhauer, culture merely involves thinking, for Nietzsche it involves making and doing, or rather, creating.

That radical self-consciousness, the aim of culture, may also undermine action presents no problem to Schopenhauer. After all, it is in full awareness of this that he presents the genius as one who is in virtual opposition to will. His axiom is that the more intelligent man is, so is he less active. Nietzsche however, is impressed at an early age by the difficulties of matching thought with action. He sees it as an irreducible contradiction lying at the centre of man and nature. Self-consciousness is therefore as much the problem as it is the aim of culture. Wakefulness paralyses action, when ideally it should be a preliminary and guide to it. Unlike Schopenhauer, he wishes wherever possible to preserve a unity between both but is oppressed by what he describes, in a letter of 1866 as the "anglückliche Differenz zwischen Theorie und Praxis."210

An early response to this dilemma is contained in The Birth of Tragedy where he credits the Greeks with having solved the problem of radical self-reflection through conscious illusion. Even while knowing that inside all was vacuous, they pretended, or continued to live their life on the surface. They consciously spread a veil of illusion over the world. Because “knowledge kills action; action requires the veils of illusion; that is the doctrine of Hamlet... Not reflection, no - true knowledge, an insight into the horrible truth, outweights any motive for action, both in Hamlet and the Dionysian man...conscious of the truth he has seen, man sees everywhere only the horror or uncertainty of existence... now he understands the wisdom of the sylvan god, Silenus: he is nauseated."211

In a world of aimless change right behaviour is senseless because in the end nothing matters. All who see this fact are deprived of hope or motivation to act. The younger Nietzsche states that only illusion can veil these comfortless thoughts, and break the evil spell of consciousness. But how do you

205 TOS II, III, p.149.
208 TP, PAT, p.6.
209 TOS II, III, p.154. Cf. TOS II, III, p.149. "If universal nature leads up to man, it is to show us that he is necessary to redeem her from the curse of the beasts life, and that in him existence can find a mirror of itself where in life appears, no longer blind, but in its real metaphysical significance." In the same essay (TOS II, III,3: the states that..." the new duties... imply either a vast community, held together not by external forms but by a fundamental idea, namely that of culture, though only so far as it can put a single task before each of us - to bring the philosopher, the artist, the saint, within and without us, to the light, and to strive thereby for the completion of Nature. For Nature needs the artist, as she needs the philosopher, for a metaphysical end, the explanation of herself, whereby she may have a clear and sharp picture of what she only saw dimly in the troubled period of transition - and so may reach self-consciousness."
210 SI, to von Gersdorff, 7 April 1866.
211 BT, 27.
consciously believe what you know to be false. You must replace belief in the unbelievable mythologies with belief in the power of art to give us what divinity or mythology once gave.

In the last chapter of *The Philosophy of As-If* Vaihinger happily describes this attempt by Nietzsche to unite theory and practice as the doctrine of conscious-illusion. The logical consistency of the doctrine is irrelevant here. It is simply to show the dilemma Nietzsche faces in employing an idea of *phas* that makes both higher consciousness and action the goal of nature, when the former undermines the latter. In spite of this Nietzsche never wishes to abandon consciousness as a fundamental criterion of culture, or as a guide to action.

As much as he may believe that illusion is needed in order to act, he cannot escape the traditional faith of those attracted to the principle of *phas*; that nature harbours creative principles that may be apprehended and exploited directly. This faith is seen in Nietzsche’s early work and portends an eventual break with the influence of Schopenhauer.

In the same letter to Von Gersdorff, he relates an event that is often recounted in the Nietzsche literature. On one of his walks in the country around Naumburg, he observed a storm gathering and hurried to find shelter on a nearby hill. On the hill he discovered a hut, where a shepherd and his son had recently slaughtered two kids. The experience of the hailstorm breaking and the spectacle of bloody sacrifice brings on an overwhelming impression of the spontaneity and “freedom” of natural forces which, he notes, are pure expressions of will without the interference of moral or intellectual constraints: compared to the dynamism unleashed before him all human problems seem but trivial. “Was war mir der Mensch und sein unruhiges Wollen! Was war mir das ewige “Du sollst”, “Du sollst nicht”? Wie anders der Blitz, der Sturm, der Hagel, freie Mächte, ohne Ethik! Wie glücklich, wie kräftig sind sie, reiner Wille, ohne Triebungen durch den Intellekt!”

Nietzsche envies nature’s expressions of pure willing. The highest happiness, it seems to him, stems from the spontaneity of action. The lightning strike is happy because it obeys its own inner necessity and no external law is imposed upon it. Likewise, when an individual acts from internally necessary circumstances and not external moral imperatives, there is a perfect sequence between his internal nature and the deed that unfolds from it. In every individual that is a layer not accessible to moral precepts or training. If he is to impart integrity to his actions, he must think through to the essential part of himself where lurk all his drives and proclivities.

The seamlessness of intention and deed cannot be implanted by moral tutelage: individual natures vary considerably in needs or capacity. When you are told *Thou shalt, or Thou shalt not* you are asked to obey a standard that is outside your nature and which does not recognise your individuality. It forces you to turn against your nature and perhaps damage it. Actions springing from solely moral imperatives therefore remain halting, superficial, and sometimes completely “false”.

This is especially so if the outer-man, the social man, is coerced to act in ways that deny his inner nature. He really wishes to do one thing, but is compelled to do another that he only half-heartedly defers to. *True* action recognises this primal nature, and is therefore spontaneous and effective, like lightning. Goethe, in conversation, once prefigured this idea with a remark concerning “extraordinary men” like Napoleon who, “place themselves outside morality. They act, after all, like physical causes such as fire and water. Indeed anyone who steps out of the position of subordination - for that is what morality is - becomes to that extent immoral.”

**Nietzsche’s idea of Phasis**

In the tradition of *phas* in Germany, Nietzsche holds that the basis of cultivation is to consciously act in accordance with the innermost recesses of one’s being. This idea is the substance of the slogan he borrows from the Greek poet Pindar: “You must become the being you are” which he alludes to persistently from early youth until, in the final instance, he uses it to subtitle his autobiography: *Ecce Homo or, How one becomes what one is.*

Pindar’s injunction complements that of Solon to: “Know thyself” and taken together they perfectly represent the form of enlightenment ethics that demands self-knowledge of inner necessity. This differs from the brooding introspection of Christians like Augustine or romantic poets because it is not at once fatalistic and optimistic. Its character can be seen in Montaigne who, standing at the gate of the modern enlightenment, says: “I study myself more than any other subject. That is my metaphysics, that is my physics... In this universe of things I ignorantly and negligently let myself be guided by the general law of the world. I shall know it well enough when I feel it. My knowledge could not make it change its path; it will not modify itself for me.”

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214 Briefwechsel, KG I-2, to von Gersdorff 7 April 1866, pp.121-122.

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Nietzsche assumes that human nature cannot be infinitely moulded by education or drill. Some things in us cannot be altered, and the key to enlightenment is to understand what can be changed. It is useless to wish for that which cannot be. However, we can defeat gratuitous becoming by consciously holding onto what is deepest and most immutable within us. This is an essential task of philosophy. As he indicates in the essay Richard Wagner in Bayreuth: “For my part, the most important question philosophy has to decide seems to be, how far things have acquired an unalterable stamp and form, and, once this question has been answered, I think it is the duty of philosophy unhesitatingly and courageously to proceed with the task of improving that part of the world which has been recognised as still susceptible to change.”

To disavow nature, to supplant the patently obvious necessity with “agreeable thoughts” abases culture. Agreeable thoughts imprison us in arbitrary convention. Their effect is all around us in the social world; in the affectation of idealism that is never acted on, in the cant of diplomats, the euphemism of politics and public life, in the predominance of pleasant images over harsh realities. In public statements that never coincide with private convictions and the preference for things to seem well rather than honest recognition of necessary evils. Pretending that the world is nicer than it is creates a cancer of lies that corrodes the unity of theory and practice. A culture of agreeableness can only ever be decorative, a facade overlaying a building of inferior material and construction. Integrity however produces style, which is the harmonising of natural drives with consciousness.

Style is the unity of the inner and outer man in every aspect of his existence. It is the formative activity of culture. Barbarism shows itself by incapacity to create a style appropriate to itself. In the absence of self-mastery and organisation of life in accordance with principles of physis, barbarism borrows other forms to give itself the appearance of organisation. Modernity, for example, is disfigured by the prevalence of sham styles and sham appearance, it is a “complex of inharmonious bombast”. Wherever form is still in demand in society, conversation, literary style, or the relations between governments, men have unconsciously grown to believe that it is adequately met by a kind of agreeable dissimulation, quite the reverse of genuine form conceived as the necessary relations between the proportions of a figure, having no concern whatever with the notions “agreeable” or “disagreeable” simply because it is necessary and not optional.

The young Nietzsche describes the contemporary malaise as an incapacity to “feel correctly”. The tyranny of conventions estranges us from our real nature. You need to feel correctly before you can think correctly; this is the only way to attain autonomy. Freedom consists in being as honest in doing evil as in doing good, in directness, in frankness before distasteful facts of existence. The freest man is the genius who, inwardly and outwardly, shapes his own life from the materials of his own nature.

The genius displays sublime self-sufficiency which he discovers by living, as the Greeks would have had it, according to physis and not by nomos. This is also the source of his productivity or creativity. Thus all of the elements that traditionally figure in the justification of an Ideal of Cultivation by means of physis also figure in the philosophy of the young Nietzsche.

In the later period, the same ethical structures, the logical links between value and nature, freedom and consciousness remain. What differs is the understanding of what nature is. In this period in the notebooks he makes ever more frequent references to physics, and starts to read books and papers by contemporary scientists and mathematicians. He wishes to study chemistry and physics to improve his knowledge of the natural world with the aim of building a new ethical system on eternal natural principles. The immutable character of nature must be represented in the immutable character of value. Knowledge of nature is needed to revalue all values. The principle of physis requires an explication of what nature does in order to show how the highest value emerges out of it.

Physis can cover and contain the most contrary conclusions, because it establishes a logical relation between concepts but does not prescribe their content. It is one thing to say we obtain ethical justification by perfecting nature, but to decide what nature is or does, or what its perfected form would look like is altogether separate. To justify one virtue or another nature must describe the specific qualities of nature.

216 TOS II, IV, p 120.
218 One cannot forget the massive impact of epistemologists of science on his work, which undoubtedly, he read with greater eagerness and respect than any philosopher save Schopenhauer. It was through scientific theorists such as C.F. Zöllner, Ernst Mach, Roger Boscovich, Afrikan Spir, and Gustav Teubner, that he drew his epistemological ideas and concepts of the physical world rather than through philosophers like Kant. (Nonetheless a great deal of Kantianism is implicit in the work of individuals like Mach for instance). For an analysis of the influence of these writers on Nietzsche, see Friedrich Nietzsche, Von den Verborgenen Anfängen seines Philosophierens, by Anni Anders and Karl Schlechta, 1962. See also Stack, op. cit., passim.
7 - The Will to Power in Nature

The principle of physis justifies young Nietzsche's *Ideal of Cultivation*. In the later work the logical relationship between categories like nature, consciousness, individual, will and genius remain but the content of those categories is redefined in a way that defines a unique philosophical moment.

The key change is the concept of nature as Will. In notes from *Human all too Human* he breaks completely from the philosophy of Schopenhauer by referring to his idea of nature's substrate as Will to Power. From this new understanding of nature he starts to build an entire ethical system in a way he had not done previously and which changes the character of his *The Ideology of Cultivation*.

*Physis* understood as will to power offers new explanations for the nature of morality, value, aesthetics, and genius. It is the key idea of his mature philosophy; the pillar upon which his projected philosophical edifice would stand.

The intellectual need for the doctrine of Will to Power

In the first place will to power is a means to overcome the limitations of mechanistic or materialistic interpretation of the universe offered by classical physics. Nietzsche's antipathy toward materialism follows a long-standing vitalist prejudice in German philosophy and it is one that enjoys intelligent instruction and profound guidance by Friedrich Albert Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus.*

The mechanistic viewpoint accounts for events and phenomena by tracing their origin to external compulsions such as force, pressure, or stress. It does not account for these effects in themselves. Two bodies exert a force on each other across empty space, but it is not known what this force actually is. When these bodies interact, the interaction remains, for all purposes, an occult *actio in distans*. If the concept of force worked out by classical physics cannot explain masses acting on each other at a distance, it would be no less occult to assume that there is a dynamism working within matter, or what is perceived to be matter. This inner dynamism would be the author of every event and every material structure. With this idea we could dispense with "atoms" as the primary units of being and speak instead of "points of force".

The idea of points of force does not dispense with atomism, it merely changes what atoms are; i.e. finite centres of activity, instead of units of extension. But Nietzsche regards this as a complete break with classical physics. Points of force behave as atoms; they organise in increasingly complex forms to produce the varieties of matter and life itself. The problem that mechanistic systems have of distinguishing between matter and force, which is to say, between a subject and its actions, is overcome by abolishing the category of the subject. Matter does not really exist at all; what we call matter is our own foreground construction. There is no discontinuity between dead material and live material. In some sense all things in the universe are alive. When everything can be reduced to the action of "points of force", the one pervasive quality of the universe is will to power: "Physicists cannot eradicate action at a distance from their principles; nor can they eradicate a repellent force (or an attracting one). There is nothing for it: one is obliged to understand all motion, all appearances, all laws only as symptoms of an inner event and to employ man as an analogy to this end. In the case of an animal, it is possible to trace all of its drives to the will to power, likewise all the functions of organic life to this one source." 220

The idea of will to power is also a strategy to explain the totality of becoming: as it permits universal chaos to exist within a comprehensible framework. Unlike Schopenhauer’s, Nietzsche’s new concept of Will is not unitary, it is not a monism. Schopenhauer’s *Will* is an ocean, upon which flicker waves and shadows we call "reality". The seagull we see skimming the waves is as much of this essence as the fish beneath its surface. The seagull devours the fish, but the separateness of their existence from one another is merely a phantasm resulting from their individuation from the great oceanic Will. Their substance is actually one. *Tat twaam asi or This thou art* is the Vedas teaching that Schopenhauer often cites.

Species of animals such as birds or fish, are merely molds, into which the same substance is poured. As individual entities, this fish, and this seagull are an estrangement from the oneness. By the fact of their individuation both creatures carry primordial guilt in their being, a guilt extinguished only in their death and decomposition to the primordial substance from which they were expelled at birth. For Schopenhauer, merely to come into the world means to take on a burden of guilt. This is the meaning he places on the lines of Calderon, which he again cites more than once: "Pues el delito mayor del

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219 In correspondence he refers to Lange’s work as “das bedeutendste philosophische Werk, was in den letzten Jahrzehnten erschienen ist.”

220 WP, 6f19.
hombre es haber nacido” (for the greatest crime of man is that he ever was born). 221

One of the profoundest desires of thinkers is to demonstrate that multiplicity can stem from simplicity, or at least, as Leibniz perceives this relation, that unity may exist in multiplicity: *similitudo in varietate*. A world of plural essences without an underlying unity is anathema to a thinker’s organisating and reductive proclivities. Truth cannot be if it is not simple. For this reason, *monistic systems* that assume a single essence underlying all phenomena are favoured by philosophers in all ages. Their psychological appeal is that they provide a common foundation for multiplicity. At the same time they are also dogged by a problem that lies in the advantage that monism is seen to provide: namely, how can the diversity of the world arise out of one thing. How can a uniform substance precipitate the chaos of eternal becoming? How can it be that there is so much havoc in the very nature of things? Is it possible for a *unitary substance* to come into conflict with itself?

A vexing problem historically. It has oppressed the monism of theologians, whose burden is to explain how perfect divinity permits imperfection in the world. The burden they call the “problem of evil” is not unknown to atheistic monisms either. Whatever its nature, ingenious solutions have been devised to lift monist systems out of contradiction, invariably by using an alienating principle of some kind; some tendency to disunity resting in the bosom of being. Somehow, the creativity of the original unitary substance is impaired by an inner short-coming or flaw within its nature.

In Schopenhauer’s system, primal *Wille* is a *blindly* active agency whose creations are condemned to exist *blindly* because they have no awareness of their origin. The very moment an individual being or thing comes into existence, it is alienated from *Wille*. The principle of *individuation*, of separate beings forming and losing all sense of their unity with other beings provides the ground for otherness and multiplicity. What deepens the alienating principle is the distinction between the activity of *Wille*, and *Wille*’s consciousness of this activity. The simpler a being in form and composition, which is to say, the closer it is to pure *Wille*, the more individuated it is and the more violently and blindly it strives. It is only when the being attains *consciousness* - most potently in the mind of the genius - that the intensity of blind *Wille* is diluted and at least an intellectual return affected toward the original unity.

Schopenhauer’s older contemporary, Hegel, gave an evolutionary dimension to his monism, by posing that “*geist*,” though initially alienated from itself, was moving by distinct phases toward its completion in absolute knowledge or consciousness. The early Christians, in more primitive fashion, employed a corporeal alienating principle. Rather than seeing “evil” as a limpid abstraction, they personified it, and call it Satan, a spoiler, a being in complete contradiction to God, though permitted to exist by him. The imperfections of the universe are accounted as a rebellion against perfection.

Nietzsche’s contemplations on unity and diversity appear early in his work, not truly thought through but as a set of assumptions. It is likely he had already grasped the problem of monism before the *will to power* had been conceived. We are alerted to this possibility in his early study of Pre-Socratic philosophy. In the unfinished *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* he states the principle behind the later idea of *will to power* while discoursing on Heraclitus: “if the world which we see only knows becoming and passing but no permanence, should perhaps those qualities constitute a differently fashioned metaphysical world, true, not a world of unity as Anaximander sought behind the fluttering veil of plurality, but a world of eternal and essential pluralities.” 222

The phrase “*a world of eternal and essential pluralities*” is echoed in Nietzsche’s later statements against monism, and in his explication of the *will to power*. During the middle period he criticises Schopenhauer for having so twisted the word “*Wille*” that it merely denotes several human conditions and serves merely to fill a gap in the language. *Wille*, through the philosophical mania for generalisation turned out to be an intellectual liability, merely a poetic metaphor. “Finally, that it might be applied to all kinds of disordered mysticism, the, word, by a fraudulent convention was misused. So now all our fashionable philosophers repeat it and seem to be perfectly certain that all things have a will and are in fact One Will. According to the description generally given of this All-One-Will, this is much as if one should positively try to have the stupid Devil for one’s God.” 223 In some later notes he implies that the tendency of philosophers to posit unity behind the world is a symptom of their inertia, of a psychological need for peacableness and a desire for reconciliation. A plurality of interpretations however is a sign of strength. We should not, he says, “deprive the world of its disturbing and enigmatic character.” 224

Nietzsche’s preference is for a universe in which multiplicity is *already its primal character*. His philosophy has the opposite problem to one that begins with unity, being a universe of *points of force* with each centre acting independently; no *point of force* is united in being with any other one.

In this state of multiplicity how is form and organisation conceivable? The simplest being, let alone life itself, is unthinkable without there being some form of commonality. Some things at least must
act in the same way if a complex structure is to exist. For Nietzsche the answer lies in a principle of likeness exhibited by every point of force. This is not divulged in its substance for it does not have substance, but rather in its motion; in the way it acts. The principle of motion is highlighted by designating each point of force a unit of "will to power" (Wille zur Macht).

What Will to Power is

A unit of will to power is a point of force in a location in space that wills, and insofar as willing implies intention, it intends what is immediately itself, which is power.

Power has no thingness or quiddity, for it is no more than an eternal grasping outward - an exertion that seeks only to exert more forcefully. The action of units of will to power is like the action of an alpine avalanche hurling itself down a mountain slope. Irresistible, it cannot prevent itself, or hold itself back. Moreover these units of force are quantifiable; they come in smaller and larger packages. Nietzsche uses the term quanta of power\(^\text{227}\) to give the sense of magnitudes. That quantity is not of substance, but of the degree of effect each willing unit can exert on its surroundings.

We must not think of points of force as atoms i.e. as subjects, for this is precisely what the idea of will to power does away with. Abolishing the subject abolishes the mysterious lacuna between a subject and its deed - the essence of the problem of causality. A unit of will to power annuls the separation between cause and effect; it is not an atom, not a substance possessing - in the parlance of the Cartesians - "extension", but a happening, an occasion, an event entire within itself. In Nietzsche's words, will to power is "not a being, not a becoming, but a pathos".\(^\text{226}\) Indeed the concepts of being, subject, and cause and effect, are simply fictions invented by the living organism in order to deal with its environment. These points are prior to being, for being suggests that there is a thing that exists. Points of force do not exist. They do no more than provoke the phantasm of existence.

Thus, the entire phenomenal world, interpreted through the diverse perspectives of diverse beings, results from the manifestation of points of will to power. "The following are therefore phenomenal; the injection of the concept of number, the concept of the thing (concept of the subject) the concept of activity (separation of cause from effect) the concept of motion (sight and taste) our eye and our psychology are still part of it. If we eliminate these additions, no things remain but only dynamic quanta: their essence lies in their relation to other quanta, in their "effect" upon the same. The will to power not a being, not a becoming but a pathos - the most elementary fact from which a becoming and effecting first emerge."\(^\text{227}\)

A world of essential pluralities necessarily excludes an absolute type of perception or knowledge. A unit of will to power cannot apprehend, or be apprehended, or have any existence at all until it can interact with another of the same. The universe is a magnitude of relationships (for Nietzsche this magnitude is finite) between isolated power points, therefore the character of being must be perspectival. As each point of force strives outward from its own centre it is destined to encounter and perceive its surroundings as a simple displacement from this centre. 

...a necessary perspectivism by virtue of which every centre of force - and not only man - construes all the rest of the world from its own viewpoint, i.e. measures, feels, forms, according to its own force...\(^\text{228}\) The perspectival character of human knowledge and consciousness is determined at the most rudimentary levels of being.

By pronouncing a unity between representation and will, between perceptio and appetitus, Nietzsche is a true heir of German Idealism, and particularly of its primogenitor - Leibniz. Although there are key differences between these "vitalist" philosophies the similarities between Monadology and the will to power are profound.

Leibniz and Nietzsche think a universe of dynamic pluralities, and each in his own way wishes to grasp the creative potency behind everything. Like Nietzsche, Leibniz is sceptical about mechanist causality. The idea of the monad - Leibniz’s simplest substance - assumes that every action originates in the inward impulse of a body. But in place of the eternal grasping outward that Nietzsche calls “power”, Leibniz assumes that every created thing, or monad is subject to change, “indeed that this change is continual in each one...” and that “the changes of monads come from an internal principle”. This disposition to change moreover, which he calls appetitio, varies one perception to another and while it “cannot attain completely the whole of the perception to which it tends... it always attains something of it, and arrives at new perceptions.”\(^\text{225}\) In Nietzsche’s system a body perceives according to the magnitude of force it can exert. As its capacity to exert force lessens or increases so its own representation of the world will change.

The will to power is something that builds. This building can only occur when binding relationships

\(^{227}\) See WP, a633-639.

\(^{228}\) For a detailed exposition of the essential character of “power quanta” see NF 1888-89 KG, VIII-3, pp.49-51.

\(^{226}\) WP, a635.

\(^{225}\) WP, a636.

\(^{225}\) Leibniz, Monadology, n10, n11, and n15.

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are formed between centres of force. But if each point of force wants to promote itself at the expense of all others, no complex building can occur. There has to be a way of forming binding relationships and therefore complex forms of organisation. Nietzsche's answer is that units of power build relationships based on command, or, obedience, which is a necessary consequence of the former.

Every encounter between two centres of force is determined by which of them is the greater and can subsume and control the lesser. The command and obedience relationship makes higher levels of organisation possible, but it means that everything in the natural world is in permanent contest, since no point of force wishes to be subservient to any other. It is held in check by the more compelling force but it continues to offer resistance. Therefore every complex body is in danger of disintegration if the dominating centre loses hold. "Obedience" and "commanding" are forms of struggle.

Every complex thing is a political entity haunted by factions within itself that strive for control. Every aspect of existence, every forgotten corner of being, is a complex web of power relationships. The entire universe a monumental series of 'political' arrangements. Nothing is excluded from this order, living or dead. Chemical reactions, "laws" of physics, all amount to concatenations of dominations. "I beware of speaking of chemical "laws:" that savours of morality. It is far rather a question of the absolute establishment of power relationships; the stronger becomes master of the weaker, insofar as the latter cannot assert its degree of independence - here there is no mercy, no forbearance, even less a respect for "laws."

And again: "The unalterable sequence of certain phenomena demonstrates no "law" but a power relationship between two or more forces. To say "But this relationship itself remains constant" is to say no more than "One and the same force cannot also be another force" It is a question, not of succession, but of interpenetration, a process in which the individual successive movements are not related to one another by cause and effect." As he explains, the "two successive states, the one 'cause', the other 'effect' is false because "the first has nothing to effect, the second has been effected by nothing." It is in actuality" a question of a struggle between two elements of unequal power, a new arrangement of forces of achieved according to the measure of power in each of them. The second condition is something fundamentally different from the first (not its effect); the essential thing is that factions in a struggle emerge with different quanta of power.

**Will to Power as life**

When points of force array about a commanding centre, the group presents unity in action, all components exhibiting the same impulses, but having a greater magnitude of power. A molecular polity of this type will interact with like bodies until more intricate, highly organised, even specialised arrangements occur, indeed until they become organic, and yield the prospect of the most uncanny and effective transformation of will to power, which is life.

Simple or complex, living things carry the character of the universe in all of their actions; a never ceasing questing after power. But, unlike non-organic beings, their organisation requires favourable circumstances for them to exist. Living things can reproduce (within the strictures of defined species and types), but are limited by their need to assimilate foreign materials as nourishment, for which they are provided various senses, organs and appendages. If will to power is the foundation of life then each of its special characteristics must also be explicable in terms of command and obedience.

Nietzsche did not neglect to offer such explanations, but they are rarely seen in his published books, and for obvious reasons. Much of the exegetical material on the will to power as life occurs in the notebooks from the year (1888-1889) before his collapse, and was being prepared for his proposed systematic work. Some notes state his ideas comprehensively, but others leave us a germ, whose implications are evident. This aspect of his work remains in a state of incompleteness, and is afflicted with logical lacunae and omissions. But the notes do show the working principles of his system.

The characteristics of living things; nutrition, procreation, responding to stimuli, are usually thought of as fundamentally different drives, but Nietzsche represents them as special cases of will to power. On the origins of nutrition, he cites the example of uni-cellular organisms to describe how the simplest forms of nourishment can exist as modifications of the necessity to exert force: "...the protoplasm extends its pseudopodia in search of something that resists it - not from hunger but from will to power. Thereupon it attempts to overcome, appropriate, assimilate what it encounters; what one calls "nourishment" is merely a derivative phenomenon, an application of the original will to become stronger."

To eat means to assimilate other being into an organism's areas of control, and to subsume and
disperse its contents throughout its body. But what pertains to simple life-forms such as amoeba does not easily apply to organisms with complex organisations and specialised adaptations. Nourishment in this case would seem a necessity, something required for mere survival, rather than conquest of the organism's environment. He suggests that hunger is a primitive form of will to power, which in higher animals, becomes a residual function, a secondary need incorporated into an animal now able to find new directions to exercise powers to command. "It is not possible to take hunger as the primum mobile, any more than self preservation. To understand hunger as a consequence of undernourishment means; hunger as the consequence of a will to power that no longer achieves mastery. It is by no means a question of replacing a loss - only later as a result of the division of labour, after the will to power has learned to take other roads to its satisfaction, is an organism's need to appropriate reduced to hunger, to the need to replace what has been lost."235

Another result of the organism's assimilation of other bodies into its own is the fact of procreation. When the protozoon assimilates more than it can control it breaks into separate entities, each with its own distinct will to power. "Appropriation and assimilation are above all a desire to overwhelm, a forming, shaping and reshaping, until at length that which has been overwhelmed has entirely gone over into the power domain of the aggressor and has increased the same. If this incorporation is not successful then the form probably falls to pieces, and the duality appears as a consequence of the will to power, in order not to let go what has been conquered, the will to power divides itself into two wills (in some cases without completely surrendering the connection between its two parts)."236 Protoplasm divides in two "when its power is no longer adequate to control what it has appropriated, procreation is the consequence of an impotency."237

Division of power centres may explain procreation in unicellular life, but we are not advised how the reproduction in complex life forms arise. In the absence of genetic theory an answer is merely suggested. Procreation ensures that the identity of the complex organism is closely duplicated, and thereby prepares its own continued duration. Even if its own organisation crumbles away, it at least leaves a template of its form behind which might be further duplicated. Without this succession it would itself perish and exert no further force. Thus the obsessive interest of the individual in the sexual instinct is not due to its value to the species, but "arises because procreation is the real achievement of the individual and consequently his highest interest, his highest expression of power... judged from the centre of the whole individuation." Sexual reproduction is therefore a further "spiritualising" of the will to power, a refinement arising from its increasing complexity.

Just as nutrition is one way in which will to power is satisfied, procreation is another. Both develop in parallel and, becoming integral to life, allow new and more astonishing ways for force to exert itself.

The capacity of living things to respond to stimuli is dealt with in greater detail. Organisms "discourse" with their environment through the primitive language of the nervous system, and their discrimination between pleasurable and painful experiences arises from an exaggeration in the capacity of a power centre to act against whatever resists it. A point of force manifests itself only when it interacts with another entity; it only truly 'exists' through encountering and overcoming resistance. The only experiences it truly knows are when a weaker force yields before it, or when a stronger one exerts overwhelming pressure upon it. If even the raw unit of power 'experiences' stimuli as a purely physical event, it will seem inevitable that a more highly organised structure of power heightens or deepens these experiences. The multitude of sensory affects available to organisms - sight, touch, hearing or scent - can all be reduced to these fundamental interpretations.

If, however, the senses make use of variations of the sense of resistance, involving either its "pleasurable" or "painful" aspects, this is not to say we can call such interpretations of experience the primary drives of living beings. Pleasure and pain are secondary affects, the first is not a goal to be pursued, and the second is not a fate to be avoided, both are feelings that ensue from the normal pursuit of power. Hence, Nietzsche's elaboration of the question of pleasure and pain is consciously directed against the utilitarian ethic: "Man does not seek pleasure and does not avoid displeasure, one will realise which famous prejudice I am contradicting. Pleasure and displeasure are mere consequences, mere epiphenomena - what man wants, what every smallest part of a living organism wants, is an increase of power. Pleasure or displeasure follow from the striving after that: driven by what will it seeks resistance, it needs something that opposes it. - Displeasure as an obstacle to its will to power, is therefore a normal fact, the normal ingredient of every organic event; man does not avoid it, he is rather in continual need of it, every victory, every feeling of pleasure, every event, presupposes a resistance overcome."239

Feelings of pleasure and pain are evaluative reactions by the intellectual centre in response to changes affecting the whole organism. The evaluation called "pleasure" stems from every increase of power...

235 WP, a652.
236 WP, a656.
237 WP, a654.
238 WP, a680.
239 WP, a702.
acquired and is registered as such in its nervous system. If degrees of power are maintained, a reference point is established, against which the degree of pleasure or displeasure an organism experiences can be assessed. To grow in power means to experience pleasure, to have that power diminished results in displeasure. "The will to grow is of the essence of pleasure, that power increases, that the difference enters consciousness. From a certain point onwards, in decadence, the opposite difference enters consciousness, the decrease, the memory of former moments of strength depresses present feelings of pleasure - comparison now weakens pleasure."\textsuperscript{240}

Elsewhere Nietzsche refers to more than one type of pleasure and displeasure and implies that pleasure itself is only a momentary condition that briefly swamps the more abiding feeling of displeasure. This is so because it is not the satisfaction of the will that causes pleasure: something which is always driving outward of necessity cannot, after all, be satisfied or sated. An organism would immediately and continually wish to acquire more power to overcome and master still more of its domain. There would be no respite; the will to power is an eternal dissatisfaction, therefore, "the feeling of pleasure lies precisely in the dissatisfaction of the will, in the fact that the will is never satisfied unless it has opponents and resistance."\textsuperscript{241}

This agitation is not a depressant but a stimulant and we see that pleasure, far from being something opposite to pain, is actually a product of it. Pleasure may result from a close sequence of unpleasant stimuli or resistances, which are overcome in swift succession and so engender the feeling of exaltation in power. "There are even cases in which a kind of pleasure is conditioned by a certain rhythmic sequence of little unpleasantable stimuli; in this way a very rapid increase of the feeling of power, the feeling of pleasure, is achieved. This is the case, e.g. in tickling, also the sexual tickling in the act of coitus: here we see displeasure at work as an ingredient of pleasure. It seems a little hindrance that is overcome and immediately followed by another little hindrance that is again overcome - this game of resistance and victory arouses most strongly that general feeling of superabundant, excessive power that constitutes the essence of pleasure."\textsuperscript{242}

Nietzsche extends this analysis to suggest the existence of two varieties of displeasure and therefore of pleasure. The displeasure that is a type of irritation provokes an organism to resist and overcome its source. When the irritation is small enough to be resisted successfully, the organism experiences a feeling of victory. The other type of displeasure occurs when an organism over-expends itself and suffers excessive stimulation from an inability to resist an imposing force. Nietzsche calls this condition exhaustion and it figures significantly in his discussions of contemporary morals. Exhaustion is a feeling that afflicts declining or decadent life. The type of pleasure with which it is associated, is not realised in victory, but in rest, in sleep, in avoidance of conflict. The exhausted organism looks inward because its organisation is not in repair for external conquest. For the decadent life form it is enough to monitor its own boundaries and avoid upheavals that may over extend its modest economy of force and resistance. In short, "the exhausted want rest, relaxation, peace, calm - the happiness of the nihilistic religions and philosophies; the rich and living want victory, opponents overcome, the overflow of the feeling of power across wider domains than hitherto."\textsuperscript{243}

**Will to Power and the evolution of species**

In the eighteenth century the suggestion that the diversity of life forms arose through evolving speciation could only be uttered by a Diderot; that is, someone with a sense for the outrageous. But the activity of philosophes like Maupertuis, Robinet, and most famously Lamarck, acquainted biology with the historicising consciousness that was everywhere taking hold in Europe.

In physical or social science, and in philosophy itself, the new historical consciousness began to see everything as the result of pervasive, protracted and cumulative processes of change. Thus, by 1859 when Darwin unleashed his exposition of the "origin of species by the means of natural selection" upon the world, the fact of biological evolution was already well established. It merely required an adequate explanation for the process, which the theory of natural selection was able to supply.

Darwin's theory captured Europe so successfully that by the 1880's, when Nietzsche was working out his system of nature as will to power, serious intellectual opposition was scarcely audible and an entire intellectual movement was constructing elaborate political and ethical doctrine out of the principle of "survival of the fittest". When we examine Nietzsche's remarks on the evolution of species, we must take into account the pre-eminence of Darwinist doctrine, since he is doggedly opposed to it; not of course, because he doesn't accept the principle that species evolve but because of the manner in which it explains this fact.

There are two reasons for this: the first is that he thinks the Darwinian theory of natural selection

\textsuperscript{240} WP, a695.
\textsuperscript{241} WP, a696.
\textsuperscript{242} WP, a699.
\textsuperscript{243} WP, a703.
cannot account for as many facts of nature as the will to power; the second, is that he sees the ethical implications of Darwinian theory to be incompatible with his own Ideal of Cultivation. It requires remarkable solidity, as many have exhibited, to associate Nietzsche's doctrine of will to power with Darwinism, especially in view of his explicit attempts to separate the two.

Nietzsche's criticism of Darwinian evolution appears to follow the pattern of other "vitalists", most familiarly in the silliness of Bernard Shaw's Back to Methuselah or Bergson's more ponderous Creative Evolution. In one sense it is just another episode in the ancient feud between those with a bylozoic view of nature, and those attached to the metaphor of nature as machine. Mechanists condemn vitalists for their irrationalism and vitalists scorn mechanists for their superficiality. Nature, for the vitalists, has always had a more fundamental reason within it than the rationality of function. But the mechanist's accusations against them have not always been unjustified as the vitalist programme in many ways represents a belated and desperate bid to put the "soul" back into nature.

It was this type of sentimentalism that informed secular opposition to Darwin from the beginning. And even though Nietzsche, in the Twilight of the Idols and the Nachlass, ridicules Darwin and his theory as vintage naisserie Anglaise: a typically English resort to mechanistic stultifications and simplistic conceptions of causality, he is particularly careful to disassociate himself from similar sentimentalism. As a representative vitalist doctrine the will to power is perhaps one of the most deliberate and thorough-going of anti-sentimentalist of meditations, in comparison to which the sternest Darwinian would affect a heaving bosom and moistening eye.

The doctrine of will to power differs from those of Life-force or Elan vital in that all natural phenomena, including apparently dead physical reactions are seen to be activated by the same principle of movement. Assuming that only living things are moved by a force, alien to that applying to physical nature, produces logical difficulties. It could not be explained otherwise how the same dead matter - atoms, molecules, electromagnetic and gravitational forces et cetera - should, when occurring in living forms, suddenly self-generate and self-motivate.

By claiming that organisms only are infused with life force we create a logically unsustainable and empirically justified dualism. We merely discover yet another way to resurrect the Manichean division between a world of "matter" and a world of "spirit". The dualism is surmounted by asserting that living and non-living things are determined by the same necessity. Either we assume that what we refer to as dead matter is somehow alive, and living beings merely an accentuation of the animating force; or, that living things are simply mechanisms lacking capacity for self-will, Nietzsche chooses the first option, but not in order to put the soul back into nature. Along with the most ardent mechanists he wishes to see the soul abolished once and for all. Rather, he sees it as a way of explaining an inordinate restlessness in nature, for which he believes Darwinism cannot account.

Another complaint is that Darwinism attributes teleology to becoming. Nietzsche dismisses ideas of perfectionism implicit in Darwin's theory because it assumes that nature, when left to its devices, ensures that the unfit perish while the strong survive.

Although Darwin was reluctant to believe that absolute perfection of species would be possible, he did muse on the happier ethical implications of natural selection. In the chapter on the "struggle for existence" in the Origin of Species, he consoles us that "the war of nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, and that the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply".

For Darwinians, our path to biological eudemonia is hedged with thorns, our ascent is slow and laborious, but our destiny certain. Humankind leads the progress of the species; and behind lies a chain of development from the simplest creatures to the most complex. Higher species crawl upward over the backs of the primitive. There are grades of being - "links" between one species and another. Whenever individuals survive and adapt they assure the evolution and improvement of their species.

Nietzsche thinks it is otherwise. Species do not develop toward perfection. Their occurrence is marked by profusion and disorder, obscuring the distinctions between grades of being. Evolution does not cause a progression from lower to higher species; instead, species occur all at the same time, the ancient types mixed with the modern. Even man as a species "does not represent any progress compared with any other animal. The whole animal and vegetable kingdom does not evolve from the lower to the higher - but all at the same time, in utter disorder, over and against each other." Primitive creatures are said to be the ancestors of those now existing", he argues, "but a look at the flora and fauna of the Tertiary merely permits us to think of an as yet unexplored country that harbours types that do not exist elsewhere, while those existing elsewhere are missing. That species represent any progress "is the most unreasonable assertion in the world so far they represent

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241 In any event this species feud has deep roots in our primal animist imagination. Thankfully the question of "the riddle of life" is no longer pursued as philosophy, but as science.
243 WP, 698.
244 WP, 694.
245 loc. cit.
one level. That the higher organisms have evolved from the lower has not been demonstrated in a single case.248

The evolution of a species always reaches a limit, beyond which nothing further develops. "There are no transitional forms... one asserts the increasing evolution of creatures. All grounds are lacking. Every type has its limits, beyond these there is no evolution.249 The appearance of new species is not determined by protracted and gradual transitions. These movements are much more sudden than are generally supposed and occur with a minimum of linking types between one form and another.

How can new species arise, and what causes their evolution? Darwin says that this happens because species adapt to circumstances. Certain individuals are always more successful than others by qualities they are given at birth. If these are successful in dealing with new circumstances the individuals having them will be more likely to breed and pass on their traits. This is how the process works, but the actual driving force behind is the fact that every individual organism from the moment of its genesis must struggle to survive. New species could not emerge if it were not in the interest of living things to prevail in any environment or against whatever competition they may encounter. This one abiding interest is the foundation of evolution.

What Darwin calls natural selection presupposes that nature is greatly impoverished, whereas there is great extravagance in the production and destruction of living forms. Nietzsche concedes that struggle, exploitation, and death are inextricable elements of nature’s processes, but these do not result from mere striving for existence, but from an indomitable will to power. Competition is not for scarce resources; it arises from every organism's intention to master whatever it encounters.

If it were only the desire for self preservation that animated organisms there would not be insufficient grounds for change and evolution to occur. "One cannot ascribe the most basic and primeval qualities of protoplasm to a will to preservation, for it takes into itself absurdly more than would be required to preserve it..."250 It is simply a matter of experience "that change never ceases, we have not the slightest inherent reason for assuming that one change must follow upon another. On the contrary, a condition once achieved would seem to be obliged to preserve itself if there were not in it a capacity for desiring not to preserve itself - Spinoza’s law of “self preservation” ought really to put a stop to change, but this law is false, the opposition is true. It can be shown most clearly that every living thing does everything it can not to preserve itself but to become more..."251

For Darwin, a thing wishing merely to preserve itself alters its characteristics only under external compulsion; that is, the environment must change and then the organism is forced to do the same. Nietzsche condemns this emphasis on “external” causal factors in the evolution of life. That an organism adapts to environmental change is but a minor matter considered against the impact of will to power, which disposes all being to restlessness and change from within itself. "Life is not the adaption of inner circumstances to outer ones, but will to power, which, working from within, incorporates and subdues more and more of that which is “Outside.”252 According to Nietzsche, “the influence of “external circumstances” is overestimated by Darwin to a ridiculous extent, the essential thing in the life process is precisely the tremendous shaping, form creating force working from within which utilises and exploits “external circumstances” The new forms molded from within are not formed with an end in view but in the struggle of the parts a new form is not left long without being related to a partial usefulness and then, according to its use, develops itself more and more completely.”253

Natural selection cannot explain how animals acquire new organs, since the utility of these is not evident when their properties are still forming, and in that state cannot play any part in preserving the individual or the species. Indeed one must ask to what ends this utility manifests itself, what is favourable to an organism in one respect may be disadvantageous in others. "...that which preserves the individual might at the same time arrest and halt its evolution. On the other hand, a deficiency, a degeneration, can be of the highest utility in so far as it acts as a stimulant to other organs. In the same way, a state of need can be a condition of existence, insofar as it reduces an individual to that measure of expenditure which holds it together but prevents it from squandering itself.254

Darwin cannot explain how an organ can be used to achieve something: "In these matters, the assumption of causae finales explains as little as the assumption of causae efficientes. The concept of “causa” is only a means of expression, nothing more, a means of description.255 Nietzsche believes there is purposiveness and inventiveness in nature that need not for that reason be considered “conscious”. We exaggerate the gulf between the activity of conscious beings and those that lack this
faculty. The creative forces of will to power show an "inventiveness in the application of tools to new ends analogous to our inventiveness and experimentation". But the problem of heredity remains inexplicable, particularly the persistence of traits carried down from generation to generation. Writing in ignorance of the discoveries of Mendel, Nietzsche can only suppose that there is in organisms a "memory analogous to our memory that reveals itself in heredity and evolution and forms."

Species and individuals

A further problem with Darwinism is its emphasis on the species as the vehicle of evolution. The idea of will to power shifts the source of movement from homogenous laws, essences, or monism, to the particular, the individual, the unique points of force. Nietzsche hates the fact that Darwin accentuates the role of species over individuals. The universal for Nietzsche is always a collection of roughly similar particulars as is evident in how he sees animal and plant species existing. The concepts of "individual" and "species", he says, are false and misleading distinctions. "Species expresses only the fact that an abundance of similar creatures appear at the same time and that the tempo of their further growth and change is for a long time slowed down, so actual small continuations and increases are not very much noticed (a phase of evolution in which the evolution is not visible, so an equilibrium seems to have been attained, making possible the false notion that a goal has been attained - and that evolution has a goal)."

A species is recognisable whenever a preponderance of similar or "average" types exist at a location. The species is nothing more than a mean based upon partial similarities. It does not play the evolutionary role ascribed to it by Darwinists, that is, as a tightly meshed chain of members. Individuals do not live on behalf of the species, but for themselves. The destiny of the species does not represent a higher destiny than that of the individual "ego". "In natural science, the moral depreciation of the ego goes hand in hand with an overestimation of the species. But the species is something just as illusory as the ego, one had made a false distinction. The ego is a hundred times more than merely a unit in the chain of members; it is the chain itself, entirely; and the species is a mere abstraction from the multiplicity of these chains and their partial similarity. That the individual is sacrificed to the species, as has so often been asserted, is certainly not a fact; rather only an example of false interpretation."

Species are experiments: narrower or broader perspectives and interpretations of will to power. They take organisms along a particular line of development. That these organisms endure as a species implies only that their system of interpretation remains constant. Each new species occurs whenever a group of organisms incorporates an additional and similar piece of information into their structures of power. This concept of speciation is reminiscent of Schopenhauer's, insofar as he too describes species as "ideas" of Will; abstract but sometimes enduring patterns in which Will shapes itself.

For Nietzsche there is a fundamental tension between the success of the individual and the survival of the collective average known as the species. Darwinian theory errs, he believes, in asserting that the progress of a species is determined by its best endowed exemplars, who by their health and strength, survive and prosper, whereas the less developed, the undistinguished specimens languish and exert no significant influence over heredity. He believes that, in nature, precisely the opposite happens; the fortunately endowed - the highly developed individuals - become superfluous, due to their incompatibility with the larger breeding population, and so perish more easily. Their relative complexity in relation to the species adds to their needs and makes them more vulnerable.

If anything, it is the average and uncomplicated who guarantee survival of the species: "...growth in the power of a species is perhaps guaranteed less by a preponderance of its children of fortune, of strong members, than by a preponderance of average and lower types - The latter possess great fruitfulness and duration; with the former comes an increase in danger, rapid wastage, speedy reduction in numbers." He sees that "the lower preponderate through their numbers, their shrewdness, their cunning..." and "the 'cruelty of nature' of which so much has been said, in another place: she is cruel toward her children of fortune, she spares and protects and loves les humbles..."

So grouping a multitude of power-centres creates a compelling force. Every weaker individual understands how it is in its highest interest, indeed the very expression of its own will to power, to congregate with others of its own type and exert a greater communal power. The species that allows a majority of weaker individuals to prevail at the expense of the stronger few (whose self sufficiency disposes them to exert power away from the communal centre and pursue an independent course) has acquired what Nietzsche designates the "herd instinct". With this idea we reach the point in

256 WP, a646.
257 loc. cit.
258 WP, a521.
259 WP, a682.
260 WP, a686.
261 WP, a685.
Nietzsche's presentation of will to power where description of nature also describes human culture and values.

Given that Will to power exists as individual points of activity, and individual organisms are the source of change and evolution, the exceptional is posed as the real source of all that is productive and interesting in nature. Despite Nietzsche's refutation of teleology, his belief that will to power exists in grades of simplicity or complexity, suggests that the more complex formations of will to power have greater value, as states of enhanced power they more perfectly manifest the universal principle. So, even if nature is not moved by necessity toward a final state of completion, it has within it a principle of formation that makes development possible. It has a beginning and a way of going that can be consciously enhanced.

The fact that Nietzsche attributes a kind of consciousness to the primal points of power (here the similarity with Leibniz is most noticeable) promotes this possibility. Nature that is will to power is ideal to cultivate. It is fertile, flourishing, creative, and endlessly plastic. An individual convinced of the reality of such a nature could see his highest justification abiding in the extent to which he perfects or enhances it in his own being.
8 - Will to power as value

The later Nietzsche’s idea of nature is based on a principle he calls "will to power".

Nature is not a unity, but a multitude of centres of force dispensing and acquiring potency. These centres of force are what create and dissolve forms and cause what we call "change". Since "matter" and "living matter" also partake of the character of this dynamism, each evolution of organic life results from the relentless grasping after power; and each innovation in the organisation of life represents a platform from which this will embarks upon newer and stranger excursions.

Evolution of the idea of will to power as physis

With this idea Nietzsche hopes to explain the diversity of natural phenomena using a single principle. More accurately, he hopes that a single metaphor can represent the many different facets of the physical world. But not being a natural scientist, his delving into biology and physics to argue the case for will to power as a scientific idea are the conjectures of an imaginative dilettante.

The purpose was to provide him with a tool to analyse and measure value objectively rather than to prepare a theory of nature. This is laid bare in his earliest statements about will to power and in the drafts for the systematic work which he was to refer to by that title. Two sketches from the year 1888 propose chapter headings for this systematic work and show how he wants to describe the will to power both as nature and in its cultural forms.

These occur as follows:

1. "Wille zur Macht als Naturgesetz"
   Wille zur Macht als Leben
   Wille zur Macht als Kunst
   Wille zur Macht als Moral
   Wille zur Macht als Politik
   Wille zur Macht als Wissenschaft
   Wille zur Macht als Religion\(^262\)

2. "Wille zur Macht Morphologie"
   Wille zur Macht als 'Natur'
   Wille zur Macht als Leben
   Wille zur Macht als Gesellschaft
   Wille zur Macht als Wahrheit
   Wille zur Macht als Religion
   Wille zur Macht als Kunst
   Wille zur Macht als Moral
   Wille zur Macht als Menschheit\(^263\)

In both of these sketches a chapter heading dealing with will to power as "nature" and "life" appears, whereas the rest of the topics show an intention to examine some aspect of human culture: art, morality, politics, science, religion. Attention is focused less on the quality of nature itself, than on the "morphologies" of power occurring as culture. Importantly he introduces his analysis of culture with a preamble concerning the will to power as nature, in keeping with the principle of physis. In the Nachgelassene Fragmente between the years 1885, when this title was first conceived, and the last months of 1888, there are many other sketches for a book with the title The Will to Power. Though the format varies from sketch to sketch, the content appears to remain roughly as that posed above.

Unlike the idea of eternal recurrence, which occurred to Nietzsche with great moment and suddenness when he was composing Die Frohliche Wissenschaft, will to power evolved in his philosophy, growing from more basic concepts into a fully developed ontological system.

To begin with, these concepts had no ontological status whatsoever, for he originally uses the idea of power only in reference to the psychological drives. In the books of the middle period he employs terms like "Gefühle der Macht" or "Wolluste der Macht" to designate primary human motivations, but does not link these to a wider theory of nature and being. Such terms are apt to occur in a psychological apercu like the following, of which there are many other examples: "People who prefer to attract attention, and thereby to displeasure, desire the same thing as those who neither wish to please nor to attract attention, only they seek it more ardentely and indirectly by means of a step by which they apparently move away from their goal. They desire influence and power, and therefore show their superiority, even to such an extent that it becomes disagreeable; for they know that he who has finally attained power still seems to please. The free spirit also, and in like manner the believer, desire power, in order some day to please thereby; when, on account of their doctrine, evil fate, persecution, dungeon, or execution threaten them, they rejoice in the thought that their teaching will thus be engraved and branded on the heart of mankind; though its effect is remote they accept their fate as a painful but powerful means of still attaining to power."\(^264\)

\(^{262}\) NF 1888-89, KG VIII.3, p.46.
\(^{263}\) loc. cit.
\(^{264}\) TI, p.106."Thucydides, and the Princeipe of Machiavelli, are related to me closely by their unconditional will not to deceive themselves and to see reason in reality - not in 'reason', still less in 'morality'..."
Here he gives the desire for power a central position in the stellar system of human emotion, an estimation uttered consistently by thinkers questing after icy clarity concerning human affairs. Whether a Thucydides writing in the turmoil of the Peloponnesian wars, or a Machiavelli in the jungle of Renaissance politics, time does not diminish the attractiveness of the hypothesis. 265 Hobbes, who translated Thucydides, assumed the evidence for mankind's grasping after power to the first principle for the justification of an absolute Sovereign 266 and the same assumption lurks behind Spinoza's systematic treatment of ethics and politics.

Nietzsche treats this company with respect, for his agreement with them is more profound than his kinship with Schopenhauer, often regarded as the parent of Nietzsche's philosophy of power, but whose use of the term Wille he refers to as a "mere empty word" ("ein blosses leeres Wort") 267.

Though it appears in his thought initially as a reflection about human psychology it is afterwards applied to the entire phenomenal world in an attempt to preserve the coherence and integrity of a philosophical system. Asserting that man and nature are driven by the same engine he is obeying a logical necessity. Any attempt to justify value by linking it to physis needs a comprehensive and workable understanding of what nature is.

For physis and value to mesh logically a consistent explanation must exist for every facet of nature. In works between 1876 and 1882 he speaks of mankind being animated by feelings of power, but after writing the first four sections of Die Frohliche Wissenschaft he then decides on Der Wille zur Macht as a title for his planned systematic work. Doubly significant is that he couples it with the subtitle "Versuch einer Umwerthung aller Werthe" (Attempt at a Revaluation of all Values), thus expressing his intention to use will to power as physis to redefine and reassess all values.

To grasp the logic of this process we need to show how Nietzsche believes "spiritual" facts such as value, morality, consciousness and reason arise out of animal physiology explained as will to power. 268

How an organism perceives

Value is conferred on nature in order to maintain himself. 269 But among species man seems a special case, since all other animals appear to survive and prosper without any such need. Nevertheless, the factors that gave rise to its evolution must surely originate in animal physiology activated and driven by the will to power. Nietzsche therefore begins his search for the origins of value in the capacity by the simplest organisms to form perceptions.

Because no living thing can perceive or know everything, it constantly takes what it needs from the vast sea of data that at every moment envelops and assails it. An organism only perceives what it has to and, based on its own power and others surrounding it, circumscribes its own horizon of knowing. Looking, hearing, tasting, smelling, are in every case evaluative activities that enable organisms to set workable limitations to their experience. The various organs of perception at the disposal of living beings actively abstract and simplify the environment. Far from being passive and faithful recorders, they are instruments of acquisition, actively taking possession of an organism's surroundings. Perception is selective in its schematising of the chaos. "It cannot be doubted that all sense perceptions are permeated with value judgements (useful and harmful - consequently pleasant or unpleasant). Each individual colour is also for us an expression of value (although we seldom admit it, or do so only after a protracted impression of exclusively the same colour..." 270

Perception, which is "the awakening of conscious life", begins in the external parts of the organism as mere impressions that direct it toward food or away from peril - pleasure and pain are simple evaluations that aid the process. In complex organisms this process becomes increasingly centralised until perception finally attains consciousness; that is, until more and more sense evaluations are made and coordinated from the centre of the life form. An ensemble of simple responses becomes

265 HAH I, a595.
266 Hobbes, Leviathan, Pt. I, Chap 11: "So that in the first place, I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of Power after power, that ceaseth only in Death."
267 NF1888-89, KG VIII.3, p.93.
268 Nietzsche takes pains to employ physiological metaphors to drive this message home. His new "scientific" posture is associated with his intention to examine morality and values from a standpoint "beyond good and evil." From this perspective the evaluations made by a living thing are related to the efficiency of its organic processes. Because there are no eternal universal standards of "good" or "evil" the moral vocabulary must be replaced to reflect instead whether an organism displays "health", "strength", "pleasure", or conversely "sickness", "exhaustion", "degeneration". In this new vocabulary the word "bad" expresses "a certain incapacity associated physiologically with the degenerating type. e.g. weakness of will, insouciance and even multiple 'personality', inability to resist reacting to stimuli and to 'control' oneself..." (WP, a304). Its clinical character purports to wrest the discussion of value from the domain of metaphysical or religious discourse. Value and morality it is thought, have for too long been cocooned from the cold steel of the scientist's probe. The genealogy of human values cannot remain hidden from view; that is, if it is our intention to change from "a moral into a wise mankind". In any event this practice merely establishes in yet another form the moral dualism that runs throughout his work, and which at bottom is always reduced to the opposition between his attachment to the secular Ideal of Cultivation and the other-worldly orientation toward life. Consider examples of moral oppositions in his work like the following: "master-morality/slave-morality", "Classicism/Christianity", "Heiligenmut/H不忍讓的, "warrior/priest", "healthy/sick", "life-affirming/life-denying", "Dionysis/Christianty". Finally, he can say that "the symbol of this struggle inscribed in letters legible across all human history, is Rome against Judea, Judea against Rome," (GM, I-16).
269 Z, p.85.
270 WP, a505.
comprehensive awareness, a sense of “being alive.” “Consciousness - beginning quite externally, as coordination and becoming conscious of “impressions” - at first at the furthest distance from the biological centre of the individual; but a process that deepens and intensifies itself, and continually draws nearer to that centre.”

How an organism knows

A developing nervous control centre allows complex organisms to experience new ways of “knowing” which are no longer simple reactive responses to sensory stimuli. Now it is sensible of logic, and is capable of discriminating, and remembering. The organism sorts the sensory data into recognisable, remembered classes and categories, which do not really exist in the world as such, except in the coarsest sense. Since no thing is perfectly identical with any other thing, identities and similarities must be created by perception itself. To this end the organism has to employ the most Procrustean methods. If equalities don't exist in nature, then they must be imposed upon it by the organism in the course of its appropriation of things in it.

The perception by the simplest organism of the outer world as an ensemble of equalities, in the sense that it will always reduce broad classes of different stimuli to an identical response, is also the source of human intelligence. “All thought, judgement, perception, considered as comparison, has as its precondition a “positing of equality,” and earlier still a “making equal.” The process of making equal is the same as the process of incorporation of appropriated material in the amoeba.”[272] “The same equalising and ordering force that rules in the idiplasma, rules also in the incorporation of the outer world: and equalisation in regard to all the past in us; they do not follow directly upon the ‘impression’.”[273] The fundamental inclination to posit as equal, is modified, held in check, “by consideration of usefulness, by considerations of success: it adapts itself to a milder degree in which it can be satisfied without at the same time denying and endangering life. This whole process (which is its symbol) by which protoplasm makes what it appropriates equal to itself and fits it into its own forms and files.”[274]

The sophisticated machinations of human intellect originate in a physiological will to equalise, which is itself another incarnation of the will to power. Logic could not function without the existence of identical cases, and memory requires the appearance of similarity or equalities in nature. The organism’s imposition upon nature of perceptual equalities creates a realm of fictions, albeit exceedingly useful ones. The organism makes experience comprehensible by parceling and categorising it as manageable units and retaining them as memory. Rather than wasting its energies in re-orienting itself to each new circumstance, it equips itself with a system for abbreviating and systematising its responses. Quickly it knows best when to hide, run, attack, breed, feed or drink.

The process of acquiring knowledge is not passive. It is a devouring, assimilating and digesting of what is of interest to the organism. Perception, from which all higher forms of knowledge derive, is a process of physically appropriating, via nerve ends, physical data from the perceived object. One cannot, therefore have “truer” perspectives, only more accommodating ones.

In the epistemology of will to power, we could not have absolute knowledge of an object, say a rat, only as much as accords with what we appropriate from it. Our senses would “perceive” more if more physical elements carry across to our senses: sounds by air vibrations, form by light particles, smell by gaseous molecules, and so forth. In the longer term we would “know” more about the rat, if we were able to appropriate and store through memory aspects of its behaviour, its habits, and haunts, and make-up. In this way we have physically accommodated aspects of the rat within us more effectively, and so provided ourselves with additional power over it.

The categories we associate with knowing are useful fictions that enable a particular species of animal “to prosper only through a certain relative rightness”. In this strictly anthropological sense its conception of ‘reality’ must “comprehend enough of the calculable and constant for it to base a scheme of behaviour on it”. It is the “utility of preservation - not some abstract theoretical need not to be deceived - stands as the motive behind the development of the organs of knowledge - they develop in such a way that their observations suffice for our preservation. In other words: the measure of the desire for knowledge depends upon the measure to which the will to power grows in a species: a species grasps a certain amount of reality in order to become master of it, in order to press it into service.”[275] In this way power and knowledge are in a reciprocal relationship; each enhancing the other. The quality, quantity, and effectiveness of organism’s knowledge are directly determined by the organisation of its will to power. Increasing this knowledge represents a quantitative increase of will to power. In Nietzsche’s world, Bacon’s injunction can be reversed just as validly: Knowledge is...
power, but also, power is knowledge for "Knowledge works as a tool of power. Hence it is plain that it increases with every increase of power."

For Nietzsche, the organism's need for certainty is needed to produce knowledge and value. It must feel that the world it inhabits is solid and dependable and that there are regular and recurring events. Knowledge must impart the sense of stability and if it too readily recognises the shifting ground of becoming and fleeting impressions, it would paralyse the capacity to act.

Evaluation, whether as simple perception or more complex knowledge, imposes order on chaos and filters out the shifting minutiae of experience, for "a world in a state of becoming could not in a strict sense be "comprehended" or "known"; only to the extent that the "comprehending" and "knowing" intellect encounters a coarse, already - created world, fabricated out of mere appearances but become firm to the extent that this kind of appearance has preserved life..."

The world of being, of stable and persisting unities, is the work of the body's organs and reflects the organism's need to preserve and fortify itself. Because all knowledge is a type of evaluation, being itself may be considered a value which is wholly, if unconsciously, believed in. This belief, irrespective of its falsity, allows life to persist. This is why a great deal of belief must be present; that judgements may be ventured; that doubt concerning all essential values is lacking - that is the precondition of every living thing and its life. Therefore, what is needed is that something be held to be true - not that something is true. The real and the apparent world "I have traced this antithesis back to value relations. We have projected the conditions of our preservation as predicates of being in general. Because we have to be stable in our beliefs if we are to prosper, we have made the "real" world a world not of change and becoming, but one of being." 

**How organisms become conscious**

For Nietzsche, consciousness does not begin with man but is embedded in the nature of will to power. Since all willing requires an end or object and consequently, all things, from organisms to physical forces, intend what they accomplish. In this universe the character of all intention is of a grasping for power. Intention does not require consciousness; it is something inextricably bound up with activity of any kind, even that of dead matter. The consciousness of living things however, which is a capacity for self-reflection, is a qualitative development beyond intentionality. Consciousness occurs in an organism when it is able to direct its organs of perception back upon itself. With the act of self-reflection the internal life of feelings, moods, desires and the organism's sense of being an acting unity i.e. that it is an ego or subject, begins. To be unconscious means that the organism cannot perceive its own feelings or desires, with the result that a guiding "ego" cannot take hold.

The ego is another fiction. Organisms are not unitary entities but a multiplicity of subjects in which a few dominate the rest; "whose interaction and struggle is the basis of our thought and our consciousness in general. A kind of aristocracy of "cells" in which dominion resides." The vast communality of cells in the body requires a division of labour and order of rank, with "regents" of a kind supervising the structure. What these "regents" know or do is represented in consciousness, for these constitute the "ego". Not everything however, which occurs within the body is visible to the overseers, the dominating forces of the body. They are not always in touch with the intricate system of processes occurring in the various organs and these consequently are not represented in consciousness. "It is essential that one should not make a mistake over the role of "consciousness": it is our relation with the "outer world" that evolved it. On the other hand, the direction or protection and care in respect of the coordination of the bodily functions does not enter our consciousness; any more than spiritual accumulation: that a higher court rules over these things cannot be doubted - a kind of directing committee on which the various chief desires make their votes and power felt."Pleasure", "displeasure" are hints from this sphere; also the will; also ideas.

As we lack sensitive organs for the inner world, we interpret this communal complex of fluctuating nervous impulses and muscular reactions as a type of unity, and call it the ego. We presume that this is responsible for all motion and change within the body. But what appear as thoughts or feelings of intention and desire are simply the becoming-visible of these bodily changes; they accompany them, they do not cause them."In summa: That which becomes conscious is involved in causal relations which are entirely withheld from us - the sequence of thoughts, feelings, ideas in consciousness does not signify that this sequence is a causal sequence; but apparently it is so, to the highest degree. Upon this appearance we have founded our whole idea of spirit, reason, logic, etc. (none of these exist: they are fictitious syntheses and unities), and projected these into things and behind things."
Consciousness could not exist if it did not make use of a type of knowledge that was communicable; that was rigorously pared down and simplified for the purpose of interaction between organisms. Language, the capacity to express intentions or desires, is used by the organism for interaction with the outer world. It is only at a much more refined stage of development that the organs of perception were ever turned inward to discover a world of inner events, and even then these can behave only as superficial registers of the surfaces of this world, not as sources or guides for actions.

Consciousness does not direct, but is a tool of self-concealed directing agents; a means to perfect the animal functions, which are "as a matter of principle, a million times more important than all our beautiful moods and heights of consciousness: the latter are a surplus, except when they have to serve as tools of those animal functions. The entire conscious life, the spirit along with the soul, the heart, goodness, and virtue - in whose service do they labour? In the service of the greatest possible perfection of the means (means of nourishment, means of enhancement) of the basic animal functions: above all, the enhancement of life. What one used to call "body" and "flesh" is of such unspeakably greater importance: the remainder is a small accessory. The task of spinning on the chain of life, and in such a way that the thread grows ever more powerful - that is the task." Nietzsche constantly stresses that evaluation does not originate in the consciousness of mankind but in the facts of physiology and environment, and all our attempts to estimate the value of existence by what takes place in the conscious mind are a wayward deflection of this fact: "To measure whether existence has value according to the pleasant or unpleasant feelings aroused in this consciousness: can one think of a madder extravagance of vanity?"

How organisms become moral

Nietzsche believes that all "valuations are only consequences and narrow perspectives in the service of this one will: valuation itself is only this will to power." The reason many valuations stem from the same drive is because there are many power centres and consequently many representations of value according to equivalences in the degree of power that they express. He does not believe that values are simply signs humans use to communicate with each other but are estimations about life embedded in the very form, construction, habits and instincts of all living beings.

Even simple organisms display in their means and acquisition of nourishment, in their manner of reproduction and so forth, evaluations determined wholly by the magnitude of their will to power. This determines and is determined by their physical organisation. Their choices in evaluating are constrained by this fact. In complex organisms such as man, many more valuations are possible, all the more so because he is very much a creature "whose nature has not been fixed". Man has to seek guidance for his actions from a different source than the rigid instincts of simpler organisms. A single individual of a complex species "contains within himself a vast confusion of contradictory valuations and consequently of contradictory drives. This is the expression of the diseased condition in man, in contrast to the animals in which all existing instincts answer to quite definite tasks."

For the greater part of history, mankind has countered the degeneration of these instincts by relying on a form of guidance called "morality". Moral judgements do not originate in consciousness but remain the product of physiology, albeit in a more attenuated way, and are profoundly subject to the environmental influences to which human life is subject.

In morality the tools and habits of consciousness are used to help us to adjust to the environment. Morality therefore bespeaks a degree of consciousness about conditions needed to preserve individuals or groups but no more than that. Mostly it is the evolved product of habit, custom and prejudice rather than a continual and methodical investigation by people of their circumstances. Nietzsche describes morality as "a system of evaluations that partially coincides with the conditions of a creature's life" He has attempted to "understand moral judgements as symptoms and sign languages which betray the processes of physiological prosperity or failure, likewise the consciousness of the conditions for preservation and growth - a mode of interpretations of the same worth as astrology, prejudices prompted by the instincts (or races, communities, of the various stages of life, as youth or decay, etc.)."

The herd instinct imposes the greatest influence upon the birth and growth of morality. Long before individual consciousness arose, individuals depended for their welfare upon the group. Tribal organisation protected them from nature and increased each individual's will to power. The group makes individuals stronger in relation to their environment but at the expense of their own autonomy.

282 WP, a674.
283 loc. cit.
284 WP, a675.
285 WP, a259.
286 WP, a256.
287 WP, a258.
Individuals desire power at the expense of their fellows and physiological variety in nature give some individuals advantages over others. Powerful individuals can distance themselves from the group or strive to dominate it. This is seen by the majority of weaker individuals within the group to be against their interest, and by protecting themselves, shape a common interest and standard of conduct.

Awareness of their common needs slowly acquired a spoken and unspoken character, manifesting in laws as well as in the daily habitual behaviour of the herd. A standard of conduct based on the example of the group's average member was used to police and control dangerous deviations. The task of morality was therefore to bring a specific type of being, the herd animal, to prominence, at the expense of exceptional individuals. The instinct of the herd is to want “to be master: hence its "thou shalt" - it will allow value to the individual only from the point of view of the whole, for the sake of the whole, it hates those who detach themselves - it turns the hatred of all individuals against them.” 

The herd animal seeks to "preserve one type and defends itself on both sides, against those who have degenerated from it (criminals, etc.) and those who tower above it. The tendency of the herd is directed toward standstill and preservation, there is nothing creative in it. The pleasant feelings with which the good, benevolent, just man inspires in us (in contrast to the tension, fear which the great, new man arouses) are our own feelings of personal security and equality: the herd animal thus glorifies the herd nature and then it feels comfortable. This judgement of comfort masks itself with fair words - thus "morality" arises.”

The herd has not baulked at any means to keep recalcitrant individuals in check, and has used morality to justify its cruelties. All the feelings associated with morality originate in the herd’s systematic repressions: "conscience", "guilt", "debt", "punishment" and so forth. During the early stages of the formation of the herd, it could only employ the immediately explosive force of anger and physical violence to forestall transgression. Morality is a more sophisticated means for exerting control. Morality is a refinement of violence.

The feelings of remorse stemming from a "guilty conscience" for example, is nothing less than a sublimated form of torture invented for erring herd members. The essence of the delight in cruelty, "one of the most ancient festive joys of mankind", as Nietzsche refers to it, is the supreme titillation of the feeling of power. Cruelty is time and again sublimated and internalised through morality in communities where people are most endangered and deprived. It is the means by which people refresh themselves: "one supposes that the gods too, feel refreshed and festive when one offers them the sight of cruelty; and so the idea creeps into the world that voluntary suffering, torture one has chosen for oneself, has value and makes good sense."

Gradually all well being is looked upon with mistrust, and hard and painful states with confidence: In the Genealogy of Morals, he accounts in this way for the origin of asceticism, a morality of voluntary suffering which has bloomed like an exotic flower on the manure bed of herd violence. All spiritual leaders or martyrs, he says, undergo voluntary torture to engender great faith, and most of all faith in themselves. The entire aim of this grim history of morality in the herd has been to produce a type of animal which could remember right conduct and to promise to obey the authority demanding it. In doing so morality has set horizons around man and made him calculable. This tremendous labour, what Nietzsche calls the "morality of mores": "...the labour performed by man upon himself during the greater part of the existence of the human race, his entire prehistoric labour, finds its meaning its great justification, notwithstanding the severity, tyranny, stupidity, and idiocy involved in it: with the aid of the morality of mores and the social straight jacket, man was actually made calculable."

The relation of types of morality to will to power

Although all herd moralities may seek to repress individuality, they do not necessarily have anything else in common and differ from place to place, nation to nation, and between castes, classes, professions or orders within the one nation. These differences are most pronounced wherever one caste rules another, for it is then that master and slave moralities emerge. The morality of the slave derives from a group whose powers and independence have been stripped away, and whose daily experience is subordination and humiliation. Accordingly, the slave estimates as "bad" every human quality he associates with those responsible for his oppression: martial spirit, pride, an order of rank, the cruel punisher of disobedience: and every behaviour he calls "good" - peaceableness, fraternity, equality, humility - either opposes the harmful character of the master, or eases the burdens of a suffering life. Whereas the group that is master believes everything "good" to be the outcome of a conquering pride, martial strength, the sense of superiority and everything "bad" to reflect the subordinate slave class: its weaknesses, its resentment.

Nietzsche does not believe that herd moralities are inherently objectionable. In a physiology founded

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288 WP, a275.
289 WP, a285.
290 See GM II.3 to II.7.
291 GM, II.2.
on will to power, a group may be as well constituted, vigorous, and strong as an individual may be badly constituted, exhausted and weak. What matters to the evaluator of morality is that expressions of morality reflect either "ascendant" or "decadent" forms of life. Again we encounter physiological metaphors: "ascending life" is that which grasps after the will to power with greatest surety. It is "healthy", "robust", "life affirming" and its aims are in harmony with its capacity. "Descending" or "decadent" forms of life are prey to exhaustion, their energies are easily dissipated, their attack feebly applied; they envy what is well constituted, and conspire against it.

Decadent life is sick and values what is sick; it has no wish to control the world around it or even itself, but wishes to be controlled. It takes actions least demanding to its energies and resources. Descending life works against life itself; it denies the value of life in itself.

But if all life is will to power, surely decadent life is a disproof of its very existence? For Nietzsche even declining life desires to impose its will on its surroundings. What differs is that this exhausted will, due to dissipation of its internal organisation, can only will what is inferior, and closer to its meagre capacity, whereas the ascendant life can make greater demands on itself and can will grander and finer things.

Even when its instincts are ascending herd morality is undesirable to some degree because it rejects individuals who diverge from the mean. This includes exceptional ability, stature, and character as much as exceptional baseness and malice. The bad is rejected with the good. Yet the rare exceptions are precisely what express the greatest worth. It is not that the individual in itself is a more valuable document of will to power than the group. The morality of the herd is perfectly appropriate if it is applied only to those who fit the standard. It is only the indiscriminate application of these standards against higher natures, who cannot conform to a debilitating norm, that deprives nature of its means for perfecting itself. By rejecting them the herd destroys master works of will to power.

Nietzsche’s philosophy consequently aims at an ordering of rank: not at an individualistic morality. The ideas of the herd should rule in the herd - but not reach out beyond it: the leaders of the herd require a fundamentally different valuation for their own actions, as do the independent, or the "beasts of prey", etc.292 The view of various asses and donkey that Nietzsche embodies an intellectual doctrine known as "nineteenth century individualism" which preaches a gospel of "egoism" is clearly incorrect. His interest is not in the individual per se, but in an elect few whose thoughts and actions, he believes, bestow value on all mankind. Most individuals are best to remain with the herd: that is their highest value; others must live away from it and in their own right because the herd reduces their highest value.

A deed is no less valuable because it is committed by one and not ten. More important is the type of individual who performs it. "Order of rank" implies a wholesale separation and distinction between the value of individuals within a herd according to their innermost character. The nature of an individual is intrinsic to the value of his deeds, and these must be judged accordingly. A deed has no universal value or significance, no abstract value in and for itself; the same action committed by one may have a different worth when committed by another. What matters is who undertakes it, and the indicators of that person’s nature: whether they act from innermost impulses of their nature, or by habits and customs imposed upon them from without. ‘Der Werth einer Handlung hangt davon ab, wie sie that und ob sie aus seinem Grunde oder aus seiner Oberfläche stammt: d.h. wie tief sie individuell ist. Der Werth einer Handlung ist bestimmbar, wenn der Mensch selber erkennbar ist: was im Allgemeinen zu leugnen sien wird.’293

That actions should be assessed according to the impulses behind them accords with the idea of physis. If the impulses are inferior, then the action is inferior regardless of its outcome or effect. If the impulse is deep, and the action shows this character, then it is good. Individuals must be assessed by their nature rather than by their actions. If the man is great, he is so regardless of whether he demonstrates this greatness in his life or works; and likewise the mean-spirited man will never redress his inner worthlessness by a multitude of good works.

Who is most valuable?

Nietzsche points to the difference between ascending or descending life as a solution to the question: What makes the higher type more valuable than the merely moral man or herd animal? In real life of course, the decadent frequently triumph over the healthy so does that make the decadent more valuable? A simple naturalist would have to agree, but Nietzsche resorts to paradox: “Strange though it may sound,” he advises, “one has always to defend the strong against the weak.”294 By this he infers that “strength” or “ascendant life” does not imply evolutionary success and involves a more complex estimation of how power is to be defined.

292 WP, a287.
293 WP 1884, KG VII2, p.283.
294 WP, a685.
“Ascendant” or “strong” life cannot be characterised as brute vigour or flourishing, nor as megalomania. A brute force were the sole criterion of value, the gorilla must rank higher than the human. It is not quanta of power that defines value but the superior usage of raw force. The higher type possesses more force because he utilises what he has more efficiently and pushes his raw will to power to the optimum. The higher type has a superior facility for synthesising data: he is more conscious than any other being. He masters the world around him by assimilating data more efficiently, therefore he is freer. Freedom is directly related to the amount of power a being acquires. The more perfectly he utilises his nature, paradoxically the closer he is to the essential character of all nature. He brings to light nature’s inner character of will to power in all his actions. This does not mean that he is involved in perpetual brutal conquest, but in an immeasurable degree of creativity.

Whoever consciously perfects will to power also shares its restless urge to produce new forms. The higher type reflects in his being the character of the universe. In the doctrine of will to power all the justifications and stratagems typical of the German idea of physis are utilised: the perfecation of nature by the individual, his freedom through the development of his consciousness, his capacity for self-direction over and above merely moral guidance, and its creativity. Nietzsche even retains the term traditionally used by German philosophy to designate the higher type, namely the genius and, like his predecessors, holds the genius as one who has learned to live outside morality, who creates his own value and therefore bestows value on all mankind. At other times he refers to such types as “sovereign individuals”, “free spirits”, “noble types” or more famously, “übermenschen”, but it is the term genius that he uses most frequently. For all its renown, the term übermenschen is most heavily employed only in Thus Spake Zarathustra, and thereafter desultoriety. 295

For Nietzsche, as for the Aufklärers, the genius does not need the direction of custom or tradition, and does not model himself on the herd animal; but allows his actions to be governed by his nature. Nietzsche conception of genius does not differ profoundly from predecessors, however he does criticise Schopenhauer, for example, for having regarded genius as one whose higher capacity for reflection liberates him from the blind processes of primal will and therefore renders him more moral. "Schopenhauer", he says, "interpreted high intellectuality as liberation from the will; he did not want to see the freedom from moral prejudice which is part of the emancipation of the great spirit, the typical immorality of the genius... I see a fundamentally different value cutting across all the moral idiosyncrasies: I know nothing of such an absurd distinction between "genius" and the moral and immoral world of the will. The moral is a lower species than the immoral, a weaker species; indeed - he is a type in regard to morality, but not a type in himself; a copy, a good copy at best. 296

Nietzsche diverges from Schopenhauer only because he interprets what is valuable in nature differently. Schopenhauer, more purely than any of the Germans, retrieves the spirit of the Hellenistic Ideal of Cultivation by making the sage, the free contemplative genius, the icon of value. For Nietzsche, it is formation and creation that counts, so his idea of genius adds to the image of the sage that of the warrior, the hero, or kalois kai agathos. He foregrounds the courtly conception of the Ideal of Cultivation in a way never previously accomplished in German literature. Courtiers or warriors are accustomed to using and styling power; they are artists of activism. Nature as will to power most appropriately defines and justifies their conduct.

With this doctrine Nietzsche explicitly equates physiological soundness with "spiritual" health and thus lays a theoretical foundation for the idea of harmonious development of body and mind. By demonstrating nature to be the product of will to power he believes he can systematically validate his Ideal of Cultivation, and the image of highest humanity, the genius.

295 When, for example, Nietzsche attacks the “cult of genius” in Human all too Human, (HAA I 233) it is not the idea of a greater type of human being that he opposes, only the misunderstanding of what it really is by those who would worship it. The concept of übermenschen, like that of genius, is not an innovation of Nietzsche but of the Aufklärung and references to it occur in the works of Goethe and Herder. The fact that Herder, in his Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität, op. cit. (Vol. I, p.116), actually seeks to discredit the notion of an übermensch or außermensch, must suggest that it would have had some currency in his time. Apropos Herder’s work, one cannot get the feeling that he, like Schiller, must have provided the younger Nietzsche with a store of ideas which he would later adapt for his own purposes. It may be entirely accidental that in the following passage from Herder’s Humanitäits Briefe occur the titles for two works (in bold) of Nietzsche’s middle period (i.e. that of his greatest sympathy with "enlightenment": “Glück als zum ersten Straß der neueren poetischen Morgenröte in Europa! Sie hat einen schonen Namen: die Fröhliche Wissenschaft (gena wieneza, gey saher), möchte sie deinen immer wert sein!” Wir wollen uns nicht in den Streit einlassen, ob die spanische oder lateinische Sprache die ersten Dichter gehabt, ob in dieser dies oder jenes der Freiheit früher und glücklicher gedacht worden. Die Erscheinung selbst, daß an den Grenzen des arabischen Gebiets sowohl in Spanien als Sizilien für ganz Europa die erste Aufklärung begann, ist meidungs undurch für einen großen Teil ihrer Folgen entscheidend.” Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität, op. cit., Vol. II, p.43, (705-85, 1796).
296 WP, a352.
9 - What is a Genius?

When the older Nietzsche claims that genius is the highest type of humanity who brings value into being for all mankind, he justifies it on the basis that genius is the sublime development of will to power. To us the equation seems bizarre. We have learned to equate genius with higher intelligence or exceptional cleverness or think the idea more appropriate to aesthetic than ethical debate. But Nietzsche's understanding was within the tradition of German philosophy and German Ideal of Cultivation in which the genius was the hero, just as the sage was to the Hellenist model, or the warrior to the courtly model.

Genius as an ethical concept

That an aesthetic category came to be used by the Germans as an ethical model dates to the eighteenth century, when aesthetics implicitly became a vehicle to discuss the greatest questions of human value and activity. Aesthetic categories took over thought and became the centre of philosophical activity, most extremely in the work of Schelling and Schiller. Art was seen to be the primary human activity, though not as Fine Art, but as the mere making and remaking of the world by mankind into eternal idealised structures. The medium that was to be formed was not significant: a painter or statesman, for example, do basically the same thing, the one with pigment the other with human souls. It was the activity of the making and the quality of making in itself that counted.

The German Ideal of Cultivation transformed the aesthetic idea of genius into a basis for individual ethics and finally into a political idea. Once they assumed that the genius, the most creative of individuals, justified all humanity, it was a small step to proclaiming him its leader. Perhaps too the idea of genius provided the Aufklärers, who lived with censorship, a way of masking questions relating to matters such as education, freedom, law, and necessity. Such debates could be encompassed in seemingly innocent discussions of aesthetic thought.

Origins and elements of the idea of genius

In transforming the aesthetic idea of genius into an ethical concept the Aufklärers employed habits of thought that have been intrinsic to aesthetic discussions since antiquity.

The stem of the word genius, gen or gens, has a common origin in all Indo-European languages. It is always associated with the concept of begetting or producing. The modern word derives specifically from the Latin variant of this stem, whence genere the verb, and finally genius. The genius of antiquity was a spirit, who inhabited persons or places (genius loci), which they protected and guided. In this usage the Latin genius would have been synonymous with the Greek daemon that guided Socrates in all his actions and gave them a fundamental rightness.

The word genius did not then arise in aesthetic argument. It is rather to the cognate Latin word ingenium meaning inborn natural ability that it owes its present place in English vocabulary and in most European languages. The nearest equivalent in antiquity what we would today call genius, a creative or extraordinary productive personality, would have been the Poet. The words for poet and poetry in Greek (and therefore in Latin), deriving from the verb "to make" generally described constructive activity such as that of an artist.

The poet is the supreme maker or producer, and poetry the supreme production (an estimation disputed by post-Socratic philosophers, who believed philosophers superior). When Greeks debated the nature of the Poet's activity or that of his prosaic companion the Orator, three basic ideas were always manifest. The first may be referred to as naturalness, integrity, or by the Greek word, mimesis; the second by a number of terms, technē in Greek, ars, iudicium, even studium in Latin, or what we might refer to today as style; and the third might be called furor poeticus, poetic furor, implying anything from spontaneous human passion to rapture, or possession by divinities. Underlying this is the supposition that the poet could have imagination, and even originality; that is, some special human quality that cannot be found in nature.

297 It is strange that Wittgenstein's observation that "ethics and aesthetics are one", can be thought so remarkable. This is perhaps more a reflection of the prominence of English philosophy over the last two hundred years than of anything especially novel about Wittgenstein's views. Ethics and taste (the judgement of what is beautiful) are of course intrinsically related; every work of art, no matter how formally abstract - the practice of abstract formalism is itself an ethical decision - embodies the values of an individual or a group. Likewise ethics itself is a form of art, in which a species of form is imposed on life and behaviour, the pattern of which may often arise in profoundly neurological and physiological causes. The way we form and shape things is a reflection not only of our environment but also of the way in which our brain assimilates and organises reality. Thus, one may safely think of ethics and aesthetics as points along a continuum of identical activity, as x-rays are to radio waves within the electromagnetic spectrum. They are essentially the same thing, only operating at a different energy level and wavelength.
Mimesis and genius

*Mimesis,* generally translated or interpreted to mean *imitation of nature,* has been discussed in aesthetic debate in all periods and ages since antiquity, which is not to say it has ever meant one thing. At one extreme mimesis has been understood as merely copying of nature, as in a realistic painting; at the other, as an ability to impart naturalness or integrity to a work of art, as though the work showed no sign of artifice or mannerism.

Most often it has been felt that artists imitate nature's works in that their skill might achieve a perfection little greater than nature's own. They are not entitled to believe that they make freely or inventively. As in the idea of *physis* their endeavours are perfected simply following the laws by which nature itself works.

Even the gods abide by this rule: the maker of the universe in Plato's cosmology, the Demi-urge or divine Artificer, could only fashion the world from pre-existing materials in accordance with existing laws. This rational Greek god could never have *created ex nihilo* like the Judeo-Christian one. Thus the poet, the freest artist, could never invent freely but had to consider Nature's laws whenever he fabricated a poem. At best he could discover, finding what is concealed in nature, but never *originating* something entirely novel. There are close associations between this idea of *mimesis* and the more recent idea of *realism* which holds that art must seek to reveal and communicate great truths about the nature of man and his circumstances.

Style and genius

The idea of a relation between nature and art was extended from the thing *produced,* the poem, to the *producer* himself, the poet. If the best poetry reflected nature in some way, what of the character of the one who *made* poems and whence came his capacity for it? In debates it was popularly answered that the poet was *born* with a native gift for poetry, with *ingenium.* The counter charge most frequently levelled at this assertion held the native ability to be secondary to the poet's capacity for obeying the laws (*iudicium*) of art or style. Cicero for example followed Aristotle in believing *ingenium* had to be tempered by *iudicium.* Horace, in *De Arte Poetica* cites Democritus as having esteemed the native gift as something happier than the poor rules of art, but he himself insisted that *Nature* (*ingenium*) could not do without study (*studium*) and study could not do without Nature.

This opposition featured eternally in the aesthetic debate of antiquity. The emphasis on the capacity of individuals to follow laws of art or style also closely paralleled ethical tendencies then prevalent. The admirers of unparalleled achievement, of heroes, statesmen or poets, often emphatically extolled, to the neglect of great individual’s native endowments, the influence of acquired virtue upon his success. This was frequently done in post-Socratic epochs when warring philosophical schools sought prestige and influence by lauding the ameliorating powers of philosophy to the skies. *Virtue,* equates in ethics to *technē, ars,* or *iudicium* in aesthetics.

Poetic Furor and genius

Against those who argued that *ingenium* was the key to the poet’s makeup were those who argued that it was *divine guidance* or *inspiration.* The idea of *furor poeticus,* like that of *mimesis,* poses many possibilities. One of these is contained in the early meaning of the word *genius* wherein gods were thought to give guidance to the poet without his conscious volition.

This idea separates personality from personal responsibility for achievement. An individual’s accomplishment is not due to his personality but to the *daemonic* urge working within and through him. This prefigures the modern idea of the unconscious; of a psychic force within the individual for which he does not himself feel responsible. However you name it, the thought implies a feeling of overflowing or spilling over, an excess or evanescence of the soul. With the advent of Christianity, personal gods were displaced by the omniscient creator, so it was natural to attribute poetic insight to his intervention. The actor changes, the act remains the same.

In antiquity the enraptured poet was more mocked than admired, but this surely indicates widespread endorsement of the idea. Sometimes it was promoted to attack the influence of poets. Plato famously and cunningly made *inspiration,* a faculty having nothing to do with reason or truth, the main force behind poetry. He did this not out of admiration, but of envy, because the poet undermined the authority of *philosophical* truth. And it is why Plato barred poets from the antiseptic streets of his Republic.

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298 *ibid.,* n295.
299 *ibid.,* n410.
300 *ibid.,* n457–464. Horace suggests Empedocles’ may have tumbled into the volcano of Etna in a transport of poetic furor.
The aesthetic idea of imagination is also a variant of the idea of poetic furor, mainly in the middle ages when Aristotelian opinion dominated. Aristotle described the poet's use of imagination or phantasía (fantasia) as a faculty with the character of perception and thought; it revived and threw up images of previous primary experience in the manner of dreams, while not being itself unconscious. In Aristotle's view, imagination only visualised what already existed in the world: what was already in nature. The good poet simply used this faculty to recreate more vivid images than others. This idea of imagination, which lingered for as long as Aristotle's influence, belongs more properly to the mimetic strain of aesthetic argument.

Since the Renaissance, imagination was related to poetic furor once it was deemed that poets could combine and synthesise images into new and startling forms; invent completely novel histories or situations, conjure up other worlds and put themselves sympathetically into the circumstances of others.

One final variant of poetic furor, not especially manifest in antiquity is that of creativity. The terms "create", or "creator" have always implied freedom of action, of bringing into being some new thing, or, of bringing forth something new from nothing as in creatio ex nihilo. In antiquity human activity could rarely be equated with such a concept, except for poets perhaps, the one who made.

In Latin there were two roughly synonymous words that convey the idea of forming or making: facere or creare. The verb creare, from which derives creatio, and creator, had more explicitly rustic origins; it meant to produce or cause to grow, and also gathered connotations of fatherhood such as in the term creator urbis - founder of the city. The words facere and creare remained synonymous throughout most of antiquity, but creare was adopted by the Christians to describe God's bringing forth of the world from nothing. In this case, creatio, or more precisely, creatio ex nihilo could never define human activity, since only the divinity could truly originate things especially because, from late antiquity to the Middle Ages, art was generally thought to be imitative.

During the Renaissance however expressions of the idea of man creating in the manner of a divinity abound. But the word creativity or its similes in the European languages was not used to describe this or indeed to indicate artistic freedom or originality until the eighteenth century. The idea of creativity in art again makes explicit reference to magical or deistic elements provoking artistic productions. That the Christian understanding of the divinity creating ex nihilo precedes the aesthetic usage of the term is also significant. Making a work of art is subsequently deemed a magical act, partaking of some grander moment in the universe than mere craftsmanship or fabrication.

The controversy over the three elements of genius

These three ideas, having gone by various names and subject to many variations have formed the basis for aesthetic debates in the west ever since.

In debates between Baroque, Rococo, Classical, or Romantic styles, arguments have pitted Reason against sentiment, rules against spontaneity, imitation against originality (those advocating in art the pre-eminence of imagination over reason, self-creating genius over aesthetic laws, and beauty as elevated feeling over beauty as a form of objective knowledge) using the vocabulary of the epoch. There have always been revolts for and against mimesis and laws, even though the idea of nature and laws may change. During the Middle Ages and well into the Renaissance the rule of Aristotle provided one tyranny and thereafter Descartes who, having never written explicitly on aesthetics, became the despot of French and of European ideas.

There is little or no progress in the history of ideas. The aesthetic debate we today call Romanticism contra Classicism (involving a gross simplification of all the complexities which these terms betray) has never really been absent from civilised reflection on art and, due to its general nature, being a collision between two forms of sensibility rather than condensed and clarified world-views, is unlikely ever to conclude. On one extremity an arid classicism and rationalism that would make art and artists conform to a tyrannous legislature, has always been arrayed against an errant rush of sentiment and sickness that would dispense with reason for enthusiasm and with laws for recklessness. Somehow reason always picks its way between the camps, but as always extremism provides us with something to talk about, and therefore to define the temper and taste of a period.

Developments in the idea of genius

Christianity arrives in Europe and the definition of what a poet or genius is becomes a backwater issue. Outstanding worldly achievement is not a proper subject for intellectual discussion until the Italians of the Renaissance decide to remember pre-Christian antiquity, and restore various categories and talking points, in the first instance with little variation other than a stronger metaphysical and
When Lessing (1729 -1781), a man of balance and measured taste, wrote, "genius transcends all

rules! Rules suppress genius" he was reacting to the fact that German poetry was then gripped in the stranglehold of Goethe's shrivelled aesthetics, itself inspired of Boileau. But if Lessing's voice was singularly reasonable among the earlier Aufklärers it was soon drowned out by an opposite bout of extremism. From about 1760 onward the Sturm und Drang movement in German letters, sometimes called the geniezeit, thrust the idea of genius into the living heart of poetry and aesthetics. Goethe, the movement's favoured son, wrote of this period later in his life with manifest distaste, declaring that in his youth, “the word genius became a universal watchword... It was long before the time when it could be said that genius is that power of man which gives laws and rules through acting and doing. In those days it manifested itself only when it broke existing laws, overthrew established rules, and declared itself untramelled.”

What was being experienced was yet another bout of Marinismo, but this time with a more theoretical edge. Sturm und Drang was essentially a youth movement and each of its principles grew up and moved on, but their example was noted and soon systematised by intellectuals who deemed it man's highest duty to develop all his powers to the full. The genius was the type of man who set out on this quest in earnest and lived by fulfilling the dictates of Bildung. The equation was historic, for it explicitly tied the idea of genius to the Ideal of Cultivation. Thereafter, it became a commonplace in German intellectual life to make the genius exemplify cultivation of the highest kind. The Romantic generation which succeeded not only endorsed the idea but pushed it to its ultimate limits by regarding the genius, as Nietzsche was later to do, as the justifier of life itself.

As an aesthetic sensibility, Romanticism, or rather the varieties of romanticism, emphasises personal experience, emotion and spontaneity, eclecticism in taste and style, beauty for its own sake, and estimates highly the significance of art. In short, it is an untramelled embrace of the idea of poetic favor. For the German Romantics artistic activity was the sublime achievement of the universe. During Schelling's Romantic phase he regarded the work of art so highly that he believed it reflected the unity of existence behind all the grades of self-evolving life. The process of self-divisions and unifications experienced by nature and history could be united by the activity of the artist.

The artist unifies being, because his work is both conscious and unconscious. "It is as though in rare persons who are, above all others, artists in the highest sense of the word, the immutable identity, on which all existence rests, has put off the raiment with which it clothes itself in others... Consequently it can only be the contradiction between the conscious and the unconscious in free action that sets the artistic impulse into motion, just as, once more, it can only be given to art to satisfy our infinite striving as well as to resolve the ultimate and most extreme contradiction in us." 307

The artistic genius closes the contradiction in nature. We are now not too far from the younger Nietzsche's radical aestheticism. Schelling comes closest among the German Idealists to putting art equal to or higher than philosophy for systematic reasons. Similar sentiments are found among the Romantic poets and literati. Novalis, an active and significant poet associated with the Schlegels, believed that "nur der Künstler kann den Sinn des Lebens erraten". 308 Friedrich Schlegel, writing to his brother in 1793 while still a young man, declared "Die Seele meiner Lehre ist, daß die Menschheit das Höchste ist und die Kunst nur um ihr willen vorhanden sei." 309 From there poetry or the feeling for art and style in general was felt to be needed in all areas of life: ethics, politics, and social institutions. And above it all was to stand the greatest type of poet, the genius.

The sceptical rationalism of the Aufklärers made them determined to explore all areas of human life critically, methodically, and unencumbered by ancient prejudices. The juvenile poets of the Sturm und Drang never sought to impede the Aufklärers' progress, or react against rationalism in any sense. They were seen as a reaction of feeling against reason, but this feeling was itself highly reasoned and came out of a higher order of thought. It was not Reason itself but a particularly limiting it stifling brand of it that the intellectuals of the geniezeit wished to complain with familiar green enthusiasm.

Likewise the Romantics who followed were not, as generally assumed, merely revolting against reason even if they explicitly claimed to be doing so; they continued the programme of the Aufklärers, but pushed aspects of it to ludicrous lengths. The dictum that “rules suppress genius” can be and was extended to ethical and political life, with the effect that great criminals and demagogues could be and were elevated to hero status, and monstrous irresponsibility justified as the privilege of “great” men. This excess also afflicts Nietzsche, whose sobriety in other matters melts to sentimentality before mug shots of unshaven criminality.

307 In An Meinem Leben, Dichotomy and Wholes in Goethe, though disapproving of the cult of genius during the Sturm und Drang by no means renounces the concept. He continues to believe in the necessity for extraordinary individuals and their achievements as the necessary basis of culture. For example, in the Conversations with Eckermann, op. cit., p.128, he notes that “the whole mischief proceeds from this, that poetical culture is so widely diffused in Germany that nobody now ever makes a bad verse. The young poets who send me their works are not inferior to their predecessors... and yet we cannot encourage them, when talents of the sort exist by the hundreds; we ought not to favour superfluities while so many...”. 308 F.W.J. Schelling, System of Transcendental Idealism, tr. J. Hafz, Charlottesville, 1979, Section IV, 1. 309 Cited in Kluckhohn, op. cit., p.160. 310 loc. cit. Schlegel also states that “Die Bildung und Entwicklung der Individualität als höchsten Beruf zu treiben, wäre ein göttlicher Egoismus.” Kluckhohn, op. cit., p.57.
German idealist philosophers were obsessed with awakening inner consciousness, and equated this consciousness with the progress and freedom of the human spirit; this is true not only of the greatest of them, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Schelling, Fichte, Schopenhauer, but countless others. With respect to this unifying aim Romanticism and Rationalism were never at cross-purposes. In Germany, the Romantics built upon concepts already prepared for them by the Aufklärers. The aesthetic discussions of the Enlightenment and Romantic period widened and deepened the idea of genius and provided most of the formulae for Nietzsche’s understanding of its character. The pages of the Birth of Tragedy or the Untimely Meditations for example contain much that is Schiller, as presented in the Letters upon the Aesthetic Education of Man, which Nietzsche’s would have read in his youth, even if he affected to scorn the poet in his maturity.

The Aufklärers built the bridge to greener pastures and the Romantics walked across it. Nietzsche, working at least two generations later, started to build a philosophy there.

The elements of genius in Nietzsche’s works

The three primary qualities of genius or poetry that historically have constituted aesthetic discourse are also essential to Nietzsche’s understanding of genius and ethical behaviour. For Nietzsche any person who truly embraces an Ideal of Cultivation will always embody what we have termed here mimesis, iudicium or poetic furor. In Nietzsche’s nomenclature, mimesis is integrity, iudicium is style and furor poeticus is plenitude.

Integrity

Integrity as an element of genius, or the highest levels of culture, appears consistently in all Nietzsche’s works. It is signposted by words or phrases such as “freedom and sincerity”410, “correct feeling”411, the “unity of inner and outer”412, “honesty”,413 and “you shall become the person you are.”414

Integrity has close logical affinity with the idea of physis, insofar as it is seen as the means to reach down to and touch what is fundamental in nature. This is the first principle of culture, as we see when we construct the logic of idea of physis:

A Human beings are involuntary productions of nature.315

B There are two aspects to human nature; one is individual, inborn; the other is social and given to us through relations with the group or tribe.

C That which is inborn is deep-rooted, persistent, and too essential to be changed; that which is formed in us by the group is superficial and ephemeral.

D In every group there are manners or customs that may prevent what is in-born in individuals from emerging. This may or may not benefit the group, but it places individual in a state of contradiction; they must decide whether to follow the group, at the cost of giving up what is their own; or, follow their deeper nature, though it may lose them the goodwill of the group.

Living by customs of the group gains goodwill; living by the dictates of one’s nature is more difficult or dangerous, but it is the noblest course. We are more honest when we live in harmony with our primal character: Integrity may be defined therefore as being true to our primal self.

We have seen how two injunctions of Greek antiquity informed Nietzsche’s Ideal of Cultivation; one, from the Pythian odes of Pindar: “You must become the being which you are”; the other, attributed to Solon: “Know thyself”. Both statements announce a concern for the development of the individual, indicate that self-development is a desirable end in itself and are sign-posts in the history of the Ideal of Cultivation in the west.

Pindar’s statement has an uncanny hold on Nietzsche throughout his life316. To emphasise its importance to him he uses it as the subtitle of his autobiography - Ecce Homo, or “wie man wird, was man ist”. “To become what one is”; is paradoxical. If one is then one cannot become what one is.

313 TOS II, III, p.131
314 TOS II, IV, p.141. The obverse, presumably, of ‘incorrect feeling’
315 TOS I, II, p.100.
316 BGE, a227.
317 GS, a270.
318 For both the younger and older Nietzsche an abrupt separation between the two is completely unthinkable: ‘The younger Nietzsche notes, for instance, that “when one speaks of humanity, the idea is fundamental that this is something which separates and distinguishes man from nature. In reality, however, there is no such separation; “natural” qualities and those called truly “human” are inseparably grafted together. Man in his highest and noblest capacities is wholly nature and embodies its uncanny dual character.” (HC, EGP, p. 51).
319 He cites Pindar’s line from The Pythian Odes, 2, in correspondence to his friends. See SL, to Rohde, 3 November 1867, and to Lou Salome, 30 June 1882.
Becoming bespeaks incompleteness, or a series of stages toward a state of completion; to say that one is, indicates this state has already been attained and that further change would be unnecessary.

It is not a paradox if we consider how human nature is represented here. The view of humanity expressed implicitly in Pinder’s injunction and explicitly in Nietzsche’s is that two natures dwell in us; the primary nature or “daemon” underlies the secondary one that is imposed on us by upbringing. By becoming the “being we are” we allow the primary nature, the genius or daemon within us, to ripen under the shell of the social nature. The younger Nietzsche believes that few can shed this shell once their primary nature comes to maturity and in most cases “the germ of it withers away.”

If we are honest we must liberate ourselves from the constraining shell and permit inner genius its full expression. Only by becoming what we truly are can we produce something of enduring value and avoid a life of mimicry and servitude to others; wherein we produce only things of fleeting value. We can attain things of truly abiding worth by discovering our own laws of movement, not by imitating others. Those who seek to become what they are “human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves... must become the best learners and discoverers of everything that is lawful and necessary in the world: we must become physicists in order to be able to be creators in this sense - while hitherto all valuations and ideals have been based on ignorance of physics or were constructed so as to contradict it. Therefore: long live physics! And even more so that which compels us to learn physics - our honesty.”

“Physics” means the study of human nature, of one’s own individual nature so as to bring it to perfection. We may not create or accomplish anything great unless we turn our honest inward and assess what is there. Those who act on false beliefs about themselves acts less effectively than those who study themselves carefully. Thus we see the affinity which draws together the concept of Pindar and that of Solon, and later Socrates: “Know thyself”. For Socrates the discovery of internal laws substituted for the abasement of feeling for the laws of the Athenian polis; if guidance could not be found externally, then a more abiding system of law lies in our interior, which can be obeyed if its existence is discerned. For Nietzsche there is no universally valid law, but degrees of necessity, elements of human character and instincts that cannot be altered but which may hinder or enhance creativity. By knowing these are there we can at least see how necessity can be turned to best effect.

Integrity and the younger Nietzsche

The younger Nietzsche deals with the theme of integrity extensively in the first of the series of Untimely Meditations, - David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer. In this essay he distinguishes between those who have “honesty” who are “true men of culture” and possess or follow their “genius”, and those who are philistines (Bildungspflister): a term of student coinage brought into wider usage by Goethe and Schiller in the previous century. Those with true culture have uncompromising integrity concerning the ends and means of their existence, whereas philistines have sham culture, which Nietzsche exposes in the popular writer and critic David Strauss. The philistine, he muses, is one who affects a degree of civility and learning and parades an aesthetic sensibility, though none of his actions or interests are informed by sincere sentiments.

Easily blown in the winds of convention, the philistine cannot guide himself because he is unwilling to know himself. Partly this is due to a cowardice and reluctance to acknowledge the disturbing enigmas of existence. Mostly however, it is due to sloth: “Each knows they are a “unique being” but hides this knowledge from himself, preferring to look to his neighbour "to think and act with his herd, and not seek his own joy. The reason for this behaviour is, apart from rare cases of shyness - sloth. Men are more slothful than timid, and their greatest fear is of the burdens that an uncompromising honesty and nakedness of speech would lay on them... The man who will not belong to the general mass has only to stop “taking himself easily”, to follow his conscience which cries out to him, “Be thyself! All that thou dost and thinkest and desirest, is not thyself!... There is no more desolate creature in nature than the man who has broken away from his true genius.”

The man of true culture is not distracted by the demands of the zeitgeist. Current events do not drown out his own thought. He obeys an inner compulsion that presses him to ask the most fundamental questions: “Why am I alive? What lesson have I to learn from life? How have I become what I am, and why do I suffer in this existence?”. Finally he asks: “What is the real worth of life? In attending to these concerns he is unwilling to satisfy himself with facile conclusions like the philistine, who

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317 EID, 455.
318 GS, a335, cf. quote from Montaigne in Chapter VII, fn.28.
319 TOS II, III, pp.103-104. Nietzsche notes that “...everyone... has a deep longing after the "genius" in himself. This is the root of all true culture; and if we say this means the aspiration of man to be born again as saint or genius... we feel a strong loathing when we find talent without aspiration in the circle of the learned, or among the so-called educated... (clever men) are no aid but a hindrance to culture and the blossoming of genius, the aim of all culture.” TOS II, III, p.127.
320 TOS II, III, p.145.
321 TOS II, III, p.131.
The questions are so great they need to be answered with deeds as well as words; by living out his response to these enigmas he commits an act of "heroism" and so ceases to be the plaything of time and circumstances. Now he aspires to an imperative that goes beyond his time and circumstance and so declares: "I will remain my own". The man of culture cannot compromise with truth, so his actions betray what he truly believes; there is no disharmony between his inner and outer life.

For young Nietzsche the unity between inner and outer life is the key to integrity. The culture-philistine lacks this unity so whatever culture he possesses is no better than a veneer on an ineffectual centre. His indifference toward truth contrasts markedly with the cultured man whose innermost longing and deepest need if for certainty. Reflecting on the influence exerted by Kant's sceptical philosophy on his generation, he claims that it is "only a very few men that Kant has so vitally affected as to change the current of their blood." On the popular mind the only affect has been "corrosive scepticism and relativity", whereas noble and active men, who cannot remain in a condition of tepid doubt, the despair of truth is a shattering experience.

Doubt makes it impossible for noble men to act with passion. If the task they undertake is not significant, if it cannot seize their imagination and invest every moment with meaning, then they would rather not bother. The extremities, total conviction or utter nihilism, are more satisfactory than the incompletion of uncertainty. To believe unquestioningly spurs you to action but also to foolishness; to despair of all truth condemns you to unredeeming idleness. Honesty tells you that all knowledge is a fabrication of order imposed upon the world by the need to live. Falsehood is advantageous to life, but only so long as it is believed. Men of true culture meet every truth directly, whether it is to their advantage or not, and understand the illusory and provisional character of knowledge. The contradiction between urgent desire for truth and the realisation that this is not possible in any absolute sense provokes a tension that tests their creative powers.

Philistines experience no contradiction as they do not really care whether what they believe is true, or whether what everyone calls truth is false. They pursue the path of least resistance and abstain from thoughts that lead to inner commotion. They do not even recognise the challenge that affronts every man of culture: "How much truth can a spirit endure, how much truth does a spirit dare?"

There is an important distinction between what Nietzsche calls "honesty" and what he later refers to as the "will to truth". At an early stage in his intellectual development he is uneasy about the value of an untrammelled pursuit of knowledge. He experiences the disquiet eternalised by Goethe in his treatment of the Faust legend; of a polymath hungering for a richer, more passionate existence. Nietzsche the culture-physician, drawing from the examples of this German affliction concludes that the libido scienti may not be a spur to culture at all and may not be a spur to culture at all and may in fact lead away from that goal. "Scarcely anybody," he notes in the essay on David Strauss, "seems to ask what the result of such a cultivation of the sciences will mean to culture in general, even supposing that everywhere the highest abilities and the most earnest will be available for the promotion of culture."

Further on he cites Pascal's observation that men work hard at "business and sciences" in order to escape questions of greatest import that every moment of loneliness or leisure might press upon them: those relating to the "wherefore, the whence and the whither of life." In this he follows Socrates who disparaged the work of the natural philosophers because it dwelt on what he thought were less essential questions. In the case of unbounded will to truth the degree of self-reflection and self-consciousness demanded by the cultural imperative "know thyself!" is dissipated in the investigation of objects outside of the self. True culture involves deeper self-consciousness than this.

In later works Nietzsche treats the will to truth as a special form of the will to power. Scholars or scientists, types who exhibit this trait most forcefully, have a boundless appetite for knowledge for its own sake. Scholars unconsciously imagine their investigations into history or nature bring them ersatz, control over reality. By bringing themselves intellectually into the presence of things, they experience an abstracted sensation of will to power. When scholars gain understanding of an object or process they obtain a victory; a satisfaction in itself, after which they desire nothing further. Their happiness is in knowing what is. In Nietzsche's estimation this action is incomplete and does not satisfy the criteria of true culture. Men of higher culture do not merely desire to know that something "is thus and thus" but wish to act so that something becomes thus and thus. The scholarly type consequently stands in lesser relation to the philosopher or artist who fixes things as they "ought to be". Instead of merely knowing, they create, and by creating they bring value into being.

In Richard Wagner in Bayreuth, Nietzsche uses the term correct feeling to describe integrity. In

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322 TOS II, IV, p.145.
321 loc. cit.
323 TOS II, III, p.124.
324 WP, a1041.
325 TOS I, I, p.50.
326 TOS I, I, p.62.
matters of life and culture, he observes, you must feel correctly before you can think correctly. It is the spontaneous in you that should determine how you evaluate, not second-hand conventions, which he likens to an "artificial estrangement" that distances one from another, and gives birth to countless misunderstandings. For the sake of an agreeable dissimulation we create an "inharmonious bombast" within and between ourselves. By convention and "incorrect feeling" the forms of life are emptied of content, their significance is lost, and true value which can only be forged out of sincerity is effaced.

Thus, "wherever form is still in demand in society, conversation, literary style, or the relations between governments, men have unconsciously grown to believe that it is adequately met by a kind of agreeable dissimulation, quite the reverse of genuine form conceived as a necessary relation between the proportions of a figure, having no concern whatever with the notions "agreeable" or "disagreeable" simply because it is necessary and not optional":328 "...incorrect feeling governs and drills them unremittingly, and does not even give them time to speak, convention whispers their cue to them, and this makes them forget what they originally intended to say: should they desire to understand one another their comprehension is maimed as though by a spell: they declare that to be their joy which in reality is but their doom,... they have become transformed into perfectly and absolutely different creatures, and reduced to abject slaves of incorrect feeling."329

Man's best and worst qualities depend on the depth of nature within and "those of his abilities which are terrifying and considered inhuman may even be fertile soil out of which alone all humanity can grow in impulse, deed and work."330 To suppress that nature for the sake of peace and civility makes the highest human endeavour impossible. The genius of culture requires depth of passion and spontaneity as much as he eschews excessive refinement or mistrust of the appetites. The later Nietzsche gleefully observes how periods of highest culture are volcanic in their passions. The same energy applied to constructing and adorning a city is as easily adapted to destroying another: noble Athenians were as ready for war as for philosophy, and the tyrants of Italy scourged their enemies as energetically as they paid geniuses to adorn their courts. Too much "nature" may indeed be a dangerous surplus but when nature is denied life is undermined.

In a culture of correct feeling passions are played out in innocence of bad form or bad conscience. You understand that your passions are necessary and that it is hypocritical or superfluous to disavow them. This integrity is difficult to sustain in a milieu of rigid morality – such as Christian morality – which equates nature with sin or evil, and conceals countless passions behind pious ritual. To leave passion hiding, but undiminished behind masks of respectability ferments poison. Morality reflects low levels of culture, whereas high culture is dominated by "admitted immorality".331

The Greeks and pagans of antiquity displayed an "innocence" before the natural,332 likewise the Renaissance Italians, and in modern times individuals like Napoleon and Goethe, who is a "return to nature" after the superficiality of the eighteenth century; not in the sense of "going-back" or regressing to something lower, but a "going-up" to a freer kind of being. Naturalness to the Greeks meant affirming life through contest and struggle and openly admitting ambition, their will to dominate, envy and hatred of rivals. This is what stimulates the energies that produce genius.

No disgust or guilt was felt for desiring victory or employing cruelty to attain it. Struggle was necessary to culture, and to ensure that struggle never ceased no one victor was permitted to over-tower his opponents; many geniuses excite competition and constrain the excesses of absolute domination. The Greeks understood that one victor dominating for too long results in tyranny and the hereby the diminishment of culture: "That is the core of the Hellenic notion of the contest: it desires, as a protection against genius, another genius."333

Integrity, freedom and necessity

If value is that which resists becoming; the sincere man of culture, who produces and contains value, also resists becoming. This does not imply unwillingness or lack of desire to change in his life or his milieu, but that he makes what is essential to himself the foundation of his actions. The personality he creates for himself is more enduring than that of the man of his time: "who only regards his life as a moment in the evolution of a race or state or a science, and will belong merely to a history of "becoming" has not understood the lesson of existence and must learn it over again. This eternal "becoming something" is a lying puppet-show, in which man has forgotten himself; it is the force that scatters individuality to the four winds, the eternal childish game that the big baby time is playing in front of us... The heroism of sincerity lies in ceasing to be the playingth of time. Everything in the process of "becoming" is a hollow sham... man can only find the solution of his riddle in "being"

332 TOS II, IV, p.135.
333 TOS II, IV, p.141.
328 HC, EGP, p.51.
329 WP, a747.
330 WP, a147.
331 HC, EGP, pp.57-58.
332 TOS II, IV, p.141.
333 TOS II, IV, p.135.
something definite and unchangeable.\textsuperscript{334}

The inner life of the cultivated man addresses immutable needs. He asks questions about his life that can be posed in every epoch, and the energy with which he responds to these questions indicates the extent of his freedom. In the essay, \textit{Richard Wagner In Bayreuth}, the younger Nietzsche expresses this conception of freedom with a precision which is not bettered in later writings: “passion is better than Stoicism and hypocrisy, that being honest in evil is still better than losing oneself to the morality of tradition, that a free human being can be good as well as evil, but that an unfree human being is a blemish upon nature and has no share in any heavenly or earthly comfort; finally, that everyone who wishes to become free must become free through his own endeavour, and that freedom does not fall into any man's lap as a miraculous gift.”\textsuperscript{335}

This is not the freedom of a citizen in a republic but of the Hellenistic sage and the German philosopher. It is personal not public freedom that you seek in a civilisation without political liberty. Physical and material freedom is deemed lower or easily obtained, whereas spiritual autonomy, something gained by inwardly directed exertions and discipline, is viewed as higher. Like the Hellenistic sage Nietzsche is unmoved by exhortations for liberty by the liberal movements of his time. His freedom is wholly appropriate to traditional Germany where the inner life of spirit is the one area of life not controlled by the political ruler, and therefore easiest to demand as one's own. Real freedom does not arise by opposing secular authority, it comes from thinking in accordance with truth that is independently acquired.

Real tyranny is not imposed by a ruler, but by the opinions of others. These considerations inform Kant's masterly definition of "enlightenment" as an "exodus from a self-imposed tutelage" and his observation that "immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another." Immaturity, he notes, is "self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. Sapere Aude! 'Have courage to use your understanding!' that is the motto of enlightenment."\textsuperscript{336} Kant demands we act in accordance with our independent understanding, arrived at as an individual rather than as a party to a social or political order. Freedom requires strength of resolve and self-consciousness to resist the arbitrary customs and superstitions that prevent us knowing what is essential.

The same paradigm causes Nietzsche to oppose the idea of free will favoured by moralists opposed to the idea of \textit{physik}. The ‘freedom’ given to us by acting with integrity does not free us from one single link of the chains of necessity, for we remain wholly and solely determined, like everything else in the universe, by physical forces.\textsuperscript{337} We cannot under any circumstances be liberated from our nature or seek to exert a will in contradiction to it. Our inner nature cannot be recast. It is only that by honestly appraising our circumstances we may calculate the scale and extent of necessity which gathers in and around us, and can thereby assess what it is we are able to change and what we must learn to endure. Freedom consists, paradoxically, in the \textit{consciousness of necessity}.\textsuperscript{338}

Traditional morality legislates for a multiplicity of human natures without considering what it has license to control, an action no less absurd than trying to rule that the sun should rise. In every moral epoch we see the ironic consequence of this naivety: moralists set down codes that force us to act against our inner nature and then rail and thunder because they are disobeyed. Irony completes itself as moralists energetically theorise an illusory freedom for mankind merely so that it can be believed opposed to the idea of \textit{physik}. Mankind must be seen to possess free will, for without it how could anyone follow traditional morality. Because moral categories are the basis of the power of officers of morality - of priests, shamans, journalists, or state functionaries - they cannot be allowed to be undermined by an idea that shows it is impossible to act in contradiction to natural forces. Mankind must be seen to possess free will, for without it how could anyone follow traditional morality. The moralist insists that we are free from nature only in order to secure his own power. "if you are free from nature" he argues, "then you can choose between what I call 'good' and what I call 'evil'." These categories good and evil have no meaning in a purely determined world.

For early and later Nietzsche, freedom is a narrow zone of possibility between the overwhelming power nature exerts over humanity and the slender power humanity exerts over nature. It is a small freedom but one that makes possible the multiplicity and drama of human value, since our capacity to evaluate is its direct result. Increase of power, freedom and value are closely related. We extend our freedom by increasing our knowledge of ourselves, recognising the nature in us.

\textsuperscript{334} TOS II, III, p.145.
\textsuperscript{335} TOS II, II, p.94.
\textsuperscript{336} Kant, \textit{An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?} (1784), op. cit., p.41.
\textsuperscript{337} In \textit{PTAG}, 7, the younger Nietzsche remarks that "man down to his last fibre is necessity and absolutely 'unfree'.".
\textsuperscript{338} For further observations on the relation between consciousness and action see WP, a72, a289, a434, a439, a524, a504, a505, a707 and a711.
\textsuperscript{339} Or, as Nietzsche expresses it: "if power has been attained over nature, one can employ this power in the further free development of
oneself: will to power as self elevation and strengthening.”^342^ Once this relationship is established you embark on the next step in the process toward genius; you now have to learn how to organise power. Thus, if the aesthetic conception of mimesis resembles the ethical notion of physis, the aesthetic idea of style, resembles the ethical notion of perfecting.

**Style**

Schiller, in the *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* declares that "One of the most important tasks of culture, then, is to submit man to form, even in a purely physical life, and to render it aesthetic as far as the domain of the beautiful can be extended..."^343^ This remark could be taken as the cue for Nietzsche’s reflections on, the second element of genius: style (Stil). If integrity is the process of becoming conscious of nature, style is the next step in the process of cultivating genius, that is, of giving form to nature. This understanding of style is shared by the early and the later Nietzsche.

Its significance may be defined as follows:

A. Nature is chaotic, without being, and therefore without value. To be made valuable it must be given a fixed and immutable form i.e. it must be organised.

B. All living things are fragments of value insofar as they are attempts, inwardly and outwardly, to organise nature.

We give form to nature by learning to master ourselves and resist the tendency toward decay. We do this by integrating the many impulses of which we are constituted, and sublimating them to a more perfect level of development. Together these processes bring forth style.

For the later Nietzsche, style was reformulated in sympathy with the doctrine of will to power, and defined as the practice by which the life most effectively embodies power.

**Style through integration**

Nietzsche’s earliest discussions of style occur in the *Untimely Meditations*, particularly in the third essay *Schopenhauer as Educator*. Not unexpectedly, the question of education is discussed in the same context as style. Education attends to the aspects of a person that are subject to change. It helps produce integrity by encouraging people to see “what in man is immutable and what is accessible to change.” Education, according to Nietzsche, should not hope to alter the fundamental character of a man, but seek to reveal the deepest layers and significance of his being. It should not try to change but to complete nature. It can do this by helping someone see the arbitrary restrictions that impair their development.

Education should liberate as all "true educators and moulders reveal... the real groundwork and import of thy being, something that in itself cannot be moulded or educated, but is anyhow difficult of approach, bound and crippled: thy educators can be nothing but thy deliverers. And that is the secret of all culture: it does not give artificial limbs, wax noses, or spectacles for the eye - a thing that could buy such gifts is but the base coin of education. But it is rather the delicate shoots, the streaming forth of light and warmth, the tender dropping of the night rain; it is the following and the cue for Nietzsche’s reflections on..."^342^ Like the guru, the ideal educator brings enlightenment, aiming not just to impart information but to help each pupil discover and develop their individual genius. This philosophic teacher has two maxims: that he seeks out his pupil’s one strong point, and strive to bring this to maturity and that he raise all of that pupil’s qualities to a higher level and have them exist together harmoniously.

Again Nietzsche echoes ancient wisdom, and like Plutarch, believes it is in the nature of certain pursuits that they cannot exist side by side. You must occupy yourself as nature intended and not try to master her by compulsive emulation of one mode of life or another.^343^ He approves the example of Benvenuto Cellini who, having a decided talent for gold smithing, refused his father’s pleas to learn to play the cornet. The demand for harmonious development hardly applies to a talent as strongly manifest in one direction as Cellini’s. It may well be, he argues, that "the maxim of harmonious development applies only to weaker natures, in which there is a whole swarm of desires and inclinations, though they may not amount to very much, singly or together... Where do we find such a blending of harmonious voices... as we see in natures like Cellini’s, where everything - knowledge,

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342 WP, #403.
344 TOS II, III, p.108.
desire, love and hate - tends towards a single point, the root of all, and a harmonious system, the resultant of the various forces, is built up through the irresistible domination of this vital centre.\footnote{344}

Years later, Nietzsche returns to this concern when he gives voice to Zarathustra. This ideal pedagogue warns that too many virtues may afflict an individual and "if you are lucky you will have one virtue and no more... To have many virtues is to be distinguished, but it is a hard fate; and many a man has gone into the desert and killed himself because he was tired of being a battle and battle-ground of virtues."\footnote{345} Inner chaos arises as much from surfeit as lack of ability. It undermines effectiveness and thwarts the process of cultivating your nature. Rather than face an unmanageable ensemble of possibilities you can integrate your resources by directing these at a single purpose. Better an internal tyranny arises that dominates all action and sweeps aside vacillation and weakness.

The benign effect that a single goal or task has on your character and culture is self-evident: "Formula of my happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, a goal..."\footnote{346} But once you identify your supreme virtue you can allow lesser ones to grow and adorn without impairing it. Harmonious development begins by seeking a centre; thereafter the two pedagogical maxims complement each other, since the ideal philosophic teacher would know how to encourage the lesser virtues without impairing the centre. 'And so perhaps', Nietzsche concludes, "the two maxims are not contrary at all; the one merely saying that man must have a centre, the other, a circumference as well. The philosophic teacher of my dream would not only discover the central force, but would know how to prevent its being destructive of the other powers: his task, I thought would be the welding of the whole man into a solar system with life and movement, and the discovery of its paraphysical laws.\footnote{347}

Attaining unity or integrating your actions is the first principle of style, which follows from honest appraisal of your natural faculties and capacities.\footnote{348} By identifying that which is most essential, and dispensing with that which is unnecessary you achieve unity of purpose. By clearly setting goals that are within scope of your virtues or capacities you achieve effectiveness and cultivate your genius.

Nietzsche attaches so much significance to integration that he even uses the concept to define genius: "What is genius?" he asks, and in answer replies that it is "to aspire to a lofty aim and to will the means to that aim."\footnote{349}

\section*{Style through sublimation}

Those who can live in word and deed according to a cohering principle may make considerable progress in the cultivating their personality, but the task does not end there. Gaining power over your many inclinations is not fully justified until you can extend and refine that power. This is the basis of the idea of sublimation, which Nietzsche refers to elsewhere, most famously in Thus Spake Zarathustra, as self-overcoming.

The idea that nature longs for her perfection through sublimation is always implicit.\footnote{350} For the younger Nietzsche mankind will justify nature by bringing the raw materials that she provides to a higher purpose: "...if only we will take her yarn and spin a fine cloth out of it we will be redeemed. Not only will we ourselves be redeemed but we will redeem nature itself. We, the cultivated men, are the deliverers and the delivered."\footnote{351}

Innocence and directness toward Nature's most terrifying aspects is needed in order to sublimate her. Nietzsche believes that where instincts are deeper and more violent, there is greater capacity for culture. Finer productions need finer materials and greatness is impossible in civilisations that have lost the ferocity of passion. Every "higher culture on earth" has begun when men "of a still natural nature, barbarians in every fearful sense of the word, men of prey still in possession of an unbroken strength of will and lust for power, threw themselves upon weaker, more civilised, more peaceful... old mellow cultures."\footnote{352} Whenever barbaric passions are assimilated by a civilisation that has been conquered, its etiolated forms are refreshed and revivified. Speech and conduct is stripped of its affectations and everywhere there is an innocent joy in contest and struggle. All of this is achieved by holding fast to many of the feared remnants of barbarism. You cannot expect to have it otherwise. If culture must lead nature from its myopia, it must also share in its abominable cruelties. All our human refinements and all we honour, have been purchased at magnificent cost or bred into us by either cruel necessity or the tyranny of society: "...reason, seriousness, mastery over the affects,

\footnotesize{\begin{footnotes}
\item \footnote{344} TOS II, III, p.109.
\item \footnote{345} Z, p.64.
\item \footnote{346} TI, p.27.
\item \footnote{347} TOS II, III, p.110.
\item \footnote{348} For the younger Nietzsche every healthy culture is a delicately poised equilibrium between the powers of the state, between the ambitions of the classes and the practice of religion, philosophy and art. As he states in TP, PAY, p.16, "the culture of a people is manifest in the unifying mastery of their drives: philosophy masters the knowledge drive; art masters ecstasy and the formal drive."
\item \footnote{349} HAH II/A, 978.
\item \footnote{350} cf. Goethe's remark to Eckermann: "What would be the use of culture if we did not try to control our natural tendencies". \textit{Conversations with Eckermann}, op. cit., p.59.
\item \footnote{351} TOS II, III, p.149.
\item \footnote{352} BGE, 427.
\end{footnotes}}
the whole sombre thing called reflection, all these prerogatives and showpieces of man: how dearly they have been bought: how much blood and cruelty lie at the bottom of all "good things!" Blood drips from everything that elevates us over beasts. The special power and duration of our memory for example, owes its existence to the enforcement of obedience within the tribal group. "Man could never do without blood, torture, and sacrifices when he felt the need to create a memory for himself: the most dreadful sacrifices and pledges (sacrifices of the first-born among them), the most repulsive mutilations (castration, for example), the cruelest rites of all the religious cults (and all religions are at the deepest level systems of cruelities) - all this has its origins in the instinct that realised that pain is the most powerful aid to mnemonics." Prolonged and often awful moral schooling gives us the refined instrument of reason, for it is out of our capacity to remember: to fix one thing in the mind for eternity, and make promises that we learned to reason.

He bludgeons home the point by referring the "nation of thinkers", the Germans, to their tribal past: "We Germans certainly do not regard ourselves as a particularly cruel and hardhearted people, still less as a particularly frivolous one... but one has only to look at our former codes of punishments to understand what effort it costs on this earth to breed a "nation of thinkers"..." Consider the Old German punishments; for example, stoning (the sagas already have millstones drop on the heads of the guilty), breaking on the wheel... piercing with stakes, tearing apart or trampling with horses... boiling the criminal in oil or wine... the popular flaying alive... cutting flesh from the chest, and also the practice of smearing the wrongdoer with honey and leaving him blazing in the sun for the flies. With the aid of such images and procedures one finally remembers five or six "I will not's", in regard to which one had given one's promise so as to participate in the advantages of society - and it was indeed with this aid of this kind of memory that one at last came "to reason"!

Thus the genealogy of "reason": a pedigree of public lynchings!

Culture teaches manners to the brute, but it cannot change physiology. We may adore finer feelings, yet we must not forget their vexing origins. If we want to cultivate style we must accept the unruly character of the raw materials. Sublimation requires nature to be drawn out of itself and presented with opportunities it could not itself contrive. Art, the most essential expression of stylisation, is nothing less than a spiritualised sexuality. "Making music", declares Nietzsche, "is another way of making children."

Art is not an overcoming of sensuality. They exist side by side, the former as a transfiguration of the original desire so that aesthetic feelings no longer enter consciousness as sexual excitement. Thus from one urge a thousand volatilisations are brought forth to beautify and adorn civilisation. Christianity's ignorance of this principle and its hostility to the passions has diminished culture: "The Church combats the passions with excision in every sense of the word: its practice, its "cure" is castration. It never asks: "How can one spiritualise, beautify, defy a desire?" Christianity reproaches nature with the epithet - "sin", and compels us to become shameful before the "deepest and highest desires of life." The freedom that results from knowledge of necessity; and which consists in a facility in "self-direction" results in style. Style, is not just an aesthetic phenomenon; it is integral to the processes of living and is manifest in every aspect of civilisation: in customs, manners, cuisine, technical practices, arts, and conduct of war. When a specific way of organising becomes familiar to a people it is as though all individuals share the same taste and every task is executed in conformity with this taste. Freedom in action results the moment these processes become unconscious.

Purification of taste is a sign of strength and of the freedom of self-knowledge. In this sense the highest style is one that subjects raw nature to a higher will. 'To 'give style to one's character - a great and rare art! It is practised by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed... Here the ugly that could not be removed is concealed; there it has been reinterpreted and made sublime... In the end, when the work is finished, it becomes evident how the constraint of a single taste governed and formed everything large and small... It will be the strong and domineering natures that enjoy their finest gaiety in such constraint and perfection under a law of their own, the passion of their tremendous will relents in the face of all stylised nature, of all conquered and serving nature. Even when they have to build palaces and design gardens they demur at giving nature freedom."
**Style and Will to Power**

When Nietzsche interprets nature as will to power he adds something new to his reflections on style, without abandoning his original standpoint. In the new view sheer quantity of force is worth nothing unless it is artfully guided and controlled. A being with less brute force but superior organisation is more valuable. Power is only worthwhile to the extent that it is sublimated and refined by reason. Again Nietzsche directs our attention to the example of the genius, who efficiently exemplifies this principle. "We still fall on our knees before power... when the degrees of venerability come to be determined, only the degree of reason in power will be the deciding factor. We must find out, indeed, how great an extent power has been overcome by something higher, which it now obeys as a tool and instrument... I refer to the spectacle of that power which a genius does not lay upon his works, that is, his own self-control, the purifying of his own imagination, the order and selection of his inspirations and tasks."  

The degree of guiding intelligence that the genius demonstrates and his ability for organisation is the real criterion of value. The principle applies throughout the natural world. Organisms manifest will to power in internal administration and in the order they seek to impose on its environment. It is this that makes the power of the organism superior to that of physical forces. The degree of command that an organism can exert over its own physiology and the fluency with which it executes its effects dictates the extent that it can dominate. In the scale of worth the avalanche rushing down a mountain slope is infinitely less significant than the ant descending a blade of grass.

The creation of value is equated with the degree of organisation of power and genius is the living embodiment of this principle, being able to attain within himself an equilibrium of forces and to focus with extraordinary tenacity on a single objective. The genius is a creature of intricate engineering. Pushing this metaphor further he declares the genius to be the "sublimest machine that there is" but also adds that he is therefore the most fragile. Because he is a being of complex coordinations he is all the more disposed to disintegrate. For this reason simpler and more stupid forms of life are often more successful in purely Darwinian terms.

With will to power, perfection for Nietzsche becomes open-ended, creative and dynamic. It is in Thus Spoke Zarathustra, where he entertains this notion for the first time, that he calls the genius an übermensch; which is to say, someone who extends the practice of self-stylisation beyond the self and therefore becomes more than human. The younger Nietzsche's preference for an enclosed, harmonic view of genius is dispensed with. The übermensch lives by the dynamic principles of physis as will to power; he is constantly re-inventing himself and achieving new formations of power within himself. The process of sublimating this kind of nature is termed by Nietzsche "self-overcoming" and the injunction which flows from it is that man must never form himself to remain at one state. He must always be moving on, for life itself is that "which must overcome itself again and again."  

The difference between this and the harmonic idea of perfection is that man redeems himself, not by perfecting his individual nature, but that of the entire cosmos. That is why he can exhort that "Man is something that should be overcome" as merely an ethical possibility rather than a thing in itself: an intermediate stage between ape and a new species he calls the Superman. This is not an exhortation to deny or turn against human nature. Self-overcoming simply extends what cosmic nature already does, except consciously at a higher degree of complexity. So even the open-ended idea of perfection of his later period does not abjure the classical features of the principle of physis or of stylisation.

**Classical style**

When the older Nietzsche's speaks of will to power he also speaks of what he calls "grosse stile", that is, grand or great style, or sometimes "classical style". Grosse stile is the most masterly form of coordination and sublimation, the "highest consciousness of power" that typifies genius.

Most references to grosse stile occur in the notes of 1888 shortly before the onset of insanity. Certain ideas recur: the man of classical style is synthetic, purged of all chaotic elements; he is calm, and reacts slowly to antagonism. He is not alarmed by contest or struggle; in all matters he hardens and strengthens himself; nothing he accomplishes appears complex since his thoughts and actions aim at

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861 DD, a548.  
862 WP, a674.  
863 NF1888-1889, KG VIII,p.109. "Das 'genie' ist die sublimate Maschine, die es gibt - folglich die zerbrechlichste".  
864 When Nietzsche says: "I teach you the Superman! The Superman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: the Superman shall be the meaning of the earth" (Z, p.138), he is resurrecting his principle of the genius as redeemer of all nature.  
865 Z, p.41. In WP (a859) he states that "the degree of power that the one or the other should exercise over others or over all, and to what extent a sacrifice of freedom, even enslavement, provides the basis for the emergence of a higher type. Put in the crudest form: how could one sacrifice the development of mankind to help a higher species than man come into existence." A critical passage in the WP (a676), makes the explicit connection between the evolution of humanity and the possibility of extending beyond itself in purely physiological terms "Put briefly: perhaps the entire evolution of the spirit is a question of the body; it is the history of the development of a higher body that emerges into our sensibility. The organic is rising to yet higher levels. Our list for knowledge of nature is a rambling; hundreds of thousands of experiments are made to change the nourishment, the mode of living and of dwelling of the body, all kinds of pleasure and displeasure, are signs of these changes and experiments. In the long run, it is not a question of man at all: he is to be overcome.  
866 WP, a799.
simplicity; he is not preoccupied by moral questions, all decisions are based on considerations that are "beyond good and evil." The most powerful men have always inspired the architects; the architect has always been influenced by power, Pride, victory over weight and gravity, the will to power, seek to render themselves visible in a building; ...The highest feeling of power and security finds expression in that which possesses grand style. Power which no longer requires proving; which disdains to please; which is slow to answer; which is conscious of no witnesses around it; which lives oblivious of the existence of any opposition; which reposes in itself, fatalistic, a law among laws: that is what speaks of itself in the form of grand style. The feeling of intoxication, in fact corresponding to an increase in strength; ...becoming more beautiful as the expression of a victorious will, of increased coordination, of a harmonising of all the desires, of an infallibly perpendicular stress. Logical and geometrical simplification is such a simplification again enhances the feeling of strength - High point of the development: the grand style.

Classical taste simplifies and unifies. Its aims and goals are grand and its conceptions expansive; what is manifest is its nobility. In those who exhibit classical style: the Greeks, the Romans, the condottieri of the Italian Renaissance, Napoleon, the best instincts of nature have ripened and the human machine approaches its optimum. Nature is so impressed their mark on the clay of millennia. They are the end to which the human experiment has been striving. They are the 'highest type: the classical ideal - as the expression of the well-constitutedness of all the chief instincts. Therein the highest style: the grand style. Expression of the 'will to power' itself.

Grand or classical style results when consciousness accords with will to power; the means of organisation that is closest to nature and which attains the highest feeling and consciousness of power. In this the genius reaches a perfection that can finally bear fruit. When this state is reached a natural and inevitable evanescence occurs that brings forth new being and new values; a feeling of plenitude that is the manifest joy in begetting or creating.

**Plenitude**

*Plenitude* describes two aspects of Nietzsche's idea of genius, related to what we have called *poetic favor*. The first may be called *creativity*, the second, the *tragic* or *Dionysian* outlook. The idea of plenitude or overflowing of powers has always been associated with the idea of creativity and has been a natural, even essential way of explaining how gods might bring the world into being; as if from nothing.

This is as true of religious speculation as of philosophy; Plato used the idea to represent the actions of his Divine Artificer, and thereafter it was used by pagan and also by Christian thinkers. A late pagan like Plotinus, for example, in speaking of the "One", the transcendent being of beings, says: "The One is perfect because it seeks for nothing, and possesses nothing, and has need of nothing; and being perfect, it overflows, and thus its superabundance produces an Other... " Whenever anything reaches its own perfection, we see that it cannot endure to remain in itself, but generates and produces some other thing... "To [the One]...we cannot impute any halt, any limit of jealous grudging; it must move forever outward, until the ultimate confines of the possible are reached..."

For Plotinus the generation of the world is the spontaneous result of the perfection of the divinity. Perfection stimulates *outwardness*: a being desires to overflow because *inwardness* or even self-containment would not be conceivable to something that needed nothing. In secular periods, when we are not so frightened to compare ourselves favourably with gods it is natural to apply the same principle to human endeavour, even to explain why humans have to be *be* more than what they are. Men, like gods, create because they have a surplus of energies that expels itself in great works or deeds. As the Aufkärer Schiller says, man is "not satisfied with the needs of nature, he demands the superfluous. First, only the superfluous of matter, to secure his enjoyment beyond the present necessity; but afterward he wishes a superabundance in matter, an aesthetical supplement to satisfy the impulse for the formal, to extend enjoyment beyond necessity."

In the *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, he calls this surplus energy *play* (Spiel) and man's proclivity for it the *play instinct or play drive* (Spieltrieb). Play is a sensuous impulse that flows from his innermost nature and presses him to change and renewal, toward creativity in short. It is counterbalanced by the formal impulse in man that wishes to define and press a specific shape on the

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66 C.f. *WP*, a341. "The classical ideal - as the expression of the well-constitutedness of all the chief instincts. Therein the highest style: the grand style. Expression of the "will to power" itself." Also, *WP*, a799. "The classical style is essentially a representation of this calm, simplification, abbreviation, concentration - the highest feeling of power is concentrated in the classical style - a great consciousness; no feeling of struggle." Another significant reference occurs in TI, p.74, where he states that "the highest feeling of power and security finds expression in that which possesses grand style."

67 TI, p.74.

68 WP, a799.

69 WP, a341.


71 ibid., V. 4. I. and IV. 8. 6.

72 Schiller, op. cit., letter XXVII, p.112.

73 This term was later adopted and developed by Johan Huizinga in his essay *Homo Ludens, A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, London, 1949.
character of that change. In defining this relation between the formal impulse (what we have hitherto called style) and that of play (what we call plenitude), Schiller lays bare the same metaphysical kernel at the centre of Nietzsche’s philosophy. “The sensuous impulsion”, Schiller says, “requires that there should be change, that time should have contents; the formal impulsion requires that time should be suppressed, that there should be no change. Consequently, the impulsion in which both of the others act in concert - allow me to call it the instinct of play... would have as its object to suppress time in time, to conciliate the transition or becoming with the absolute being, change with identity.”

The conciliation of being and becoming is the object of human activity and embodied in man’s attempt to bring value into existence; it is, in the words of Nietzsche, the attempt to impress upon becoming the eternal character of being. Style is the human activity that attends to being and is therefore the static aspect of genius: plenitude parallels becoming and is therefore a dynamic quantity, being the motor that drives genius and culture.

Though loathe to admit it Nietzsche undoubtedly received significant guidance from Schiller. In his early work it is reflected in his distinction between Apollonian and Dionysian art; the former representing the form-drive and the latter the play-instinct. Apollonian art draws on the visual and plastic faculties and its effects stem from the world of phenomenal appearance; it manifests itself as the calm and ordered contemplation of a dream. Delighting in beautiful surfaces, it justifies and makes valuable the world of illusion, i.e. of being. Dionysian art is immediately identifiable with music, which is dynamic and impetuous; its affects reach beneath the phenomenal world to that of blind striving will itself, the endless becoming which is the foundation of all being.

Even though in the highest culture Dionysian and Apollonian elements are combined, he always concedes the primacy of the former: “Thus the Dionysian is seen to be, compared to the Apollonian, the eternal and original artistic power that first calls the whole world of phenomena into existence.”

The tragic view of life, which Nietzsche equates with Dionysian art and therefore with the principle of plenitude, is the highest form of consciousness; it is one which recognises the nihilistic order of the cosmos yet which is willing to embrace life uncompromisingly.

All three formulae are united in a passage of Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft, where Nietzsche sees those who seek a Dionysian art as suffering from “the over-fullness of life”, they want a “Dionysian art and likewise a tragic view of life, a tragic insight.”

Dionysian insight is tragic because the overflowing of those who have it affirms even painful existence. Only the unselfconscious voluptuousness of plenitude can sideline the importance of suffering in life. The most questionable and terrifying conditions of existence are accepted as inescapable counterpoints to the most joyful. Destruction and creation exist as boon companions and creation cannot begin at all without commission of some outrage of destruction. The key to tragic wisdom is found in the pagan orgy. The later Nietzsche states that “the psychology of the orgy as an overflowing feeling of life and energy within which even pain acts as a stimulus” provided him with “the key to the concept of the tragic feeling...”

These are ideas Nietzsche never relinquished. In his maturity, when seeking to ground his system of value, he selects an idea of nature that is the very character of plenitude: will to power. Will to power is predicated on the idea of surplus. At the simplest level of being all things extend outward, not out of hunger but out of fullness. At a more complex level every well-constituted living thing, which is always a construction of commands and subjugations of will, must also overflow since it has tamed its borders and subjugated its internal organisation. It must extend outward because it has nowhere else to go. It must discharge itself of necessity, like any natural force whose equilibrium is disturbed.

Nietzsche relates plenitude as will to power to genius by declaring that the genius is a “being who either engenders or produces”. Plenitude occurs in him as an inner vitality that constantly seeks work and action. The abundance of the genius is attributable to the splendid coordination of his physiology, which produces a surplus of powers; with the internal strife of the organism stilled, it is free to look outward. The feeling of outwardness is an urgent tension which preys on him inwardly.

Surplus energy is tumultuous when suppressed and seeks expulsion. When this occurs the genius is heedless of self-preservation. It is not sacrifice, indifference to his own interests, or devotion to an idea, cause or fatherland that impels him to act. His imperative is to release his powers: “he flows out, he overflows, he uses himself up, he does not spare himself - with inevitability, fatefully, involuntarily, as a river bursting its banks is involuntary.” To describe this state Nietzsche employs terms traditionally associated with the idea of plenitude. One might as well be listening to Plotinus as he observes that it is “richness in personality, abundance in oneself, overflowing and bestowing, instinctive good health and affirmation of oneself, that produce great sacrifice and great love: it is strong and godlike selfhood from which these affects grow, the inner certainty of having a right to do

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375 BT, a25. CS, WP, a796. “The world as a work of art that gives birth to itself.”
376 Cf., a370.
377 Tl, p.110.
378 BGE, a206.
379 Tl, p.42.
The concentration of energies given to individuals is also given to nations. A noble nation - here Nietzsche mentions Athens - is tormented by a restlessness that leads to bold and sometimes needless undertakings. When abandoned by other Greeks and prostrate before the advancing Persian army, the people of Athens put out to sea to save themselves, leaving the city itself to burn. This remarkable venture, gains them an invaluable education that they use to check the invaders at Salamis and transform themselves into masters of the Aegean. The same energy that spurred every citizen to defend their city aspires to empire. Alcibiades dazzles the city with the ambition of conquering Sicily. Defying caution they equip their expedition to Siraecuse only to suffer a military catastrophe. But this grim reverse is soon shrugged off and the nation presses on to other undertakings. Restlessness of this sort awaits neither victory nor defeat, it does not consider outcomes but delights in activity for itself. “This “boldness” of noble races, mad, absurd, and sudden in its expression, the incalculability, even incredibility of their undertakings... their indifference to and contempt for security, body, life, comfort, their hair-raising cheerfulness and profound joy in all destruction, in all the voluptuousness of victory and cruelty”382 betrays a desire to affirm their existence at any cost.

In Nietzsche's final estimation, the true mission of genius in individuals and nations, is to create; to bring form to becoming, to endlessly generate whole new worlds out of the richness of being. In doing so genius completes nature and redeems the suffering of ages. Creation is the sport of those who, sundered from blind nature by self-consciousness, can display an unqualified acceptance of every good and evil thing that occurs to them.383 Hence this effusion in Thus Spake Zarathustra: “ “a sacred Yes is needed, my brothers, for the sport of creation; the spirit now wills its own will, the spirit sundered from the world now wins its own world;”384 or, as he states more composedly, “there is nothing better than what is good - and good is having some ability and using that to create...”385

Conclusion

Nietzsche’s ethical ideal of genius embodies three elements that have been at the foundation of aesthetic discourse since antiquity. The qualities of integrity, style and plenitude are reflected not only in what the genius does, for he may or may not be an artist in the literal sense - certainly he must be an artist in whatever he chooses to do in life - but in what he is. Integrity and style indicate the “how” of what a person must do and plenitude the "what". The genius perfects his own personality and makes his life and deeds a perfect example of form within becoming, and therefore of the foundation and embodiment of value that comes from cultivation.

Occasionally Nietzsche gives us a more complete and concrete picture of the genius: most often he is one who unifies diversity, after the principle of similitudo in varietate of Leibniz. He is a synthetic individual who embodies and unifies diverse tendencies in his nature. In one example, often cited admiringly by Jaspers, he sees the genius as a "Roman Caesar with Christ’s soul", though this specimen might be to ethics what a camel is to marine biology.386 At other times he refers to the pre-Socratic philosophers as ideal synthetic individuals, who embody capacity for self-rule, with that of legislating for all mankind. They were commanders of the spirit and political commanders as well. But his idealisations of pre-Socratics are as shadowy and incomplete as our actual historical knowledge of them.

Amore convincing picture of ideal genius appears in the Twilight of the Idols when he describes Goethe as engaging in all of the operations of genius, integrity, style and plenitude, to form himself as a total being. What Goethe aspired to, he tells us "was totality". He "strived against the separation of reason, sensuality, feeling, will... he disciplined himself to a whole, he created himself... Goethe conceived of a strong, highly cultured human being, skilled in all physical accomplishments, who, keeping himself in check and having reverence for himself, dares to allow himself the whole compass and wealth of naturalness, who is strong enough for this freedom; a man of tolerance, not out of weakness, but out of strength, because he knows how to employ to his advantage what would destroy

382 WP, p388.
383 WP, p335.
384 GM, I, 11.
385 Note the language used to describe the origins of justice, magnanimity and heroism in WP, p388: “It is richness in personality, abundance in oneself, overflowing and bestowing, instinctive good health and affirmation of oneself, that produce great sacrifice and great love: it is strength and godlike selfhood from which these affects grow...”. For Nietzsche, intoxication never means oblivion or forgetfulness as it is a cold passion. Command is the supreme remembering of the self. In this regard Nietzsche is once again at one with the German philosophical heritage.
386 Z, p.55.
387 WP, p275.
388 WP, p383. This remark has been popularised, especially by Jaspers, perhaps because the Christian feels that it is a means by which he can build a bridge across to Nietzsche. It makes Nietzsche more approachable to think that his idea of the übermensch can incorporate some of the qualities of the Nazarene. Apart from its interest to modern theogians who display an interminable industry and boundless intellectual poverty in seeking to establish a rapprochement between Christianity and every other conceivable modern intellectual development, the remark has little credibility.
an average nature; a man to whom nothing is forbidden, except it be weakness, whether that weakness be called vice or virtue.... A spirit thus emancipated stands in the midst of the universe with a joyful and trusting fatalism, in the faith that only what is separate and individual may be rejected, that in the totality everything is redeemed and affirmed.\footnote{TI, p.102}

These are the classical elements of the \textit{Ideal of Cultivation}, but of which model? The Mycanean aristocrat, the republican politician, the Hellenistic sage? Like many German intellectuals before him, he juxtaposes the first of these with the third. Sharing the natural affinity of the Germans for the Hellenistic sage, but also entranced by the idea of action and political effects, Nietzsche imposes on it the model of the warrior. The principle of the independent and self-cultivating sage, the Hellenistic icon of heroism, is activated by representing him as an aristocrat given to command: the sage as \textit{kalos kai agathos}, as one who has the leisure to cultivate himself and the privilege to command.

This hybrid is no mere aristocrat of property and tradition, but of "spiritual greatness" and therefore more authentic. These reflections accord with the political reality of German civilisation from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century: where power is in the court or bureaucracy and the agents or servants of power either courtiers or mandarins or as happened often enough, the mandarin or courtier merge indistinguishably into a single entity as happened to Goethe who, as Minister of State in Weimar, fulfilled both roles. Intellectuals, desiring power and influence, but who do not deny the principle of aristocracy, seek to unmoor it from inherited privilege and redefine it on the basis of merit. In short, they spiritualise it. The desire for a meritocracy of spirit based on those who best cultivate themselves was prevalent among Greek as among German intellectuals. Perhaps, it will always be wherever aristocracy is not itself in dispute. What we examine next, is how this feeling is politicised and how, in Nietzsche's hands, the \textit{Ideal of Cultivation} became a \textit{politics of cultivation}. 

\footnote{TI, p.102}
Wer soll der Erde Herr sein? Das ist der Refrain meiner praktische Philosophie. 388

Nietzsche's unbridled faith in the *Ideal of Cultivation* isolates him from his contemporaries and underpins his experience of nihilism. This leads him to employ the strategem of *physis* to justify this ideal even though fully aware that values cannot have rational foundation. The later Nietzsche continues to use an idea of *physis* that understands nature as being nothing but *will to power*.

In intellectual history an *elective affinity* often holds often entirely separate ideas together within a pattern of consciousness. If you grasp hold of one of these ideas you may expect to predict the existence of others alongside it. There is no rigid necessity here: ideas aggregate for psychological and neurological causes rather than logical affinity. It has never pained philosophers to discover reasons to 'logically' join together concepts that they merely feel to be related. They love doing it.

Given Nietzsche's attachment to the *Ideal of Cultivation*, it was highly likely he should also possess an idea of *physis* and an idea of *genius*, or rather, some *icon of heroism*. And, since having the last, it was quite probable that he should have employed at least some of the categories we associated with the terms *integrity, style and plenitude*, to define it.

Intellectual precedence, the dependence on previous thinkers, is not needed to trigger these sequences, though of course, a thinker is always likely to reach for examples ready to hand. Intellectual historians are prone to treat ideas as though they were a set of rags that once draped over a Greek, and been handed on to every thinker ever since. 389 For purely historical reasons Nietzsche was drawn to the *Ideal of Cultivation*, but he was to some extent, doomed to rethink it along a preordained trajectory.

**Nietzsche's concern with politics**

Whenever an *Ideal of Cultivation* has existed, there is also likely to be an attempt to apply to politics. Even if seen as purely an ethic for individuals, there is always an understanding of how an *Ideal of Cultivation* relates to the organisation of the group. For Nietzsche the *politics of cultivation* is the major component of his philosophical activity. He politicises the *Ideal of Cultivation* and make it the basis for discussing his contemporary world. He even refers to his concern as 'great politics' since it looked beyond the borders of the national state to the reshaping of mankind itself.

Although, in later years he calls himself an 'antipolitical' or 'unpolitical' German, suggesting that in this he falls within a venerable German tradition, this does not imply a lack of interest in worldly affairs, but a dissatisfaction with contemporary German politics, which he understands as the parliamentary, diplomatic, party and even bureaucratic games and manoeuvres of those working through formal institutions of power. By declaring himself to be 'unpolitical' he merely indicates his aversion to the power institutions of the second German Reich, in whose establishment he had willingly participated during his youth.

Nineteenth century German intellectuals were happy to see state or public institutions employed as vehicles for change, but in the longer tradition of the Aufklärung the book, the stage, the work of art, the festival, or the professor's podium was the epicentrum of the political act. It was the ironic fate of the Aufklärer, denied opportunities for direct political engagement won by his western counterparts, that he should politicise areas of life such as aesthetics. Far less incendiary than their Latin or Anglo-Saxon cousins, German intellectuals were the prophets of reform and incremental improvement. They were, above all, politicians of culture because they believed change could be brought about by educators rather than by legislators. Nietzsche, as student and scholar, as professor, as man of letters, used his vocation to press for one reform or another. In this he was a tireless participant, and never a 'mystical separatist' flitting between tourist resorts in Italy, Switzerland and southern France. It was actually during this reclusive period that his books became most polemical in the cause of the *politics of cultivation*. He even employed his reclusiveness as a political statement, for he never ceased banging on about it. And if someone publically congratulates themselves for being little read or misunderstood in their own country does that not indicate how resentful they are that they cannot exert any influence there.

388 NF 1884, KG VII2, p.72.
389 This inference is typically contained, for example, in A. N. Whitehead's remark that 'the safest general characterisation of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists in a series of footnotes to Plato'. Cited by Lovejoy, op. cit., p.24. It would not be difficult to discover similar absurdities uttered on Aristotle's behalf.

95


**Eudemonic Versus Culture Politics**

The preceding observations make more sense if we distinguish between *culture* and *eudemonic* politics. These terms describe different archetypal responses to the question of ends or purpose for which a society should be organised.

Both eudemonic and culture politics are purely secular in character. Against these there are traditional *other-worldly* positions, with which all secular viewpoints compete. Religiously inspired political debates are concerned neither with happiness nor culture but with moral standards or with preparing souls for the after-world. In Europe the medieval church opposed the emergence of the modern nation state, and in the modern western world, the call for theocracy continues in the United States, and in the Middle East and South Asia among Moslems, Jews and Hindus.

Though there are many varieties of political organisation, there are few reasons for justifying any one of them. The justification embodied in the terms *culture* or *happiness* are two of these. We can illustrate this by asking ourselves what we would consider to be the most important task of any political system. We may, if we are liberal westerners, decide that it is ‘to protect the freedom of all individuals in society’. But we would then have to ask ourselves: ‘Why is freedom good?’

Some would say that freedom is good in itself, but most would be able to qualify the claim by stating:

A. We are not happy unless we are free. Freedom for all individuals is the best means for ensuring the greatest happiness of the greatest number, or,

B. Freedom may not make us happy but it is only when we are free that we can develop our full potential and contribute to the progress of humanity.

Statement A is the *eudemonic* position and Statement B the *culture* position, though nothing they are not mutually exclusive. Culture politics and eudemonic politics aren’t necessarily opposed though quite often they are.

We could conduct similar experiments on almost any of the following political polarities:

1. Whether the state’s powers should be:
   A. maximised or B. minimised;

2. Whether the ideal political arrangement would:
   A. preserve hierarchy or B. promote equality;

3. Whether political systems should strive for:
   A. homogeneity and order, or B. heterogeneity and conflict;

4. Whether states should be:
   A. national in character or B. cosmopolitan;

5. Whether people should or should not be ruled, and if so, whether they be ruled by:
   A. one, (hereditary monarch, tyrant, or great commander),
   B. a few, (an oligarchy, aristocracy, or political party) or,
   C. many, (spontaneous participatory democracy);

6. Whether the character of rule should be:
   A. authoritarian and censorious, or, B. liberal and tolerant;

7. Whether the aim of government is to:
   A. redistribute wealth on grounds of justice or welfare, or,
   B. allow the material status of individuals to be determined by their own prowess.

Each pole could be justified as either a basis for happiness or for cultivation and improvement. It could be argued, for example, that dictatorship ensures the happiness of more than liberalism and tolerance, or vice versa; and likewise that dictatorship is better for culture than tolerance, or vice versa.

The distinction between *culture* and *eudemonic* politics is perhaps alien to modern westerners who now believe there are only two alternatives for government namely: welfare or rational economic management. Both alternatives are sub-species of the eudemonic standpoint whose current dominance assures that if we can never agree about which is the best form of government we are universally certain that our common destination is *Happy Valley*.

Because universal happiness is accepted unquestioningly as the only legitimate political end, we are surprised that anybody could desire anything else. That there have been those who have seen the production of high culture alone as the one true goal of nations is thus invisible to us. But in fact this has been the political objective of generations of intellectuals prior to the twentieth century.
Nietzsche's Political Extremism

Intellectuals have not always thought high culture and happiness to be incompatible. But wherever they have, as occurred in the German enlightenment many, as Nietzsche was later to do, conceded priority to culture. Culture is a mighty god; on whose altar even the happiness of an entire people can be sacrificed. In this sense a politics of Cultivation is the secular equivalent of otherworldly politics that serve divinity before humanity. Only, for the culture-politician, gods are in this world and require as much solemnity and piety of devotion. For Nietzsche it is not happiness but the production of great works that matters in life, and it is this point which he believes constantly eludes his contemporaries.

“The problem of culture is seldom grasped correctly”, he complains: “The goal of a culture is not the greatest possible happiness of a people, nor is it the unhindered development of all their talents; instead, culture shows itself in the correct proportion of these developments, its aim points beyond earthly happiness: the production of great works is the aim of culture.”

Nietzsche’s extreme attachment to an Idea of Cultivation brutalises his responses to other values and humanity, just as the love of deity brutalises a civilization’s attitude to human life. It is idealism rather than pragmatism that most cynically treats flesh and blood as a cipher for its purposes. And it is this tendency in Nietzsche that has made ‘liberal’ sympathisers like Kaufmann or Hollingdale reluctant to discuss the political dimension of his work.

Nietzsche's contemporaries, being innocent of the convulsions Europe was soon to suffer, were not so neglectful. By the beginning of the Great War his books had been adopted by right and left wing radicals of German and European politics. If the conservative Stefan George circle had worshipped him as a saint, the young Marxist Georg Lukacs, who later venomously attacked Nietzsche and his legacy, was the keenest of his readers. Those who took what they needed from his work, did not always express motives that were strictly ‘Nietzschean’, but they did recognise his political intentions (as did Baemuler in his Nietzsche, der Philosoph und Politiker.)904 Nor was the Nazi reception of his ideas aberrant. However crudely Nazi intellectuals digested works of philosophy, however incapable they were of distinguishing reality from fancies, they could see what more sophisticated readers have not: that Nietzsche was and wished to be a philosopher for action.

The key to the later Nietzsche's philosophical activity: “Wer soll der Erde Herr sein? - Who shall rule over the earth? This is the refrain of my practical philosophy.” We cannot stress sufficiently the candid use of the interrogative pronoun in this declaration. It is Wer? Who? What person? not what ideas? or What values? By asking who rather than what values shall rule, he implies that no values, no form of being, no way of living will ever dominate until those who embody it also have the physical power to bring it into effect. Spiritual power must be actuated by political power. Only individuals who can educate and organise can make others enact their ideals.

This view is a natural outgrowth of understanding the world as will to power. If all Being is itself will to power, ‘Who shall rule over the earth?’ is a metaphysical and a political question. More precisely this question is: Which way of expressing will to power will become dominant?, or What form of being will be imposed on mankind? Since all living things are simply forms of organised power and each organism a polity, then the common aim of nature is to attain a higher level of power that is realised in the higher types of individual known as the genius. The will to power is therefore in its essence and implications a total political doctrine extending from the forms of human society to the very foundations of Being. The politics of cultivation for the later Nietzsche is not only a political orientation but also metaphysics, involving a politicising of all Being.

Since the genius embodies the highest human value, and justifies mankind and all nature, then producing genius by means of a culture-state should be our natural objective. So just as the genius is the individual who consciously perfects nature, the culture-state is the form of social organisation that consciously seeks to bring forth genius.

Nietzsche’s idea of the culture-state is one that existed in Germany since the Aufklärung. Although he rarely used the term and sometimes explicitly disassociated himself from it (only to react against a specific understanding of what a culture-state should be) the idea is implicit in all his statements about social and political organisation. He may have claimed not to have been utopian, but his criticisms or discussions of contemporary political arrangements clearly display a fund of ideals about the way society should be organised. Nietzsche’s culture-state is loosely conceived and consistent with Hellenistic forms of Bildung that looked inward and focussed on the development of the individual. Whenever Aufklärers pondered on politics and society, they did so in a way that was consistent with their inwardness. If the paradox may be forgiven, they turned inwardness inside out, as Nietzsche's was fated to do with a vigour that they never exceeded.

How Nietzsche's imagined that culture-state, and how he proposed to bring it into existence in modern Europe in order to breed genius is the subject of the ensuing chapters.

903 TP, PAT, p.36.
904 Alfred Baranulker, Nietzsche, Der Philosoph und Politiker, Leipzig, 1931.
11 - The historical character of the German State

Nietzsche's contemplated the politics of cultivation in a civilisation whose political structures had not changed significantly for some four to five hundred years of which the most important was the Prussian state. The state is his one essential experience of how power is used to organise human existence. It is with this that his political education begins. He is instructed in Prussian schools and serves in Prussia's army. Along with generations of German intellectuals he shares an intense preoccupation with the nature and role of the state, with its origins, its development and the possibility of its extinction. Even his reactions against it are commonplace in German thought, and the revulsion he shows is no more than their extreme expression.

Certainly, discussions of the state's nature and function occur throughout Europe, due to the emergence of new territorial- or nation- states like France, England, Spain, and Holland that were replacing city-states and feudal empires. Universal like empires but autonomous like city-states, the territorial states expand outward as they grab more territory and inwardly as they intrude into the affairs of their citizens. They emerge in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as absolutist monarchs, interposing themselves between the Empire or Church and the territorial nobility, concentrate and centralise their power. More complex and invasive than any state structure hitherto, their existence could hardly be ignored in political discourse.

But unlike the English, French, Dutch and others, the Germans could not match state authority with ideas of nationhood. Geography was on the side of the westerners, and their political forms fused more easily and naturally with national territories. In Germany the undignified decay of the Holy Roman Empire delayed the formation of a nation-state until long after Atlantic nations had established worldwide empires. Generations of Germans were compelled to invest it with a significance it could never be given elsewhere, as an abstract source of devotion in its own right, even outside the claims of the nation. The idea of the state became the very kernel of ethical discourse; an obsession that is sounded by Hegel who observes that "the State is the actuality of the ethical idea". But for example, by Adam Müller who notes that "Man cannot be thought of outside of the state".

The material character of the Prussian State

The character of the future Prussian state is already observed in the administration of the founders of Prussia, the chivalric Order of the Teutonic Knights (the Deutschritterordern). Based at Marienburg these bureaucratic priestly warriors colonised and ruled eastern, mainly Slavic, territories until the fifteenth century. It was during this conquest that the Prussian political habits developed but when the knightly order withered away, they were adopted by the dynasty that succeeded them, the Hohenzollern.

You can already see many features of the corporate state by the thirteenth century: in the Order’s observance of ascetic principles and knightly ethics; its relatively open membership (you only needed to be a freeman and of legitimate birth – other orders demanded credentials of nobility); in its election of a grand master by the members as opposed to hereditary hierarchy; in its supra-national identity - members were related by common principles rather than common nationality and put the interests of the order before their own; and in its foundation of administrative arms for finance, trade, and supply.

This strict and alien regime ruled colonists and subject peoples, such as Slavs and Balts, as an abstract corporate power. There was no sense of monarchical inheritance or pursuit of national prestige. In the hundred years before Polish forces smashed the military power of the Order at Grunwald in 1410, it focussed more on promoting commerce than on military conquest, another habit that would be adopted by future Hohenzollern rulers. During the reformation, the last Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, a Hohenzollern, dissolved the order, became a Lutheran and secularised the church territories to form a separate principedom. In 1618, this Prussian territory was merged with Brandenburg in the west, where a branch of the Hohenzollern family had been ruling since 1417.

The Hohenzollern adopted military and economic policies used by the Deutschritterordern. By the time of the Great Elector, Frederick William, Prussia was a geographically dispersed inheritance, consisting of Brandenburg, the duchy of Cleves, the counties of Mark, and Ravensburg and Prussia. This inspired successive Hohenzollern princes to consolidate their possessions, for they could not be preserved by any other means. They perpetuated the psychology of power initiated by the Teutonic Order; and overcompensated for geographical weakness by enlarging state organs. They also conducted a vacillating diplomacy to forestall encirclement by predatory powers like Sweden, Poland,
Russia, Austria, and France.

Most importantly, they founded a professional standing army: a measure then uncommon in Europe which, due to the burden it imposed on government revenue, led to introduction of uniform financial administration over all territories and to efficient methods of taxation. Unlike other courts they eschewed extravagance and monitored expenditure carefully. Maintaining such an army was not just desirable, it was imperative for the Prussians. The ascetic ghost of the Deutschrömerorden tramped into the chambers of office: the modesty and frugality of the court was matched by the strict discipline in the army and the probity of state officials, a condition ensured by punishments no other European country ever sought to emulate.

Yet there was more to state policy than fiscal restraint. It was foreseen, in the time of the Great Elector that a small efficient standing army could prove economically beneficial by stimulating manufacturing. So although the basis of the Prussian economy until the 19th century was agriculture, the Hohenzollern state actively encouraged industry over centuries. In the 16th and 17th centuries it did this instinctively; in the 18th it applied the economic doctrines of Mercantilism, or 'Cameralism' as it was known in Germany. Frederick William I went so far as to establish chairs for this science at various universities and to stipulate that individuals verse themselves in the subject before applying for admission to the Prussian state service.

In the early 19th century laissez-faire principles invaded German universities and attracted the interest of Prussian officials, but their application in public policy never extended beyond aristocratic land-tenure, and guild-privileges. An economy so beholden to government, discouraged individuals from competing to promote their success in competition with those of other states.

In other nations industry spawned an independent bourgeoisie with interests above the state, worked closely with its supporter and benefactor and initiated a German policy tradition that even the Nazi's did not break. Industry was encouraged yet harnessed so that the social order could never be unsettled by it. The bourgeoisie had retreated from glory in the 15th and 16th centuries when the Hanseatic burghers could not respond to the shift in world economic power from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. It never threatened the commercial power of the noble estate owners, or sought to limit the powers of the state until well into the nineteenth century. The power of the Prussian nobility that initially resented taxation without consent was also pruned by the monarchy, as happened elsewhere in Europe. In Prussia however, their loss of traditional privileges were compensated by receiving greater economic and administrative dominance within the state.

The monarchy tightly reined in the Prussian bureaucrats, who were recruited mainly from nobility and from the bourgeoisie, and often played them off against the Junkers, the landed nobility. The recalcitrance of the aristocracy was subverted once they found themselves incorporated into the state and their interests made identical with it. In the first instance nobles were compelled to serve as professional officers in the army and bureaucracy. Officer's academies were founded that fostered professional and hereditary elitism, and schools and universities specialised in preparing sons of the aristocracy and haupt-bourgeoisie for state service. Unlike the British, the Prussian aristocracy never sullied its blood by outbreeding with the parvenu, and unlike the French never allowed itself to be accuse of idleness. Its place in the traditional hierarchy was preserved, even in the face of absolutist monarchy when their interests did occasionally diverge. Although inherently conservative the Junkers remained the only class capable of initiating change within Prussia. Until well into the 19th century it was the class of action and reaction.

Before unification, Prussia developed the state further than any other German principality. Sharing the same language, economy and political circumstances as other states in the Holy Roman Empire, enabled it to exert increasing influence over them, either by conquest, prestigious example, or economic domination.

**Spiritual character of the Prussian State**

That a nation of diverse geography, classes and nationalities could be welded into a single state and become, within a few centuries, a leading European power was a remarkable achievement. Those who lived under the Hohenzollern had no particular pride in being Prussians, at least not until the nation was a power in its own right. But no nation could achieve such power without some conviction motivating its citizens and justifying their exertions. Religion could not do it, since it suffered the same fate in Prussia as all else: being secularised and incorporated into the state structure.

Prussians were no less religious than other Europeans but they learned to subordinate their faith to higher principles. Religion was either ancillary to Prussian spiritual life or it facilitated secular rule. Like other German Protestant rulers during the Reformation, the early Hohenzollern believed they were entitled to perform spiritual and secular roles. They established the Consistory, a separate state body of leading theologians, to govern ecclesiastical affairs, and generally deferred to its counsels. As the spiritual momentum of the Reformation expended itself in the 17th and 18th centuries the
Consistory became yet another bureaucratic department. In periods of extreme secular rule, such as under Frederick William I and Frederick II, the Protestant clergy, mostly of bourgeois background, laboured under strict state regulations and, as though no more than an arm of government, performed duties remote from their spiritual calling. Obedience to the ruler and the welfare and consolidation of the state was the priority. Dissident clergy were invariably punished, sometimes with imprisonment.

The Hohenzollern assimilated organised religion into the bureaucracy but also, like every profoundly secular state, displayed civil tolerance of various beliefs. This occurred early in Prussia's history even though the rulers themselves, discounting exceptions like Frederick II, were deeply pious Calvinists, and thus did not share the mainly Lutheran faith of their subjects.

Huguenots, Jews, Hussites, and Mennonites, and even Catholics in a Europe tired of religious dissent found refuge in Prussia. Tolerance had sound practical benefits: it increased the stability of the state by protecting it from potential schism and the arrival of persecuted but talented and industrious minorities increased the population and strengthened the economy. Early capitalist enterprise in Prussia, as in other parts of Germany, owed much to immigrant westerners fleeing persecution elsewhere. It was only after 1871, the year the Catholic Church promulgated its dogma of papal infallibility, that the state initiated religious persecution in Prussia, when Bismark, fearing a usurping of secular authority, notably in South Germany, initiated the *Kulturkampf* against it.

Until the 19th century a more perfect doctrinal marriage between faith and secular rule could not have been hoped for. Protestant orthodoxy emphasised obedience and diligence and so did the state. Even when increasingly 'enlightened' Protestant clergy devalued elements of mysticism and dogma in religion, they preserved the idea of fidelity to civil order.

Religion was secularised to bare principles of 'reasonable' morality, belief in the creator god, and the immortality of the soul. Even where religion retained strong mystic elements, as in the Pietist movement, which was popular among the upper bourgeoisie and nobility, it was of a character not antipathetical to state interests, or rationalism itself. Emphasising private salvation undercut grounds for disputes on dogma, and introspection and quiet worship severed it from concern with worldly matters with the exception of charitable works, that were appreciated by and at times sponsored by the state. Pietist groups maintained highly regarded schools and made the sober and virtuous state functionary their educational ideal rather than the cavalier or gentleman. Products of their schools frequently entered the bureaucratic and military services. Pietist devotion shared many parallels with contemporary secular movements, firstly with the enlightenment and later with the Romantics and their reaction against rationalism and the ideas of the French revolution.

**A reforming hierarchy**

Up until the death of Frederick II the Prussian state was the work of rulers who might be described as 'state artists' in the sense Jakob Burckhardt spoke of when he described the despots of the Italian Renaissance. Some like Frederick II had been peerless, and others undeniably mediocre, but slowly they had acquired territory and personal power to create a nation that barely had a right to exist, and probably would never have emerged for any organic reasons. Hohenzollern rulers thereafter could not maintain breadth of command and resorted increasingly to ministerial advice.

The habit of statehood and participation in the alien abstraction of state corporation was imposed on an obedient and pliable mass by the Prince’s bureaucracy and military. They used violence judiciously and legislated to unite the interests of all classes, undermine sources of discontent and conflict and extend the tentacles of state institutions. Within the state-system *necesary* reforms were allowed without overturning the established order. Almost every major social reform up until the reign of the last Hohenzollern (by which time the German state had implemented social insurance schemes ahead of the democracies of Europe) was the result of executive decisions made with or without the spur of public agitation.

Although Prussian *ancien régime* was liberalised to some degree before the revolution in France and although *Aufklärer* intellectuals had been hawking concepts of liberty for some time, it was only after the French invasion that liberal ideas had to be taken seriously by the state in order to forestall the prospect of revolution. As early as 1799, Karl Gustav von Struensee, finance minister under Frederick William II anticipated the slogan *revolution from above*, later made famous by Hardenberg when he told the French chargé d'affaires that “*the beneficial revolution which you Frenchmen have conducted violently from below, we Prussians will conduct gradually from above. The King is a democrat in his way: his constant preoccupation is to restrict the privileges of the aristocracy...*” However,

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395 Cited, ibid., p.113.
Frederick II's reactionary and indecisive successors delayed serious attention to this matter until the French occupied Berlin in 1806. By then the need for action was self-evident.

The leaders of reform, Stein, Hardenberg, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and Von Humboldt, all highly placed bureaucrats or army officers, saw that Prussia could not eject the French without the help of patriotic citizens, which they had to create by giving them representation of sorts and some stake in preserving the order. Between 1807 and 1813, they enacted laws that abolished serfdom, liberated industry, dissolved the guilds, rationalised taxation and the financial system, and conferred wider powers of self-government on the townships. Scharnhorst and Gneisenau reconstructed the army, forging the instrument that figured so decisively in Napoleon's defeat, while von Humboldt implemented a new Prussian educational programme.

During the high tensions of the War of Liberation the reformers even managed to exact from the king a promise to enact a constitution, however he retracted this when the war ended in 1815. Conservative reaction in post-Napoleonic Prussia worked against the liberalising of public institutions, so the focus of reform was on bureaucracy. The Prussian historian and official, B. G. Niebuhr says in 1815: “Freedom depends much more on administration than on constitution.”\(^\text{396}\) Assimilating liberal ideas permitted the monarchy to forestall questions of constitutional representation until 1848 when popular uprisings forced them to accede. Even then the monarchy took the initiative and absorbed the newly prepared constitution into the old state system, affecting the appearance of popular representation but leaving power in the hands of those who always had it.

Displays of state artistry by absolutist monarchs in the 18th century, by the leaders of the Reform movement and later virtuosically by Bismark in the 19th century, were in the political consciousness of Germans into the twentieth century.\(^\text{397}\) The idea of the statesman as artist, the far-sighted genius, the philosopher-politician, who could inject advanced elements of European civilisation into a backward but pliant society, was invoked repeatedly by German intellectuals whenever they pondered on political change. It was a stock notion of the Romantic generation and even found a place in the liturgy of the social sciences in the twentieth century when Max Weber soberly and containedly posited the ideal type of the charismatic leader.

It was no accident that the German intelligentsia, until the mid-19th century saw political change in terms of state rather than social action. Nor was it an accident, for example, that the great Prussian historian, Von Ranke, should found his new historiography in the 1830's on the practice of close scrutiny of archived state papers and memoranda. He had seen that it was in the chambers of state that Prussian history was made.

The Aufklärers' sanctioning of enlightened absolutism was inherited by their Romantic successors. Some accepted the state apparatus as the destiny and justification of human existence, but many did not. Some sought to redeem state power by investing it with cultural mission: to justify the state by means of culture, and to formalise culture by means of the lawful state. Nietzsche inescapably adopts the categories and assumptions of his predecessors.


\(^{397}\) It should be noted that Hitler himself was intimately conversant with the biography and writings of Frederick II.
12 - Power-state and Culture-state in German thought

The extraordinary role of the state in the nation's political history and of its affect on German political and cultural ideas is well known. All the generations of German thinkers - Aufklärers, Romantics, Nationalists, Left and Right Hegelians, Liberals, Marxists, and later Nietzsche, based their perception of the state and their politics on this reality. We restate the fact in order to recall the context in which German intellectuals fashioned and expressed their political theories.

Machtstaat and Kulturstaat

German intellectuals had two main ways of characterising the state. Either it was a pillar of power and administration, a Machtstaat or as a foundation for culture, a Kulturstaat.598

The idea of the Machtstaat or Rechtstaat, a power institution that unifies citizens by legitimised force, is an example of the eudemonic politics we defined earlier. At the minimum such a state must ensures that individuals or society are not discomfited by disorder, but above that it can enact just laws, promote commerce, and the welfare of subjects.

The idea of the Machtstaat is not unique to German thought. At the beginning of the early modern era it was implicit in Hobbes writings, which were read by seventeenth century German intellectuals like Pufendorf (1632-1694). For Hobbes, the state or commonwealth results when individuals willingly and collectively submit to a single greater power or 'sovereign'. Whether the sovereign is one person, or some or all people is secondary: without the idea of the sovereign society could not cohere and the natural order would be continuous civil strife. Hobbes' power state, based as it is on fear of death and the desire for peace, serves as an apology for absolutism in the territorial state, but it is also a practical response to the perceived need of every conservative; a geometric principle of power designed to create social stasis and stability. It is the standard apology for the existence of any power state.

Until the mid-17th century German political theory was devoted solely to power-state apotheosis. Political theory consisted of constitutional jurisprudence employed to entrench and justify the authority of the Holy Roman emperors. It is in Pufendorf that, for the first time in Germany, we see any attempt to determine precisely how much power invested in the sovereign and how much liberty permitted the ruled could be consistent with happiness or 'justice'.

Afterwards, up until the late 19th century it was not the question of who ruled that worried German intellectuals (princely authority was seldom reviled) so much as how they ruled: a ruler must never arbitrary or capricious. They must use power in a manner that is regular and consistent. This was more important than that power be in the hands of the people or particular classes. Even individuals of liberal persuasion could state that "people want to get away from arbitrary rule... Neither republics nor absolute monarchies are any use in Germany; what we need is firm and well-ordered power..."599

This was the core of discussion concerning the Machtstaat in Germany, until a secondary level of discourse arose in the early 19th century, often but not exclusively associated with Hegel's influence. This viewed the state as an ethical entity, not in the form of contract between ruler and ruled, but as a supra-personal identity with a sphere of interests and a separate life of its own.

Adam Müller (1779-1829), a Prussian by birth who converted to Roman Catholicism and served as an Austrian official, exemplifies this development. Condemning those who merely wanted the state to concern itself with external security, he argues that it is in organic unity with a people. "Man cannot be thought of outside the state"580 he proclaims, "[the state] is the totality of human affairs, their union into a living whole."581 Private and public life cannot be separated and whoever seeks to exist outside the state is spiritually desiccated. The state has both cultural and legal authority. The sovereign's duty is to "stimulate as well as compel people into this great union."582 All human ends, happiness, virtue, culture, is subordinated in the moral hierarchy since, while the state can serve any purpose, it is actually greater than any other purpose.583 The state justifies its own existence.

The purpose of the Kulturstaat is to be an instrument of culture and create a virtuous citizenry. In Germany from the mid 17th century two different ideas of the Kulturstaat existed: one organic, one cosmopolitan. The organic idea, inherited from the culture politics of antiquity and Renaissance,

598 While the term Kulturstaat in German already has a fairly precise meaning, it is necessary for the purpose of this discussion to invest it with a broader one.
581 Reiss, op. cit., p.145.
582 ibid., p.157.
583 ibid., p.148.
584 ibid, pp.158-9.
picted civic participation and a state constitution, with the state itself a work of culture designed to produce individuals of a specific, even uniform, type. The cosmopolitan idea, expressing Hellenistic elements, pictured the state as a safe harbour providing freedom for individual culture to emerge of its own volition, and therewith a diversity of types. As we have noted, this orientation is characteristic of cosmopolitan empires, regulated by bureaucratic forms.

The difference between these views was one of emphasis rather than kind. Where the cosmopolitan Kulturstaat dominated among Aufklärers the idea of the organic culture state was more popular with the Romantic generation. In many cases, individuals like Nietzsche, wavered between both tendencies.

The Cosmopolitan Kulturstaat

The cosmopolitan Kulturstaat is the preoccupation of 18th century German intellectuals, living under absolutist rule, with individual freedom and with the especially inward-looking Ideal of Cultivation we have called Bildung. This preoccupation is clearly linked to their inability to participate in affairs of state other than as bureaucrats, to the weakness of the German bourgeoisie and urban civic life in general, and the tension between their urge for free expression and state censorship.

The inwardsness of Bildung parallels strikingly the shift from a civic to a personal Ideal of Cultivation that occurred in Hellenistic Greece. The intense civic life of the Greek polis required that individuals were cultivated to serve in public office as politicians, soldiers, diplomats and public administrators. They were fitted for their role by a universal paideia that fulfilled practical ends. When those city-states lost their power and were incorporated into baggy multinational empires administered by despots or governors, civic virtue waned and the purpose of practical paideia was lost. Now the practice of cultivation was directed at private and personal needs. The cosmopolitan faiths of this period, those of the Academy, the Stoas, and Epicurus recommended quiet, disciplined, personal development. Talented individuals, denied access to fame in the theatre of politics, sought their salvation in philosophy, science and scholarship - a fact not lost on observers such as Polybius. Paideia became intrinsically cosmopolitan: it elevated individuals above regional origins, to the higher sphere of universal principle, the perfection of human nature purely for itself. Paideia now fitted individuals to govern themselves rather than others, and this form of government was regarded increasingly as the highest form of freedom.

A free-born citizen in the polis must participate in affairs of state and suffer intrusions on their time and purse. Active civic life discourages introspection. In the cosmopolitan empire, with no obligations to public order, you are not too distracted to cultivate your soul. Likewise in an 18th century Germany, administered by territorial rulers loosely gathered in a cosmopolitan, albeit moribund, imperial system. In underdeveloped towns that lacked the obligations of the republican civic spirit, German intellectuals (as the example of Goethe and von Humboldt attests) compensated by developing their private lives even when they held official positions. Both were ministers of state but their public obligations were diluted and relieved by peace and solitude. As in the Hellenist world, sons of the bourgeoisie, clergy, academics or bureaucrats, turned to an internalised cosmopolitan culture for self-justification. Accordingly, in the fifty years before Napoleon's invasion of Germany, Europe reaped one of its most bountiful harvests in the fields of art, science and scholarship.

In Germany the idea of freedom is spiritualised, and internalised. It is something we must win for ourselves by mastering our faculties. That is why German intellectuals jealously guarded private spirituality from state control. Deeply implanted principles of stoical self-rule warned against a state that sought to regulate private ethics. The right of the state to enforce external constraints, to demand obedience in the sphere of economy, defence, or administration was not questioned; the intellectuals, even the most radical, were quite satisfied if they merely were allowed to think and speak freely. All the state has to ensure is that it does not interfere, as far as reason will allow, with this intellectual process. When the firebrand Fichte, his radical zeal awakened by revolution in France, published his first political pamphlet in 1793 he titled it: A Demand for Freedom of Thought Presented to the Princes of Europe who have hitherto Suppressed it. A gauntlet in the face of the ancien régime to be sure, but a 'demand for freedom of thought' seems unduly timid. To his credit, Fichte also expressed demands for 'external' freedom. But one suspects that he reflects an intellectual habit whose classical expression, echoed with approval by Kant in his essay What is Enlightenment? and to some extent the foundation of Kantian moral philosophy, can be attributed to that enlightened absolutist, Frederick the Great: Argue as much as you like about whatever you like, but obey!

A spiritualised idea of freedom that sanctioned ready submission to civil authority began in Germany

405 This fact is implicit in Goethe’s assessments of the English in the Conversations with Eckermann, op. cit., p.89, where he observes that all Englishmen, as such, are essentially incapable of reflection; distractions and party politics make it impossible for them to complete the quiet process of culture. But as practical men they are great!
406 Kant, What is Enlightenment, op. cit., p.41.
long before any obsession with Bildung. The same political circumstances affected even the forms of Protestant and German Catholic devotion. Luther’s insistence on freedom of conscience with obedience to civil authority is characteristic of the secular Aufklärers. The Protestant form of worship correlates remarkably with Bildung: the same inward-looking habit of mind, and emphasis on personal salvation. It was not difficult to adapt those responses to a purely secular framework.

Predictably, when German philosophers defined the relation between Bildung and the state, they would, to a man, identify freedom as the pre-requisite of a just constitution, not because freedom is good or just in itself, but because culture could not exist without it. The freedom they sought was not an untrammelled freedom of deeds, which might lead, they alleged, to a chaos that makes culture impossible. Civic harmony, enforced by and guarded by the state, would better constrain the wild instincts of men and permit these to be sublimated in pursuit of culture. They wanted to think freely, not to be free.

The state was thought to be a part of nature and therefore compulsion and necessity were intrinsic to it, but freedom belonged to the spiritual realm of Reason. All the elements of this idea, which merges the principles of the Machtstaat with those of a Kulturstaat, can be found in Germany by at least the time of Christian Thomasius (1655-1728). They were however, to receive their classic exposition during the second half of the 18th century in the writings of Immanuel Kant.

Kant, perhaps more influential than any other in the area of cosmopolitan culture-politics, prepared a groundwork of principle that was to nourish successive generations, particularly those of liberal persuasion, into the 20th century. Like all Aufklärers, his political obsession is to demonstrate the necessity of spiritual freedom for the promotion of culture and the physical preconditions it requires.

His political preference is for absolute but enlightened monarchy. It was only in the 1790’s that he starts to emphasise the role of popular will in establishing constitutional monarchy. In the essay What is Enlightenment (1784) he states that enlightened monarchy was superior to a republic in ensuring the preservation of spiritual freedom, and noted that culture is compatible with less rather than more civic liberty: “A greater degree of civil freedom seems advantageous to a people's spiritual freedom; yet the former established impassable boundaries for the latter; conversely, a lesser degree of civil freedom provides enough room for all to fully expand their abilities.”

Reconciling obedience to civil authority and spiritual freedom was difficult. But submission was easier. Kant unheroically submitted to censorship during the abortive attempt by a Prussian monarch (Frederick William II) to impose religious regulation.

In the nine theses of the Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent of 1784, Kant outlines a groundwork of principle to establish the cosmopolitan form of Kulturstaat, not too different from what Nietzsche used for the same purpose a century later. In the first three theses he elaborates the notion of the Ideal of Cultivation claiming it is nature's purpose to be consciously perfected by man, a perfection conducted by mortal individuals on behalf of the immortal human species. In the fourth thesis, he considers how this perfection takes place in human society. For Kant, as for successors like Nietzsche, the means that nature employs to develop man's capacities is 'antagonism' or what we might today call 'competition' among individuals within society: “...their tendency to enter into society, combined however, with a thoroughgoing resistance that constantly threatens to sunder this society.”

The individual's own selfish desires to surpass others, which otherwise gives rise to social evils, also leads him to overcome his laziness and to work for his own distinction. This is what blooms into enlightenment and culture. The problem is then, as outlined in the fifth thesis, how to constrain vital but unsociable instincts within a framework that does not suffocate them:

'The greatest problem for the human species... is to achieve a universal civil society administered in accord with the right. Since it is only in society - and, indeed, only in one that combines the greatest freedom, and thus a thoroughgoing antagonism among its members, with a precise determination and protection of the boundaries of this freedom, so that it can coexist with the freedom of others - since it is only in such a society that nature's highest objective, namely, the highest attainable development of mankind's capacities, can be achieved, nature also wills that mankind should itself accomplish this, as well as all the other goals that constitute mankind's vocation. Thus must there be a society in which one will find the highest possible degree of freedom under external laws combined with irresistible power, i.e., a perfectly rightful civil constitution, whose attainment is the supreme task nature has set for the human species; for only by solving and completing it can nature fulfill her other objectives with our species. Necessity compels men, who are otherwise so deeply enamoured with unrestricted

405 Kant, op. cit., p.45.
406 When Kant was instructed to abide by censorship guidelines established during the reign of the the Prussian King Frederick William II, he wrote to him in October 1794, promising that ‘as your Royal Majesty's most loyal subject’ he would keep silence on the subject of religion and sought no more than ‘a corner of the earth’ where he could end his life free from anxiety. Cited by Krieger op. cit., p.105.
407 This is not to say Nietzsche was directly dependent on Kant in this respect, only that his ideas on the culture-stone followed in the same pattern. Kant, Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent, op. cit., p.32.
freedom, to enter into this state of coercion; and indeed, they are forced to do by the greatest need of all, namely, the one that men themselves bring about, for their propensities do not allow them to coexist for very long in wild freedom. But once in a refuge such as civil society furnishes, these same propensities have the same salutary effect. It is just as with trees in a forest, which need each other, for in seeking to take the air and sunlight from the others, each obtains a beautiful straight shape, whilst those that grow in freedom and separate from one another branch out randomly, and are stunted, bent and twisted. All the culture and art that adorn mankind, as well as the most beautiful social order, are fruits of unsociableness that is forced to discipline itself and thus through an imposed art to develop nature's seed more completely.\(^{412}\)

Man is an animal that needs a master: someone who will break his self-will and force him to obey a universally valid will.\(^{413}\) Kant, unlike many of his intellectual descendents, is egalitarian enough to observe that a master is better provided by state constitution than by arbitrary rule of aristocracy. Once the just constitution is laid down culture emerges as a matter of course and the state need do no more. The state is a hard outer shell within which a constrained freedom sublates the various forms of culture. This then is the limited yet essential function of the cosmopolitan Kulturstaat.

Kant's ideas clarified the thought of the next generation. Wilhelm von Humboldt, a close friend of Goethe and Schiller (who had immersed himself in Kant's writings) and a key member of the Prussian Reform Group, provides a famous and perhaps more extreme statement of these principles in his treatise: Ideas for an Attempt to Determine the Limits of the Power of the State. The first two theses he presents are that "the true end of man... is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole..." and that "Freedom is the grand and indispensable condition which the possibility of such a development presupposes..."\(^{414}\) His adherence to the values of individuality, spontaneity and diversity in culture, and what Meinecke was later to call 'cosmopolitanism', leads him to regard the best state as one that makes minimal use of its powers\(^ {415}\) and which interferes in the lives of citizens only as far as is needed to promote their welfare.\(^ {416}\)

A state that regulates and legislates beyond this threatens its citizens with uniformity, and impedes the growth of individuality. Diversity is something that can only be encouraged if the state leaves people alone. But just as he wishes to limit state power, Von Humboldt also wants to keep the population as unpolitical as possible. Politics invades the quiet pursuit of culture. Like Kant, and most of the Aufklärers, he believes that monarchical absolutism is the best way to make the state behave responsibly.\(^ {417}\)

If freedom within constraint was accepted by the Aufklärers as the key to the development of culture, many like Von Humboldt cautioned that excessive state regulation could suffocate it. Often, in accord with the laissez faire doctrines of Adam Smith, which influenced some German intellectuals, they denied state involvement was needed anywhere other than to maintain order.

Kant did not accept that the state had any concern with guiding morality or providing welfare and even Hegel remarked on the perturbing modern tendency of the state to overly organise the affairs of its citizens. In this context he mentions the new French republic but more significantly, he links regulatory extremism in Prussia with its singular inability to produce geniuses, a point made more than once by other commentators on that country. "How dull and spiritless a life", he remarks, "is engendered in the modern State of the sort where everything is regulated from the top downwards, where nothing which has implications for the community as a whole is left to the management and execution of those parts of the people that have an interest in it - in a State such as the French Republic has made itself into - this we still have to experience in the future, if indeed mastery can maintain itself at this pitch of pedantry. But what life and what sterility reigns in another equally regulated state - in Prussia - strikes anyone who sets foot in the first village across the border or considers the complete lack of scientific or artistic genius in Prussia, and does not assess its strength by the ephemeral level of energy which a single man of genius was able to force it up to for a time."\(^ {418}\)

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\(^ {412}\) ibid., p.33.

\(^ {413}\) loc. cit.


\(^ {415}\) See Friedrich Meinecke's discussion of von Humboldt in Cosmopolitanism and the National State, tr. R. B. Kimber, 1970, New Jersey, 1970. It is interesting to note that Meinecke himself initially believed that the power-state and the culture-state could live as one, but in the end called for the pettitioning of the state concept which Bismark had set into place and urged a retreat to the order of Goethe's time.

\(^ {416}\) Goethe, for instance, in conversation with Eckermann, actually expresses doubts about the possibility of an organic culture-state in which all individuals participate in common practice of self-perfection. 'It is justly said,' he advises, 'that communal cultivation of all human powers is desirable and excellent. But the individual is not born for this; everyone must form himself as a particular being - seeking, however, to attain that general idea of which all men are constituents. ' Op. cit., p.103.


\(^ {418}\) Cited in Hegel's Development Toward the Sunlight (1770-1801), H. S. Harri, Oxford, 1972, p.456. Cf. Schiller's observation, op. cit., letter VI, pp.40-41: "it is rarely a recommendation in the eye of a state to have a capacity superior to your employment, or one of those noble intellectual cravings of a man of talent which contend in rivalry with the duties of office. The state is so jealous of the exclusive possession of its servants that it would prefer... for functionaries to show their powers with the Venus of Cythera rather than the Uranus Venus. It is thus that concrete individual life is extinguished, in order that the abstract whole may continue its miserable life, and the state remains forever a stranger to its citizens, because feeling does not discover it anywhere. The governing authorities find themselves to classify, and thereby simplify, the multiplicity of citizens, and yet know humanity in their representative form and at second hand. Accordingly they end by entirely losing sight of humanity, and by confounding it with a simple artificial creation of the understanding, whilst on their part the subject classes cannot help receiving coldly laws that address themselves so little to their personality. At length society, weary of having a burden that the state takes so little trouble to lighten, falls to pieces and is broken up... They
In his Lectures to the German Nation Fichte goes further than any in rejecting state control at the cost of culture: “Freedom in the actions of the external life also, is the fostering soil for higher culture; a legislation which has the latter in view will give to the former the fullest scope possible, even at the risk that... governing may become somewhat more difficult and laborious.” He explicitly subordinates the Machtstaat principle to that of individual freedom needed for the practice of culture. In the eighth Lecture he goes even further and insists that the early state's use of coercion would slowly be superseded by rational educative processes. The state would so elevate individuals that eventually it would cease to have any reason to exist, and actually bring about its own extinction. When claiming that the state may eventually 'wither away', Fichte anticipates an idea that both Marx and Nietzsche were to consider separately later in the century.

If the state should concern itself only with providing spiritual freedom for culture, where do the state responsibilities end and those of culture begin? Cosmopolitan intellectuals present a theoretical haze that grows darker when the French revolution, having failed to enhance diversity of personality or increase cultural endeavour, leads many to reconsider the extent to which freedom should be permitted. Schiller, an enthusiast of the revolution in its early stages, backs away from its regicidal and fratricidal outcome, grows cautious about liberty and is convinced that freedom could not benefit culture until the moral substance of men is improved. The course of the revolution, he believes, degenerated precisely because the French lacked inner greatness to follow through to noble ends.

In order for us to be capable of freedom we first have to be educated to moral strength through the power of art. We have to acquire a more refined sense of beauty and taste. In The Aesthetic Education of Man Schiller expressed the conviction that "to arrive at a solution even in the political problem, the road of aesthetics must be pursued, because it is through beauty that we arrive at freedom". What he means is that perfect freedom for individuals is realisable only in the world of appearance or imagination, in other words the world of culture, but not in the material or substantial world of the state. Schiller takes as inevitable the coercion and subjection of individuals before the law of the Machtstaat. He accepts that perfect freedom in a state system can never be possible and that consequently it is only “in the world of aesthetic appearance, [that] the idea of equality is realised, which the political zealot would gladly see carried out socially.”

The freedom of the ideal world compensates us for the restraints we experience in the material one. It is only there that imagination and exuberant energy coexist without forcing a material, and therefore ignoble, objective. By learning to constrain this exuberance we realise and apprehend the beauty of artistic forms and in so doing instruct ourselves in the practice of freedom constrained by self-rule. Schiller appears to believe that if all of us are subjected to the aesthetic experience then eventually its ennobling affect will improve us as individuals and also the institutions of the state.

Yet again Schiller confirms the schism between culture and state, without clarifying their relationship. Although pessimistic about the inherent 'material' character of the state he agrees with Kant, Von Humboldt, Fichte and other cosmopolitan philosophers that the state constitution is a type of artistic production, whose goal was to form men artistically. In the works of the Aufklärers and their successors political ideas are continually linked metaphorically or conceptually to aesthetic ones. Schiller calls the establishment and structure of a true political freedom the "the most perfect of all works of art". In the fifth thesis of the Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent, Kant likened the constraint with which the state forced the wild unsociability of individuals to be sublimated into culture, to a type of 'imposed art'. Fichte, straightforwardly declares that the ‘absolute state is ...an artistic institution, intended to direct all individual powers towards the life of the Race and to transmute them therein... as an institution of free and self-intelligent art, only after it has scientifically penetrated to its complete and perfect purpose in the Age of Reason as Knowledge...’

Strange as these metaphors may seem to us, they are consistent with the Ideal of Cultivation of the German Enlightenment. In this tradition the progress of Reason, or in other words, human consciousness and self-consciousness, liberates us from nature and allows us to view it as an object. We no longer experience the natural world unconsciously. And just as Reason frees us from nature's tyranny, fashioning our own world of objects allows us to make use of our plastic powers: nature is something ready to be formed consciously and methodically as art. The same principle extended to the social world implies that we can overcome the arbitrary restraints of tradition and superstition, and that society itself is nothing more than an object to be manipulated by conscious artistry. Thus the state conceived by a rational agent, a type of artist-statesman, would be a created artefact. This idea is

are dissolved in what may called a state of moral nature, in which public authority is only one function more, hated and deceived by those who think it necessary, respected only by those who can do without it.’

Fichte, Werke, VII, Reden an die Deutsche Nation, VIII.

Ibid., VIII


loc. cit.

Cf. Herder, op. cit.: 'serve the state if you must but serve humanity if you can’.

Schiller, op. cit., Letter II, p.27.

amplified and extended in Nietzsche's *politics of cultivation*.

Intellectuals who favoured the cosmopolitan *Kulturstaat* thought culture was the responsibility of individuals in civil society, and thus a realm of 'spiritual freedom' where state intrusion was unwelcome. Ideas of collective cultural goals were less developed. The state remained a static framework that could at some ideal point in the development of human reason be dismantled. So even when collective goals were considered, it was in the widest possible terms, as the goal of humanity rather than of the specific nations that comprise it.

The idea of state seldom converged with that of nationality. It was generally thought that a state could appropriate any mass of people of diverse races and customs, yet still remain a *Kulturstaat*. It was inevitable then when the spirit of national feeling awoke in German thought and letters in the early part of the 19th century that this model would decline in favour of one that took *national culture* as the proper justification of the state. Despite this advance in the concept of an *organic Kulturstaat* the cosmopolitan model never totally declined. Residues and remnants lived on in German political thought and would continue to nourish liberal and conservative intellectuals for another hundred years. It was this very model that informed and inspired Nietzsche's politics.

**The Organic Kulturstaat**

If the *cosmopolitan Kulturstaat* presupposes an ideal of personal cultivation such as prevailed in Hellenistic times, the idea of *organic Kulturstaat* presupposes a form of politics that prevailed in the Greek *polis*. The characteristic *Ideal of Cultivation* of the age of the *polis* was republican or civic and the focus of cultivation was not the individual but public virtue. The *polis*, as democracy or oligarchy, made heavier demands on its citizens and demanded their participation in all theatres of life: in economy, festivity, war, and administration. Little individuality other than what served the state, or the party in power was tolerated. The aim of politics, outside of immediate party strife, was to raise the city-state above others in power and prestige. Political theory was exclusively a debate over which state constitutions produced the most virtuous or cultivated citizens.

Constitutions, which were seen as means of fixing a certain type of virtue on the citizenry and bringing the whole body up to a certain ideal type, were typically the products of sages such as Solon in Athens or Lycurgus in Sparta. It was to *philosopher-statesmen* that the self-conscious *polis* would turn, as did Ephesus when it invited Heraclitus, who uncharitably spurned the offer, to give it laws: like sculptors carving living forms out of the marble of humanity, they excited in dreamers like Plato the envy and desire to attain similar renown. Even in Hellenistic times, when the *polis* had lost its power, these forms of political discourse were pronounced among the Greeks, as living examples of republican virtue could still be found in other nations like Rome.

Ironically Machiavelli, the influential early modern theorist of the organic *culture state* is most often seen as a theorist of *Machtstaat* principles, an amoral apostle of state power whose one concern is to point out how it can be attained and maintained. What is overlooked is his conviction that the goal of statecraft was to awaken *virtù* (that is to say efficiency, or talent) in the citizenry, and that the republican model of government was the best means for achieving this. Machiavelli's *politics of Virtù* as Nietzsche himself correctly designated it, with its close study of the Roman republic, specifically aimed at describing the institutions and constitution needed to create capable citizenry. The state is not separate from culture but is a creation of and creator of it, and glory would be bestowed on the actions of the collective rather than the individual. This organic unity would not consist of the gloomy harmony of say the Platonic republic, but of the balanced tension between parties and factions.

Within a free republic party friction was regarded as not only inevitable but could, when wisely directed, provide an everlasting spark of energy and action. Machiavelli draws on the examples of antiquity but is obsessed with the cultural mission of his own city Florence. In the tradition of Humanists like Aretino his studies lead him to equate the rise and decline of high culture with the fortunes of the free city state. With the extinction of the Italian republics that, needless to say, resembled and explicitly modelled themselves on the *polis* of antiquity, civic culture-politics lost its material nourishment, for it was not easily transferable to the new forms of territorial state, even when the latter attained 'republican' forms. The 'perfection of nature' or 'the development of genius' were not the first hope of the French revolutionaries in 1789, and the conjunction of *liberté, fraternité* and *égalité* shows explicit devotion to *eudemonic* political ideals, though this was redressed to some extent by a rough attachment to Reason and technical progress.

Germans, other than those in the Hansa ports and other free cities, never breathed the spirit of republicanism as others did. By the 18th century, they did so even less. In Italy, at least nostalgia

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427 WP, a104.
428 Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, Book I, Chap VII
40 Hans Baron, op. cit., p.417.
lingered. Nevertheless a variant of the idea of the organic Kulturstaat did in fact catch on, without dependence on the models of antiquity or the Italian Renaissance, but relying instead on the progress in the 19th century of German nationalism. This is in many respects entirely consistent with the organic culture-state, as republicanism can involve diverse political arrangements or constitutions, but is never anything other than patriotic; *la gloria de la patria* is in the nature of the beast.

The German form of culture-politics in this period most resembles that of the pan-Hellenist Athenian oratory. Isocrates, who pleaded for the union of Greek states in war against a looming enemy: Persia. Isocrates argued thus to persuade them from the fratricidal conflicts that had weakened them. What Greeks shared more than anything, he declared, was *paideia*, their attachment to a common Ideal of Cultivation. This is what made them different to Persians, and what made them Greek.

This idea of national kinship closely parallels what was coalescing in nineteenth century Germany after Napoleon’s invasion, when intellectuals, before the threat of a common enemy, sought to identify with a unit larger than a single principality. In this context, patriotism came to be related to the display of *Bildung*, or high culture. The *Bildung* of individual Germans was taken to be the quintessence of German nationality and offered as a reason for their superiority over French and other Europeans. Even if Germans could not shelter under the umbrella of political unity, they could at least recognise themselves as a single people on account of their shared culture. The grand achievements of German culture were after all their source of pride and vastly more significant than the political jostling of three hundred or so petty principalities. This is what made it possible to think of culture as an ensemble of national customs, language, and artistic productions, and brought about a new variation in the idea of an organic culture-state.

The drift from cosmopolitan to national ideas of culture happened slowly in the twenty years before and after 1800, in tandem with similar developments elsewhere in Europe and with similar changes to European sensibility. European intellectuals were shifting from *a priori* and speculative thinking to thinking based on historical and empirical example. The idea of humanities expanding self-consciousness, the core principle of German’s Ideal of Cultivation and their greatest endowment to European enlightenment was the first victim of the new patriotism. Herder touched on it when he stated that every nation had a unique consciousness and genius that contributed to the commonweal of all nations. Herder's sentiments were both national and universal: he wanted a cosmopolitanism of nationalities rather than of individuals, wherein an individual could contribute most to world culture by truly representing the national folk culture. Fichte, Schiller, and the early romantics took this further by arguing that, since Germany lay at the centre of the world (namely Europe), it was also the cosmopolitan centre of world consciousness. Germany was the nation into which all ideas flowed and were synthesised. It was the representative nation of mankind which by its inner diversity, its eclectic borrowing from other nations had created a universal synthesis, embodying their separate tendencies in higher unity. And yet, despite these opinions not one of these thinkers rejected the older static cosmopolitan idea of the state, and or insisted that national culture and the state should grow together.

It was Hegel who, though not a German nationalist, took the first systematic and decisive step to join ideas of culture - *Bildung* and nationality - and the state. Hegel's Ideal of Cultivation, like that of all the great German Idealists, holds that the chief object of human life is to self-consciously perfect nature; to become the mind of nature, and liberate it from blind striving. Freedom of mankind and nature is directly equated to the extent to which mankind attains understanding of himself. The difference is that, where the cosmopolitan strand of idealism from Kant to Schopenhauer tended to make the individual the bearer of self-consciousness, Hegel conferred this role on the state. The state, in relation to the nation, and therefore to all nature, was its functioning, self-apprehending mind.

Given the role of Hegel's Kulturstaat, it was necessary for him to perceive it as an organic entity, in which the various elements of the polity join in common higher purpose. As he notes in the Philosophy of Right: "the state in and by itself is the ethical whole, the actualisation of freedom; and it is an absolute end that freedom should be actual. The state is mind on earth and consciously realising itself there. In nature, on the other hand, mind actualises itself only as its own other, as mind asleep. Only when it is present in consciousness, when it knows itself as a really existent object is it the state. In considering freedom the starting point must not be individuality, the self-consciousness, but only the essence of self-consciousness... the march of God in the world, that is what the state is. The basis of the state is the power of reason actualising itself as will."430

Hegel's intellectual tendencies were to harmonise diversity and reconcile oppositions. Where predecessors saw value in conflict between individuals, and between individuals and the state he sought unity and structure. Atomism repelled him. To achieve an ethical ideal you had to start with the essence of actuality, not build on single individuals. For Hegel the state was not a work of art, but an organism subject to universal laws of development. His republican instincts coaxed him to base the spiritual progress of man on the civic order rather than the individual and though he constantly iterated the significance of subjective freedom for individuals, the right of the state was uppermost.

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430 Hegel, The Philosophy of Right, op. cit., p.279.
431 ibid., p.258.
Just as Kant best represents the cosmopolitan model; Hegel is the champion of the organic Kulturstaat. But while Hegel resembled Fichte and Schiller in sharing a lifelong obsession with the Ideal of Cultivation and believing Germany a representative nation of mankind, his habit of historicising human consciousness led him elsewhere. Preoccupation with human philosophical development convinced him that a single people are always charged with the execution of a great moment in the progress of the world spirit toward self-awareness. At any epoch an elected people is “for this epoch in world history - and it can make the epoch but once - the ruling one. Against this, its absolute right to be the bearer of the current stage of development, the spirits of the other peoples are without rights, and they, like those whose epoch is past, no longer count in world history.” Hegel believed that modern Nordic peoples, including the Germans, were charged with effecting a great spiritual turning point similar to that accomplished by Oriental, Greek and Roman civilisations. But finally their fate would be as dismal as their predecessors. As temporary instruments of the world spirit they would be supplanted by some other great people and their work would remain only as distant memories. This was a matter of indifference to him. The German nation had no unique or eternal value in itself.

Such grand perspectives suggest patriotic indifference but in fact Hegel gave patriotism plenty of weight in his political theory. Influenced by Rousseau and attached to republican democracy in his youth, like so many of his generation, he welcomed the French revolution, and idealised the Athenian polis as the perfect Kulturstaat. Even when the revolution drifted from its idealistic moorings he favoured its world-historical example. The Greek state embodied a unity of elements that modern machine states like Prussia did not. A ‘folk-religion’ was needed to arrest modern political fragmentation and alienation and Germans had to be dragged from their individual private culture into one that was civic-based. Later on he conformed to the principle, the foundation of von Savigny's school of jurisprudence, that the rational state constitution is inextricably bound to the customs, religion, art and philosophy of a nation. The critical difference was that Hegel held the state rather than the national spirit to be the true goal of ethical striving. The state, as the mind of a nation, brings a people to self-consciousness, which is the substratum of freedom. So the nation, while a valid and important ethical phenomenon, was merely a precondition, a stage on the way to a statehood that would carry a people to the highest phase of spiritual progress.

Hegel was to philosophy as Beethoven to music. He successfully synthesised the classical past and the romantic future. Whether he neatly fitted into the cosmopolitan or nationalist camp is immaterial. Devaluing the individual as the bearer and object of culture in favour of the larger entity provides a critical lead to successors who accept his example for their conceptions of an organic Kulturstaat.

After Hegel the nationalist culture-state dominates, even among those inheriting Weimar’s cosmopolitan legacy. The historian Von Ranke, at first attached to ideas of individual cultivation, later gave development of national personality precedence. Support grew among political conservatives and liberals for the idea of a Germanic national state, one not patterned on Western models but with a character appropriate to the German mind. With civic participation in government not really occurring until the latter half of the 19th century, intellectuals happily imagined that they participating in the life of the nation.

Nationalism is not responsible for the waning influence of liberalism later in the century. Empirically liberal-republican political ideals have always been associated with robust patriotism. If the liberalism waned in Germany while patriotism waxed it has little to do with antagonism of principle. Wherever liberalism survived into the twentieth century it remained attached to the national culture-state: as in the case of Max Weber, a zealous culture-politician and equally zealous patriot. Weber's goal was to keep Germany the leading nation of culture, and even his scientific preoccupations were an offspring of this intention, as seen in his concern at the ill-effects on life of rationality and bureaucratisation caused by the modern state - traditional German concerns since Schiller's time. Mostly however, the idea of nationality continued to drift from the idea of Bildung. As such, the nation state principle ceases to be a form of organic Kulturstaat and therefore ceases to be of relevance to us.

412 ibid. p.291.
Nietzsche's Culture State

Nietzsche had definite if contradictory ideas about how society should be organised. If he never outlines his vision of a utopian culture state explicitly, fundamental ideals guide him in everything he says about politics and the state. By examining these ideals we can discern how his culture-state might look. Of the two models of the Kulturstaat described, the cosmopolitan and the organic, it is the former to which he most disposed, while unconsciously incorporating elements of the latter. Although so prejudiced against state power, he can deny the very possibility of a culture-state, he can elsewhere propose ways of breeding culture that would practically require rigid state regulation. Never able to reconcile these separate tendencies or think them through methodically, Nietzsche spontaneously expels contradictions whenever he discusses the ways that genius can be produced.

Nietzsche's Idea of the State

Mostly Nietzsche discounts the importance of the organisation or constitution of the state when discussing social conditions favourable to culture. Invariably, he sees the culture-state as one in which state structures and institutions are weak, and where leadership and guidance of social organisation is by individuals of an upper caste, philosophers, artists, educators, who would work through what German philosophers called civil society or what Nietzsche himself calls the 'people'.433 The authority of these individuals stems from natural local leadership, as a feudal aristocracy might work, rather than through rigid constitutions like those proposed by Plato in his Republic.

The Cosmopolitan Culture-State preferred

This position is characteristic of cosmopolitan tendency and puts Nietzsche squarely in the camp of the early Aufklärers. Like them, he doubts that a regulating state with a fixed, juridical system can bring forth higher culture systematically. To support his scepticism he cites Machiavelli's remarks: that, with regard to the state, "the form of Government is of very small importance, although half-educated people think otherwise. The great aim of State-craft should be duration, which outweighs all else, inasmuch as it is more valuable than liberty."434

He frequently observes that it is in the environment of political stability and duration that culture is produced, for it is "only with securely founded duration that continual development and ennobling inoculation are at all possible".435 Hastily and without elaboration he acknowledges that, as a rule 'authority', which is to say, conservative or arbitrary authority lacking the wisdom of foresight and higher human goals, will be the "the dangerous companion of all duration" and "will rise in opposition to this."436 Undervaluing the relation of government forms to high culture, he overlooks what has been a key question for republican exponents of the culture-state: whether a monarchical, democratic, or oligarchic constitution is likely to produce a higher culture. Nietzsche deems such debates irrelevant and constitutions unimportant in the case of the party system of parliamentary democracy, the stability and duration of government is undermined by their frequent replacement.

All of this indicates his closeness to the cosmopolitan tradition of German culture politics; it harmonises with his belief that any perfect, regulated form of government would actually weary and exhaust the individual, which he sees as the true object and agent of cultivation.437 The state should be nothing more than a "wise arrangement for the protection of one individual against another". That is its justification, but whenever it is overly strengthened, the individual will at last "be weakened by it, even effaced, - thus the original purpose of the State will be most completely frustrated."438

Nietzsche's hope is that the most distant progress of culture diminishes the state's role. Unlike Hegel, but like Fichte, and later Marx, he sees that the state may one day disappear and be replaced by some other order, in the same way as the social forms of the gens or clan have disappeared from modern civilisation. The state's existence, he asserts, is justifiable and beneficial only in the present, where it still imposes social cohesion and permits hierarchical social structures to be formed and maintained. When less centralised modes of human organisation evolve, dispensing with the need for elaborate state structures and hastening the privatising of all areas of civil society, its decay will be assured, though hierarchy in some form must always exist.

433 This is what he implies, for example, when he says that '...the production of genius is indeed dependent upon the fate of a people [volk]. For dispositions toward genius are very common, but the concurrence of all the necessary favourable conditions is very rare.' SSW, PAT, p.140.
434 HAH I, a254.
435 loc. cit.
436 loc. cit.
437 loc. cit.
438 loc. cit.
**Goal and origin of the State**

Anxious to assure culture's highest rank in the hierarchy of values, Nietzsche is perturbed by the growth of state power in contemporary life insofar as it threatens spiritual freedom, and displaces cultivation of genius as the proper goal of society. While deeming the state as useful to culture, he is concerned that it does not become an end in itself. "The world of culture is almost independent of the 'good of the state'." 439 The mere growth of state power has no intrinsic value. Happiness, whether of the individual or the greatest number, the principle of eudemonic politics, is an inferior corporate objective. The state should not concern itself with general welfare, any more than it should be a vehicle for private political ambitions.

The only valid goal for a state is to produce conditions appropriate for the rise of a nobler humanity. In a note of 1873 Nietzsche claims that... "in the State the individual's happiness is subordinated to the general welfare: what does this mean? Not that the minorities are utilised for the welfare of the majorities, but rather that individuals are subordinated to the welfare of the highest individuals, to the welfare of the highest specimens. The highest individuals are the creative persons - by them morally the best, or else useful in some larger sense. Thus they are the purest models and are the improvers of mankind. The goal of the commonwealth is not the existence of the State at any price; but rather its goal is for the highest specimens to be able to live and create within it. This is also the goal that underlies the foundations of states, except that they often had a false opinion concerning who the highest specimens were: often conquerors, dynasties, etc. If the state's existence is no longer to be preserved in such a way that great individuals can live within it, what will then arise is the terrifying state filled with misery, the pirate state in which the strongest individuals take the place of the best. It is not the state's task that the greatest possible number of people live well and ethically within it; numbers do not matter. Instead, the task of the State is to make it generally possible for one to live well and beautifully therein. Its task is to furnish the basis of a culture. In short, a nobler humanity is the goal of the State. Its goal lies outside of itself. The State is a means. 440"

In *Thus Spake Zarathustra* he calls the state a ‘cold monster’, an abstract, heartless beast, devouring the energies and talents of all who serve and live under it. It is one of many idols in the long history of false worship that insists on being appeased by bloody sacrifice. It is a tyrant who consumes the highest men for its myopic aims. According to the wisdom of Zarathustra, those who are truly free shun state-service and leave it to the superfluous. Only where the state ceases does the man who is not superfluous, that is, the necessary man begin. 443 More than this it is responsible for the death of ‘peoples’ (Völker), the spontaneous communities of custom who represent a more authentic form of social organisation. It makes a pretence of maintaining the laws merely to maintain its own power and because everything about it, including the culture it promotes is false: values, art, religion, heroism, science and philosophy, which are all press-ganged into service, shine dimly behind its corpulent figure. The state destroys the authenticity of civil society.

More dangerously, the modern state prudently recognises culture as being useful, and encourages universal education. The Prussian state in particular sees culture as a means to promote its own power, and for that reason smugly calls itself a Kulturstaat. In the early Lectures on the Future of Our Educational Institutions he sees this presumption sanctioned by the flattery and servility of Hegelian philosophy, which treats the state as an absolute ethical organism. 442 Philosophy in Prussia, he says, actually conspires in the destruction of culture, precisely because it accords greater priority to the state rather than itself. In Prussia, as in Sparta, culture of this type would never change or progress, it would hold men back from further development. As “the modern state becomes more and more like Sparta... It might happen,” he says, “that the greatest and noblest forces will dry up and die away owing to atrophy and transfiguration. For I observe that the sciences and philosophy itself are preparing the way for precisely such an occurrence. They are no longer bulwarks, because they are no longer allowed to have their own goal i.e. because no commonwealth embodies their essence in its goal. Thus what is needed is the foundation of a cultural state, in opposition to the false ones which now go by this name and which would serve as a sort of refugium of culture.” 443

For the younger Nietzsche, the proper relation between culture and state is seen in the Greek polis where both were virile companion's, counting each other as equals and supporting each other in the face of peril. The latter did not merely supervise or regulate the former. “The ancient state emphatically did not share the utilitarian point of view of recognising as culture only what was directly useful to the state itself... and was far from wishing to destroy those impulses which did not seem immediately applicable... the profound Greek... clearly recognised not only that without such state protection the germs of his culture could not develop, but also that all his inimitable and perennial culture had flourished so luxuriantly under the wise and careful guardianship of the

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439 TOS II, III, p.135
440 PHT, PAT, pp.120-121.
441 Z, p.77.
442 PEI, pp.86-87.
443 PHT, PAT, pp.119-120.
The metaphor of 'virile friendship' between state and culture occurs in a partially completed essay of 1871 entitled The Greek State; perhaps Nietzsche's most sustained examination of this relationship. A turgid piece, composed during his association with Richard Wagner and enthusiasm for Schopenhauer, it proceeds typically as *a querelle des anciens et modernes*, with the moderns comparing unfavourably. The proposes that while the goal of society is the production of culture, which can only be achieved by a few remarkable individuals in a layered arrangement of classes and castes i.e., in conditions of slavery, it is the state that makes such a society possible; that is to say, if it were not for the state's enforcing power, hierarchies would collapse into anarchy.

The tyrannical cruelty of the state is an unpleasant necessity, the price you pay for organisation and order. In the Greek polis which, however naive and barbaric an institution in itself, made possible the blooming of Greek society; a society so diverse that it would have splintered without this 'iron clamp' that held it together. In all civilised societies the state prevents our return to the small herd, the family or tribal group, which inevitably brings a bellum omnium contra omnes. So, "be the sociable instinct in individual man as strong as it may, it is only the iron clamp of the State that constrains the large masses upon one another in such a fashion that a chemical decomposition of Society, with its pyramid-like superstructure, is bound to take place." The state for Kant and the younger Nietzsche is a way to curb our native wildness: "Nature, in order to arrive at Society, forges for herself the cruel tool of the State - namely, that conqueror with the iron hand..." Without it, in the natural bellum omnium contra omnes, society on a larger scale cannot strike root beyond the reach of the family.

Like Hobbes and the Aufklärers, Nietzsche holds that the natural inclination of man is to disorder and the need for imposed order, but does not propose, as they did, that the state was formed by social contract and noble agreements between ruler and ruled. Dispensing with this unhistorical fantasy he sees nothing far-sighted or benevolent in its foundation. The origins of the state are in brutal conquest and perfunctory arrangements by dominating powers. It is Hegel's realism he shares when he insists that all states arise out of the subjugation of the majority by a powerful few who, knowing nothing of 'rights' or 'contracts', wish only to impose their will upon all others. Violence not reason founds the state; an origin betrayed to us by the Greeks who "even in the ripest fullness of their civilisation and humanity never ceased to utter as out of a brazen mouth such words as: 'to the victor belongs the vanquished, with wife and child, life and property'. Power gives the first right, and there is no right, which at bottom is not presumption, usurpation, violence." Never relinquishing this idea, Nietzsche develops it consistently in works like the *The Genealogy of Morals*, where he describes the state as originating when "some pack of blond beasts of prey, a conqueror and master race which, organised for war and with the ability to organise" lays its claws upon a numerically superior but still formless and nomadic populace. He also proceeds to assure us that the "sentimentalism which would have it begin with a 'contract'" can be safely disposed of.

### Nature of the State

For Nietzsche, there is no organic relation between culture and the state. As independent agents they act at best in parallel and at worst in opposition. The ill-effects of the state stem from its tendency to promote its power. Every organising power is exclusive and distrustful of the growth of culture. Once established it instinctively bulwarks itself against other social institutions. Even in antiquity the state parasitized and obstructed culture. It prevented change, and the education it imposed upon people by laws kept them either at one level of development or, as occurred in Sparta, in complete stasis.

Culture, he muses, developed in spite of the polis and calls the Periclean panegyric on Athens, which lauds the happy relation between the Athenian state and its Ideal of Cultivation, a "great optimistic dream..." He denies that there was a necessary connection, as Pericles imagined, between the *polis* and Athenian culture.

In the Greek State Nietzsche observes that we form an unconscious attachment and need for the state in spite of its brutal origins: however much it usurps our freedom, however bloody its history, we who are vanquished by it inexplicably grow almost to love it. Hearts go out to the 'magic' of its growing power to the point where it is even "contemplated with fervour as the goal and ultimate aim of the sacrifices and duties of the individual." As it extends its control and establishes its many arms of administration - legislative, juridical, military, bureaucratic, and even religious - we see the possibility of extending our own power by being swallowed into the organisation. And while it undoubtedly sometimes needs talented and able individuals the state depends most of all on mediocrity.

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**Footnotes:**

444 FEI, p. 88.
445 TGS, EGP, p. 9.
446 TGS, EGP, p. 10.
447 TGS, EGP, p. 12.
448 TGS, EGP, pp. 9-10.
449 GM B. 17.
450 HAH I, a474.
In earlier work Nietzsche complains of the levelling effect of the state on culture, and the fragmentation of personality it causes. In later work he actively desires a class of herd animal in Europe, and is more sympathetic to this development. The division of labour upon which the state is founded allows individuals to find a role and function and grow strong. They can do in state service what they could never contemplate as private persons. In a note of 1887-1888 he ponders how it is "that the State will do a host of things that the individual would never countenance?". The answer, he allows, is its "division of responsibility, of command, and of execution. Through the interposition of the virtues of obedience, duty, patriotism and loyalty." "None of you," he says, "has the courage to kill a man, or even to whip him... but the tremendous machine of the State overpowers the individual, so he repudiates responsibility for what he does... Everything a man does in the service of the State is contrary to his nature..." The state, he concludes is therefore a form of organised immorality which, by upholding the qualities of pride, severity, strength, hatred, and revenge actually promotes characteristics which contradict the herd type.

The other danger posed by the state arises from strong individuals who 'pirate' the state for their own use. If most obey a blind instinct to follow the state and fulfil all its demands, there are always a few who look beyond the machinery and see how it might serve their ends. In scarcely veiled criticism of Bismark, Nietzsche notes how such men gain influence in the state precisely because they see it as a means, whereas others only see it as their fulfilment. As men with partial vision they triumph easily over those who are completely blinded. Perceiving the immense resources and powers within their reach, they jealously eliminate rivals, centralise power, free the State from the internal convulsions, enlarge their influence by deploying the state for war and conquest, enfeeble the political factions and "endeavour to wrest the question of war and peace from the decision of the individual lords, in order to be able rather to appeal to the egoism of the masses or their representatives; for which purpose they again need slowly to dissolve the monarchic instincts of the nations." Those who use the state for to enjoy brute power give no meaning to what they do and no meaning to those who labour for them. In language uncharacteristic of his early period and clearly inspired by Wagner, he accuses such men of furthering their ends by using liberal optimism, an "un-Germanic, genuinely neo-Latin, shallow and unmetaphysical philosophy". Again the reference is to Bismark who had just introduced universal suffrage to Prussia. He even makes an anti-Semitic sally against "a selfish State-less money aristocracy" who employs the state-instinct for commercial purposes.

Having dwelled on the diverse afflictions of the modern state he considers the ways in which it can be purified and regenerated. He believes an authentic union between culture and state can be attained only by returning to the original idea of the Greek polis founded on a military form of organisation. Here he is thinking of Sparta, a rare and absurd phenomenon among the Greeks, and as he himself had elsewhere noted, an example of fossilised culture. As much as a cultivated society needs slavery, so is the state in need of war. The original military state with its "immediate decomposition and division of the chaotic mass into military castes, out of which rises, pyramid-shaped, on an exceedingly broad base of slaves, the edifice of the 'martial society'" took as its unwavering goal the methodical creation of military genius.

This arrangement did not necessarily benefit culture, but it did school individuals to see and justify themselves as tools of military genius. It creates a class able to command and another able to obey. The broader conception arises of all humanity, consciously or unconsciously, existing merely for the service of cultural genius in itself. He returns to this idea later in life. In the Will to Power for example, he observes that "the maintenance of the military state is the last means of all of acquiring or maintaining the great tradition with regard to the supreme type of man, the strong type." We do not have to labour this point to see how this would fulfil his worst apprehensions about the state. For all his cosmopolitan tendencies, Nietzsche still pines after the regulated state with which he is most familiar, that of Prussia. In this sense he comes closest in sympathy to the organic culture-state; lying uneasily and irreconcilably beside his own cosmopolitan feelings.

Oblivious of this contradiction, the young Nietzsche in the Greek State fragment eulogises Plato’s metaphysical culture-state, The Republic, as a formula for the "ever-renewed procreation and preparation of the genius... discovered with a poetic intuition and painted with firmness." Crediting Plato as the first to see in a truly magnified way the ideal relation between state and culture, he passes lightly over the fact that this gloomy conservative’ had dismissed the inspired artist from his
polis. He even apologises for Plato whom, he says, really didn't mean it. The ban on artists in The Republic reflected Socrates' influence and no more. This small indiscretion should not prevent us from "recognising in the total conception of the Platonic State the wonderfully great hieroglyph of a profound and eternally to be interpreted esoteric doctrine of the connection between State and Genius." The eulogy is repeated elsewhere in Nietzsche's early work and in 1873 he remarks that "Plato's state is not impossible. Here philosophy attains its summit as the founder of a metaphysically organised state." Later in life his attitude to Plato is openly contemptuous, but he still sees the philosopher as a legislator of a superior form of social organisation and does not consolidate his thoughts on these matters. So although The Greek State may be regarded as an embarrassing sample of juvenilia, all its weaknesses and contradictions are preserved in the work of the older philosopher, sometimes within the same document.

Labour and Property

In relation to the first facts of human life and organisation: labour and the means of production Nietzsche displays a number of prejudices and opinions that are not always entirely consistent, and for the most part, out of character even with educated opinion of his own time.

Leisured and the slave classes

The younger Nietzsche's views about labour are pockmarked by aestheticism and Hellenophilia, and do not change much thereafter. Then, as later, he sees a profound difference between the value of labour for the purpose of subsistence and that serving the aesthetic instincts. He sees nothing ennobling in men working to feed and clothe themselves, just as there is nothing ennobling in the processes of breathing, sleeping, or shitting. Work that merely supports existence does not justify existence. If anything, it is antagonistic to existence because it consumes our time.

Those devoted to cultivating their nature cannot labour merely to live. The rest however are not absolved. In The Greek State, he notes that culture "which is chiefly a real need for art, rests upon a terrible basis: ...in order that there may be a broad, deep and fruitful soil for the development of art, the enormous majority must, in the service of a minority, be slavishly subjected to life's struggle, to a greater degree than their own wants necessitate. At their cost, through the surplus of their labour, that privileged class is to be relieved from the struggle for existence, in order to create and to satisfy a new world of want." Accordingly", he notes, "we must accept this cruel sounding truth, that slavery is of the essence of Culture; a truth of course, which leaves no doubt as to the absolute value of Existence... The misery of toiling men must still increase in order to make production of the world of art possible to a small number of Olympian men." Again, in the middle period he confirms the opinion, observing that "a higher culture can only originate where there are two distinct castes of society: that of the working class, and that of the leisured class who are capable of true leisure; or, more strongly expressed, the caste of compulsory labour and the caste of free labour." A culture state cannot dispense with compulsory labour; or slavery. So that the few can justify the existence of all, the many must toil in bondage and two distinct classes must always exist: noble types at the top with refined sensibilities suited to the business of administration and cultivation, and slower and duller types at the bottom with sensibilities suited to drudgery. In this society "the heavy work and trouble of life will be assigned to those who suffer least through it, to the most obtuse, therefore; and so step by step up to those who most sensitive to the highest and sublimest kinds of suffering, and who therefore still suffer notwithstanding the greatest alleviations of life."

The foundation is clear: the labour of the cultivated man is free, that of the uncultivated is obligatory, but both must exist side by side in the culture-state. This grim credo of Nietzsche's political philosophy sets him apart from other utopians. Others imagine that a perfect order has no slavery, but Nietzsche insists that it is necessary for a cultivated society. We gasp at the provocation this poses and suspect he may be taunting or exaggerating for effect. But in fact he is deadly earnest, for although his statements on slavery are often cast metaphorically, they are often enough quite literal.

In later works he sometimes describes those who, while not enslaved in a physical sense, do the bidding of others under the delusion of their own volition as a 'slave class'. He invokes the example of Greek philosophers, who felt secretly that they alone were free and that even the most powerful

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462 TGS, EGP, p. 18.
463 TLES, PAT, p. 92. See also SSW, PAT, p. 138. 'With his demand that philosophers occupy the throne, Plato expressed a thought which was formerly feasible: he hit upon the notion after the time when it could be realised had passed.'
464 TGS, EGP, pp.6-7.
465 TGS, EGP, p. 7. Also, cf., FEL, pp.33-34. 'Here lies the whole secret of the culture - namely, that an innumerable host of men struggle to achieve it and work hard to that end, ostensibly in their own interests, whereas at bottom it is only that it may be possible for the few to attain it.'
466 HAH I, a479.
467 HAH I, a462.
individuals were their slaves.\footnote{GS, a18. Note in BGE Nietzsche says that ‘the democratization of Europe will lead to the production of a type prepared for slavery as hypocrisy. Everybody, he says, must acknowledge that slaves lived more securely and happily than modern labourers, and that slave labour is easy compared with that of modern workers.’ Today, he says, we do not understand the meaning of slavery. The pride that separated the slave and those of noble descent is incomprehensible to us, for such a gulf existed between them that the slave could not even be seen clearly. We are accustomed to the doctrine of equality though not to equality itself. “One who is not at his own disposal and who lacks leisure does not by any means seem contemptible to us for that reason.”} Sometimes his advocacy of slavery is laid bare and scorns the nineteenth century condemnation of slavery as hypocrisy. Everybody, he says, must acknowledge that slaves lived more securely and happily than modern labourers, and that slave labour is easy compared with that of modern workers.\footnote{HAH I, a457.} Today, he says, we do not understand the meaning of slavery. The pride that separated the slave and those of noble descent is incomprehensible to us, for such a gulf existed between them that the slave could not even be seen clearly. We are accustomed to the doctrine of equality though not to equality itself. “One who is not at his own disposal and who lacks leisure does not by any means seem contemptible to us for that reason.”

**Slaves more desirable than workers**

Nietzsche favourably compares the fate of the slave with that of the modern hired worker, whose exploitation, he regards as ‘a piece of folly’. He does not condemn their mistreatment because it is unjust but because it is an unwise. It limits the effectiveness of those who lead and creates revolutionary prejudices in workers: inspiring class war when no such thing should ever occur. If the exploitation of workers is immediately and self-evidently unjust, he says, justice must also look to the future “and thus keep in view the well being of the worker, his physical and spiritual contentment: in order that he and his posterity may work well for our posterity and become trustworthy for longer periods than the individual span of human life. The exploitation of the worker was... a piece of folly, a robbery at the expense of the future, a jeopardisation of society. We almost have the war now, and in case the expense of maintaining peace, of concluding treaties and maintaining confidence, will henceforth be very great, because the folly of the exploiters was very great and long-lasting.”

Nietzsche contrasts the labour of slaves with that of workers and expels a familiar Romantic sigh over the effect of mechanisation on modern work. Machinery, he complains, humiliates work, robs it of its pride, and causes workers to live in impersonal servitude; handicraft allowed a mark of distinction for personality and inspired them to draw consolation from labour. Modern industrial efficiency has been bought too dearly\footnote{HAH I, a280, a283 and a288.} and industrial culture has become “the most vulgar form of existence that has ever existed”.\footnote{HAH IIB, a286.} In civilised countries we look for work in order to be paid: it is a means and not an end in itself. We are not refined in our choice and will work without pleasure if only it pays well. As a result the level of vulgarity rises, since we ward off boredom at any cost. For higher men, however, boredom and idleness is necessary, and they will not work unless it is associated with pleasure.\footnote{HAH I, a457.}

Paid labour changes the nature of the relations between those with power and those without it. At the mercy of brute need, workers work and sell themselves, but despise those who exploit their need and buy their labour. Submission to tyrants and generals could not be any more painful than submission to unknown and uninteresting captains of industry. To workers, the industrialist is a bloodsucking dog because he cannot prove that he is a higher type. If he could show that he possessed the nobility of spirit that distinguishes the aristocrat there would be no socialism, no class war, no spirit of rebellion. Workers do not mind labouring for those they respect, but the elevation of industrialists seems accidental and they cannot willingly defer to those who merely seem to be luckier. “At bottom, the masses are willing to submit to slavery of any kind, if only the higher-ups constantly legitimise themselves as higher, as born to command - by having noble manners.”

Modern workers suffer distress only because they are seduced by modern ideas. In medieval times their natural modesty and self-sufficiency allowed them to exist happily in their place, but modern ruling classes have divested them of innocence by offering universal education, making them liable for military service, and permitting them to form unions and to vote.\footnote{TI, p.95.} The degeneration of the upper classes has allowed this to happen: “if one wants slaves, one is a fool if one educates them to be masters.”\footnote{HAH IB, a288.} When workers discover that they are as capable as the ruling caste, is it any wonder they see their lowly status as injustice? Rebellion and revolution is the natural consequence of this discovery and perhaps, since the ruling classes are so rotted and feeble, it might not be such a bad thing: “It is all over with us if the working classes ever discover that they now can easily surpass us by means of education and virtue. But if this does not happen then the all the more is it all over with

\footnotesize{For additional complaints about the effects of machinery on labour and modern life, see HAH I, a280, a283 and a288.}
Nietzsche hopes that duty and contentment and even pride in occupation might once again be achieved for the worker: “Workers should learn to feel like soldiers. An honorarium, an income, but no pay!” Elsewhere he suggests that they might become a wealthier self-sufficient caste ruled over by those with no need for material possessions, only power: “the workers shall live one day as the bourgeois do now - but above them, distinguished by their freedom from wants, the higher caste: that is to say, poorer and simpler, but in possession of power.”

The sham life of modern democracies

In Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft, Nietzsche complains that the freedom of modern workers to choose their employment or ‘vocation’ undermines cultural integrity. The need to make a living forces them to adopt certain roles. As they get older, they confuse their existence with their role and, becoming habituated to the same performance, imagine that they were always destined to be what they do. They imagine their occupation to be a natural development and forget how much caprice and accident disposed them to it, or how many other roles they might have played had they taken another path.

This sham can only occur in a democratic period like the present. In the Middle Ages, men believed their vocation to be predestined and refused to acknowledge the role of accident, heredity, or caprice. This faith allowed durable social pyramids such as guilds, classes and hereditary trade privileges to emerge. But in democratic states the capacity to build for the long term is overcome by a new faith that holds that the individual can do anything or manage any role. This faith requires us to become actors, with the result that “everybody experiments with himself, improvises, makes new experiments, enjoys his experiments; and all nature ceases and becomes art.”

Actors could never have become the real masters in the solid and limited Medieval period as they have done today and did in Greece, with the consequence that no long term plans are made; the strength to build is undermined and the courage to make encompassing plans for the distant future dissipated. Due to pervasive ‘role-playing’ the ‘great architects’ of societies, those who have a genius for organisation, and who require solidarity and long-sightedness, no longer have materials with which to work. Great social edifices are built not on actors but on men who firmly believe that their value lies in being a stone in the wall. Today we are no longer material for a society and lack the properties for composing great structures because of our modern means for selecting an occupation.

Again and again Nietzsche lauds the medieval ethic of labour over modern industriousness. Today, the means for producing leisure, which is the true object of industry, supplants the goal, and ensnares men in empty routine. Blind industriousness may create wealth and honours but deprives our sensibility of its subtlety, which alone make possible the enjoyment of wealth and honours. Work, or work for commerce, becomes the chief antidote to boredom and surplus passions, just as the great propagandists of the industrial age foreseen. The sum total of this most industrious of ages only makes more industriousness and money and little else besides. Naturally the most important labour of the culture-state, the labour for art, is neglected. Art is merely consecrated the residue of our time and strength when it should be our most serious activity. It is now a province for the idle and conscienceless, who are not capable of great art and consider its claims arrogant. Artistic endeavour reflects its status as recreation and becomes petty: a pleasant distraction for the exhausted. It was better that art should vanish altogether, for an age that valued leisure would think little of the ‘great’ art of our industrial age.

The question of property

Industrialists are not bad because they are rich, but because their riches are not employed for the benefit of culture. Higher culture needs property and wealth, but more pointedly inherited wealth, which creates an aristocracy of race by permitting men to choose beautiful women as partners and engage the best teachers; it allows cleanliness, time for physical exercise and immunity from dulling physical labour. It encourages freedom of character, independence, absence of niggardliness and of self-abasement before bread-givers: in short it can permit happy nobility. Poverty is not a desirable condition for a noble man. A man who is poor comes to grief through a noble disposition: he does not get on, acquires nothing and his race is extinguished. For those aspiring to serve higher masters however, poverty is the best starting place. It teaches men to abase themselves early on.

Nietzsche praises wealth but advises that its unequal distribution should be checked in order, he says, “that property may henceforth inspire more confidence and become more moral, we should keep...”

478 HAH I, #478.
479 PHF, PAT, p. 104.
480 WP, p. 2763.
481 WP, p. 2764.
482 WS, p. 356.
483 GC, p. 21.
484 HAH I, #479.
open all the paths of work for small fortunes, but should prevent the effortless and sudden acquisition of wealth”. He advises that strategic industries like transport and trade, which favour accumulation of large fortunes, should be taken ‘out of the hands of private persons or private companies’, since those who own too much are as dangerous to the community as those who own nothing - a surprisingly socialist prescription from one mostly perturbed by excessive state influence.

Elsewhere he notes that when the injustice of property is felt in the extreme it can be relieved by either equal distribution of wealth or abolition of private possession and a return to state ownership. The latter, he observes, is the method of the socialists whereas the former was tried in antiquity, always on a small scale and with little success. Whenever an equalising adjustment was made in antiquity, the same old inequality would arise again after a few generations through inheritance, and there would be ‘needy malcontents’ longing for political upheaval. When the second method, that of socialism, is tried and ownership given to the community, the individual becomes a temporary tenant (here he refers specifically to ownership of land) and, as men do not care for transitory possessions, behaves in ‘freebooter’ fashion with the tenure, to the detriment of agriculture.

Nietzsche’s ideas about wealth and property, which sound like prescriptions for a modern ‘mixed’ economy, do not necessarily illustrate his economic preferences for the culture-state. There is only one clear indication of what should not occur there. Though material inequality is inevitable and even desirable, it should never be extreme. Likewise, private ownership of property is always preferable to state ownership, except where strategic facilities and industries are concerned. Though not condoning the possession of property, or the propertied class in itself, he insists that the wealthy should justify their privileges, rather than enjoy them without sacrifice or service. If, in its conduct of life, its manners and cultivation, the propertied class fails to reflect a higher order of being, then its existence is gratuitous and it is deservedly despised by those beneath suffering to serve it.

Writing in the turmoil of Germany’s industrial revolution, Nietzsche sounds like a patrician conservative, bewailing wont of virtue in the propertied classes: they are short-sighted, greedy; have all the vices of the parvenu. “If a Luther were to appear now”, he notes in 1873, “he would rebel against the disgusting mentality of the propertied classes, against their stupidity and thoughtlessness...” He sees no hope of reforming them or their vulgarity; they are mostly lost to culture and to its future. Sometimes he expresses feeble hopes: their redemption is conceivable, he thinks, if they started behaving like a real aristocracy and salvage some dignity from the past: “I do not expect an awakening of goodness among any substantial portion of the propertied classes, but one might be able to instil in them a custom, a duty toward tradition.”

An Ideal of Cultivation cannot be practised unless some are liberated from the cares of daily subsistence and have leisure to pursue self-perfection. This is why it has mostly been embraced only by aristocratic or propertied classes. In any culture-state many must be burdened to produce the surpluses that support the cultivated few. Nietzsche does not even want the Ideal of Cultivation to be embraced by the majority, believing it would coarsen and dilute the practice of culture. Those permitted leisure must be noble, which is to say, worthy of their privilege, and not merely the vulgar who use their advantages without sacrificing themselves to the discipline of cultivation. In the culture-state there must be no idle rich, no jet-set, for they are not worthy of their wealth. Likewise, those committed to labour should be treated fairly, and should be encouraged in their station. It should be impressed upon them that this aristocracy rules, not by the good fortune of inheritance, but by the right of superior virtue and merit. There should be no semblance of equality between the higher caste and the lower, although there must be means for lowering those in the upper caste who are not worthy and elevating those in the lower caste who are.

In the long history of the politics of cultivation, these ideas are quite familiar. While recognising the aristocratic nature of the ideal, Nietzsche’s prejudices are manifestly bourgeois. The son of a clergyman in a state owned by a landed aristocracy but administered by preachers and bureaucrats, who at least demonstrate their virtue and talent palpably, he disdains those whose privileges are merely inherited. In Nietzsche, we discover the ancient and powerful desire of the professional administrative class in civilisation - the scribes or soldiers who constitute the ‘rule of merit’ - for an aristocracy of the spirit, rather than one founded on the ownership of property.

481 HAH II, a285.
482 The idea of the mixed economy is quintessentially Prussian, and recalls the economic policies of the Hohenzollern and the Teutonic Knights. In Prussia, private enterprise was more often sponsored and initiated by the state rather than by individuals zealously seeking commercial advantage.
483 PHT, PAT, p 104.
484 TP, PAT, p 15.
Heterogeneity, Homogeneity, Hierarchy

Like any utopian Nietzsche needs to show how relations between groups and individuals should be organised in his ideal state. If he does not seek a classless society, does he count as a collectivist or as an individualist? Does he favour the group or the individual? Those who read only Zarathustra, and profess to explain Nietzsche always describe him as an arch-individualist, and dwell on his professed contempt for herd morality. However, Nietzsche expressly distanced himself from this nice caricature, which is more complex than cartoon commentary would suggest.

There are two separate voices in his work. One is the strident voice of conviction, pronouncing that an order of rank is the best form of social organisation for higher culture. The other speaks amorally, with the accents of the technocrat, the engineer seeking a ‘scientific’ basis for higher culture. This voice assures us that both heterogeneity or individualism and homogeneity have uses in a social structure, with the difficulty being to establish the right balance.488

The wise culture-politician would place both principles behind the goal of producing genius. Intimate knowledge of the social and physiological conditions of a nation would allow him to see that where society is too decayed and chaotic, universal moralities would be necessary, while where conditions are too stiffing, the moral chains should be loosened to let individuals find their way. In this precarious way, Nietzsche’s culture-state embodies all three principles of social organisation: heterogeneity, homogeneity and hierarchy.

**Heterogeneity - Individuals in Contest**

Modern individualism fails to recognise the enormous disparities between the capacities of individuals. In a fragment dated between 1883 and 1888, Nietzsche declares that even individualism does not recognise the order of rank that elevates some over others and which would grant the same freedom to all. "The modern European is characterised by two apparently opposite traits: individualism and a demand for equal rights: that I have at last come to understand... All moralities know nothing of an 'order of rank' among men..."489 Accordingly the modern principle of individualism is an extremely vulnerable piece of vanity.490

What is referred to as the 'freedom of the individual', is actually a modest and still unconscious form of will to power, in which it seems merely sufficient to individuals to free themselves from the overpowering domination of society. They oppose society not as their own person, only as representatives of all individuals... what they gain in this struggle they gain for themselves not as persons but as representative of individuals against the totality.491

The problem is that modern individualism actually rejects very great human beings and demands, which is why it expects equal rights for all,492 and the doctrines of the socialists, though apparently collectivist, are a vehicle for individualism based on universal equality: Socialism is merely a means of agitation employed by individualism.493 True individuality is not a right but a privilege earned by a few. True freedom is something gained by personal struggle and contest rather than by endowment from above. Only those who fight and conquer their afflictions can be considered sovereign to themselves, and display the pride of self-reliance. All others have only the right to be slaves.

If it is the degree of will to power you have that determines the extent of your freedom, it is unlikely that a humane society will produce more individuals than one fractured by tyranny and violence. It may be that the latter is a more favourable breeding genius. It is "the degree of resistance that must be continually overcome in order to remain on top" that is 'the measure of freedom, whether for individuals or for societies - freedom understood, that is, as positive power, as will to power. According to this concept, the highest form of individual freedom, of sovereignty, would in all probability emerge not five steps from its opposite, where the danger of slavery hangs over existence like a hundred swords of Damocles. Look at history from this viewpoint: the ages in which the 'individual' achieves such ripe perfection, i.e., freedom, and the classic type of the sovereign man is attained - oh no! they have never been humane ages!"494

It is contest, inspired by all the best and worst elements of the human passions - jealousy, ambition,
the will to dominate, the desire for blood – that spurs us to great tasks. In the unpublished fragment Homer’s Contest young Nietzsche reminds us that ‘humanity’ and ‘nature’ cannot be separated; that the same soil produces the most dreadful and inhuman actions and also the highest and noblest works. He recounts how in war the Greeks showed the depths of their hatred and cruelty. The whole Greek world revealed not only in blood-letting but in its depiction in poetry or sculpture. Their genius “admitted the existing fearful impulse and deemed it justified, strife and the pleasure of victory were acknowledged”.495 They found no offence in jealousy, spite, and envy like the Christianised moderns, but found both good and bad results from the same: spite and envy could lead men to conduct hostile wars of extermination, but could also spur them not to the ‘action of contest’.496

In this manner envy could serve as an antidote to tyranny, for the impulse of every Greek to dominate all others, is neutralised by the equally determined efforts of his peers to thwart him. To ensure that the too powerful did not behave with inordinate hubris, others entered the field against them. The Greeks went further to prevent their domination by one and employed the expedient of Ostracism to preserve the state. They acted on the principle that ‘none among us shall be the best’ not, according to Nietzsche, because they were peevish egalitarians but because they wanted the stimulus of contest, so necessary for the well-being of the state, which would have been extinguished if one person proved greater than the rest. Thus it was in the contest rather than in the victory that culture prospered.

Realising this, agonistic education was actively fostered by the Greek state for the good of all its citizens. “The all-excelling individual was to be removed in order that the contest of forces might reawaken, a thought which is hostile to the ‘exclusiveness’ of genius in the modern sense but which assumes that in the natural order of things there are always several geniuses which incite one another to action, as much also as they hold one another within the bounds of moderation. That is the kernel of the Hellenic contest-conception: it abolishes autocracy, and fears its dangers; it desires as a preventative against the genius - a second genius.”497

The measure of a sophisticated, heterogeneous culture is how many individuals can flourish, without one becoming too powerful. Many tyrants can rise, but none will dominate the rest. A civilisation of individuals cannot allow itself to submit to a single tyrant, party, faith, or morality. The heterogeneity of the Greeks caused many attempts to found new religions to fail: the Orphic cults, Pythagoras, Plato, and also Empedocles managed, despite superlatively good, only to found sects. Their higher civilisation, with its diversity of individuals and diverse needs, could not be consoled by a single prescription of faith and hope. Thus, ‘whenever the reformation of a whole people fails and it is only sects that elevate their leader, we may conclude that the people has become relatively heterogeneous and has begun to move away from rude herd instincts and the morality of mores: they are hovering in an interesting intermediate position that is usually dismissed as a mere decay of morals and corruption, although in fact it proclaims that the eggshell is about to be broken.’498

Luther’s Reformation succeeded in northern Europe precisely because it was retarded compared to the south and knew only homogenous and monotonous needs. Nietzsche takes it as axiomatic that the more general and unconditional the influence of an idea or individual, then the more homogenous the mass that is influenced. Counter-movements and fragmentation in a civilisation, normally described as its ‘corruption’, suggest other needs that have to be satisfied. ‘Conversely, we may always infer that a civilisation is really high when powerful and domineering natures have little influence and create only sects. This applies also to the various arts and the field of knowledge. Where someone rules, there are masses; and where we find masses we find also a need to be enslaved. Where men are enslaved, there are few individuals, and these are opposed by herd instincts and conscience.’499

**Individuals and their Relation to Social Decay**

The later Nietzsche equates corruption with proliferating individualism. This is not undesirable, as corruption implies that the strictures of the herd are dissolving.500 The first sign of corruption in a nation is the emergence of superstition, which opposes itself to common religious faith. This development suggests individuals are independent enough to go their own way, and the presence of many ‘false’ beliefs signals the glimmering of enlightenment. At the same time occurs the malady of ‘exhaustion’, enjoyed by those who prefer pleasure to war and discipline. Nietzsche sees this as a sign that the nation’s energies are no longer corporate but have been transformed into countless private passions. These are no less powerful than the martial passions but because they are private they seem less visible. Thus it is precisely in times of ‘exhaustion’ that “tragedy runs through houses and streets, that great love and great hatred are born, and that the flame of knowledge flares up into the sky.”

Further down the path to corruption the nation is no longer as cruel as it was when it was stronger and stuck to its religious faith. The cruelty it practices does not decline in quantity but in form. It becomes

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495 **HC**, EGP, **p.54.**
496 **HC**, EGP, **p.55.**
497 **HC**, EGP, **pp.58-59.**
498 **GS**, a149.
499 loc. cit.
500 **GS**, a23.
more refined, to the point where words and gestures achieve what was once managed by a branding iron. When 'moral decay' begins and public virtues disappear tyrants emerge and seize control of the state. Discour then follows until, in the autumnal reign of a Caesar, public factionalism is crushed and order is imposed. It is only then that individuals have peace to manage the unrest inside themselves. In such times bribery and treason are triumphant since the love of the ego is greater than love of the nation; individuals live for themselves and make laws for themselves, with the result that "the times of corruption are those when the apples fall from the tree: I mean the individuals, for they carry the seeds of the future and are the authors of the spiritual colonisation and origin of new states and communities. Corruption is merely a nasty word for the autumn of a people," Nietzsche's approval of heterogeneity exceeds the conservative and popular love of order and probity. If individuality increases culture then let it flourish, whatever the cost. Amen if the dismemberment of the herd means that there should be more evil in the world. This leads Nietzsche to inordinate fascination and even admiration for common criminality. In romantic moods he pictures himself a criminal, like anyone who defies the herd. All who do not obey herd ethics are criminals; it is merely a question of how they go about this: there are great criminals and petty ones, depending on the nature of their crime. "In our civilised world, he advises, we learn to know almost only the wretched criminal, crushed by the curse and the contempt of society, mistrustful of himself, often belittling and slandering his deed, a miscarried type of criminal; and we resist the idea that all great human beings have been criminals (only in the grand and not in a miserable style), that crime belongs to greatness...To be 'free as a bird' from tradition, the conscience of duty..."

Unlike the grand criminal, the petty or 'pale criminal', as he is referred to in Zarathustra, is really not worthy of his crime; bad manners and low intelligence deforms his sensibility, and as he surrenders to an uncomprehended drive, mostly a lust for blood, he draws back and becomes abashed at his action; out of a bad conscience he proceeds to justify his deed with some other motive such as the robbery: he "ascribes a false motive to his deed (perhaps by robbery when what he wanted was blood)..." It is the 'joy of the knife' that really moves the criminal. Naively taking the special case of the violent thief to describe 'low' criminality in general Nietzsche's image of the murderer is undoubtedly inspired by literature, perhaps Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment, rather than life experience. To be fair, his intentions here are more polemical than scientific: while declaring the low criminal to be confessedly 'sick', he wants to ascribe to him a strength that 'good' people do not possess. In Zarathustra the point is clarified: "Much about your good people moves me to disgust, and it is not their evil I mean, How I wish they possessed a madness through which they could perish, like this pale criminal."

In the right circumstances it would be easy for many men to commit a crime; therefore we should be wary of assessing the value of a man according to a single deed. "Napoleon", he says, "warned against this... If men like us have no crime, e.g. murder, on our conscience - why is it? Because a few opportune circumstances were lacking. And if we did it, what would that indicate about our value? In a way one would despise us if one thought we had not the strength to kill a man under certain circumstances... If with us the criminal is an ill-nourished and stunted plant, this is to the dishonour of our social relationships; in the age of the Renaissance the criminal threw and acquired for himself his own kind of virtue - virtue in the Renaissance style, to be sure, virtù, moraline virtue.

His romance with criminality fathers unusual opinions on the nature of and treatment of criminals. He resents the idea of penal institutions, and condemns punishment as a form of contempt or revenge against the criminal. He even entertains Christian sentiments without offering 'love' for one's foe. Crime, he says, belongs to the concept 'revolt against the social order', and requires suppression rather than punishment: one does not punish a rebel. Indeed, the act of rebellion may serve to draw our attention to some flaw in the social body, and thereby serves a useful function: "...there is nothing contemptible in revolt as such... there are even cases in which one might have to honour a rebel, because he finds something in our society against which war ought to be waged - he awakens us from our slumber..." At another point he concedes that, the noble criminal aside, there may be such a things as criminal types, a race (rather than a class) of humanity predisposed to crime by birth and breeding. So if, in general, one should not deprive the criminal of the possibility of making his peace with society, one may make an exception with the type who belongs to the race of criminals. In this case "one should make war on him even before he has committed any hostile act (first operation as soon as one has him in one's power: his castration)."

The later Nietzsche tolerates the cultural decadence he once condemned and accepts decay as the natural counterpart to growth. Don't argue with decadence; just look for the shoots sprouting through
the detritus, which are indeed being fertilised by decay. Decadence may even reflect strength rather than weakness, with individuals willing to experiment and lose themselves if they must. Where firm order is kept neither individuals nor great culture can be found. Where rulers are too successful, there is no cause for change. Only dissatisfaction ensures innovation.²⁰⁹ Likewise, where politics and the distractions of public service dominate, permitting neither privacy nor leisure, they too become anti-cultural. It is more likely that great works are produced when a polity is in decay than in its youthful flourishing. "A nation", he observes, "usually renews its youth on a political sickbed, and there finds again the spirit which it had gradually lost in seeking and maintaining power. Culture is indebted most of all to politically weakened periods."²¹¹

War or Peace

If culture needs conflict and contest between individuals does it need the same between nations? Agon, as Greek civilisation shows, was the greatest stimulant of genius, so would not the struggle of one nation to surpass another work the same effect? Should not the culture-state itself be warlike in its relation to other states? Is high culture better conducted amid arms and manoeuvres than in a cloister, or better in the turmoil rather than the harmony of nations?

Nietzsche admitted that although the Greeks were among the most humane peoples of antiquity, they also fought the bloodiest and most unforgiving wars. He himself was eager to go to war and took personal pride in his military training as 'an old artilleryman', but despite these inclinations was not committed to the idea of war being of value to culture. It is one thing for individuals to struggle with each other, even violently, and quite clearly the state may gain from this as much as it may lose. But who can profit from the extremity of wars in which many may perish?

Advantages and Disadvantages of War

A great war between nations can be likened to a 'period of sleep or winter' for culture, sometimes squandering the finest men and women. Nietzsche observes that the Persian wars exhausted the spirit of the Greeks and prevented them from enjoying the full blossoming of culture.²¹² On the threshold of discovering ever newer possibilities for human existence, the dire peril presented by Persian invaders clamped a ball and chain on Greek progress which afterwards failed to reach so far or so high. The Peloponnesian wars that followed soaked up what remained of Greek energies, and they were left as prey for predatory nations like Macedon and Rome.

In modern Europe, culture will only suffer if nations engage in total wars. The pride that surged through Germany after the defeat of the French in 1871 has only bred hubris and an over-estimation of cultural superiority. The Germans may trounce the French on the battlefield, but the culture of the victors is lower than that of the vanquished. Pride of victory has blinded the Germans to the superiority of French culture, and has convinced them that they have nothing to learn from it.

Apprehesive at the extent to which modern Europe is arming itself, Nietzsche fears that the total war which these preparations portend will weaken and engulf the continent in self-destruction. In the middle period, he even considers what steps might avert a European conflagration, noting that all European governments currently claim to be maintaining arms and armies only for purely for defensive reasons due to the attitude that "reserves morality for the defender and immorality for the aggressor". The doctrine that only your own self-defence is moral, and that others who claim this are hypocrites, is as inhuman as war itself. "The notion of the army as a means of self-defence must be abjured as completely as the lust of conquest."

At the present time in Europe the only way in which peace might be found is if a mighty nation voluntarily dismantles its army, a hint perhaps for the new German Reich. What is required is a nation "renowned in wars and victories, distinguished by the highest development of military order and intelligence...will voluntarily exclaim, 'We will break our swords,' and will destroy its whole military system, lock, stock, and barrel. Making ourselves defenceless (after having been the most strongly defended) from a loftiness of sentiment - that is the means towards genuine peace, which must rest upon a pacific disposition. The so-called armed peace that prevails at present in all countries is a sign of a bellicose disposition, of a disposition that trusts neither itself nor its neighbour, and, partly from hate, partly from fear, refuses to lay down its weapons. Better to perish than to hate and fear,

²⁰⁹ GS, a24.
²¹¹ HAH I, a665.
²¹² See SSW, PAT, p 137. The national misfortune was the Persian wars: the success was too great; all the bad drives broke loose. Individual men and cities were seized by the tyrannical longing to rule over all Hellas. With the domination of Athens (in the spiritual realm) a number of forces were stifled: one need only think of how long Athens remained philosophically unproductive... The Athenian tragedy is not the highest form which one might be able to imagine.... In general, how terrible it is that the battle had to break out precisely between Sparta and Athens! It is impossible to meditate upon this too deeply. It was the spiritual domination of Athens which prevented this reformation. One really has to imagine what it was like before this domination existed...it first became necessary as a consequence of the Persian wars: that is to say, not until after the necessity of such[spiritual] domination was demonstrated by physical and political might.'
²¹³ HAH I, a444.
and twice as far better to perish than to make one-self hated and feared - this must some day become the maxim of every political community!"\textsuperscript{513}

Again, when insanity was closing on him, Nietzsche condemned the contemporary arms race in Europe. In a fragment entitled Declaration of War to be placed at the conclusion of Ecce Homo, but which has been otherwise lost, he writes: "If we could dispense with wars, so much the better. I can imagine more profitable uses for the twelve billion now paid annually for the armed peace we have in Europe; there are other means of winning respect for physiology than field hospitals..."\textsuperscript{514}

Nietzsche's pacific sentiments are directed at an historical moment, and against contemporary Germany. They are provocative in the prevailing climate of opinion. His peans to war were not so singular in his time, and he would not have been condemned for them. It was easier then to be a hawk. To condemn German participation in the European arms race, put him out of step when, after a century of peace, whole nations were spoiling for war. The prospect of total European war seemed possible even between 1870 and 1890 and would have undermined his hopes for a unified Europe. That the nations of the continent would exhaust their energies needlessly in mutual contest was the height of folly when powers like Russia and the United States were lurching to world-domination.

Given that his martial statements outnumber his pacific ones must take Nietzsche at his word when he says that the worst thing that can be said against war is that it makes the victor stupid and the vanquished revengeful. Overwhelmingly in its favour is its power to barbarise to the extent of making men natural again: "man emerges from it with greater strength for good or evil"\textsuperscript{515} If it is not always expedient or wise to conduct war it is essential we never lose the capacity to wage it. Nothing much could ever be expected from a humanity that could not bring itself to the battlefield. Only fanatics or those afflicted by the beautiful soul mentality could wish it to be otherwise. Unwarlike nations become enervated and weary. Too much delicacy saps the power which is indispensable to great culture which "...can by no means dispense with passions, vices, and malignities."\textsuperscript{516}

Nietzsche offers the consolation that if the rough energy needed for war cannot always be satisfied in battle, it can be simulated in other ways. The Greek state saw the desire for pre-eminence and victory in humans as ineradicable and promoted gymnastic and artistic competitions contests to satisfy bellicosity without endangering the political order. Once these contests fell out of fashion the Greek state foundered in unrest and dissolution.\textsuperscript{517} In a cruder way the Imperial Romans, having grown tired of war, tried to refresh themselves by beast-baitings, gladiatorial combats, and by persecuting Christians. The modern English, who 'appear to have renounced war', have found ways to generate strength and vigour by undertaking dangerous explorations, sea voyages, mountaineering, and so on.

But substitutes are not always enough; Nietzsche also believes that there must be some engagement in real war if Europe is to survive its enfeeblement through over-refinement. "Many other such substitutes for war", he assures us, 'will be discovered, but perhaps precisely thereby it will become more and more obvious that such a highly cultivated and therefore necessarily enfeebled humanity as that of modern Europe not only needs wars, but the greatest and most terrible wars, - consequently occasional relapses into barbarism - lest, by means of culture, it should lose its culture and its very existence."\textsuperscript{518} The primitive indulgence of war in contemporary Europe is not merely an inevitability but a necessary palliative. This a view which increasingly diverts him in his later works: 'The maintenance of the military state, is the last means of all of acquiring or maintaining the great tradition with regard to the supreme type of man, the strong type. And all concepts that perpetuate enmity and difference in rank between states (e.g., nationalism, protective tariffs) may appear sanctioned in this light."\textsuperscript{519} Thus even nationalism, which Nietzsche customarily abhors, can be justified to some extent if it provide peoples with an excuse to fight each other.

In his last years Nietzsche is sure that the collisions of armies will shake Europe from its effeminacy and make the continent more virile, so that the man, the sturdy warrior, always more aesthetically appealing than the grasping merchant, will dominate businessmen and philistines. Without irony he claims that "the future of German culture rests with the sons of the Prussian officers."\textsuperscript{520} And, listing as one of the remedies for modernity, "universal military service in which the time for joking is past", declares that he is glad about the military development of Europe: "the time of repose and Chinese ossification... is over."\textsuperscript{521}

Owing to the influence of Napoleon earlier in the century "...we now confront a succession of a few warlike centuries that have no parallel in history; in short we have entered the classical age of war, of scientific and at the same time popular war on the largest scale (in weapons, talents, and

\textsuperscript{513} HAH IB, a284.
\textsuperscript{514} Unpublished fragment contained in EH, p.344.
\textsuperscript{515} HAH I, a444.
\textsuperscript{516} HAH I, a477.
\textsuperscript{517} HAH IB, a226.
\textsuperscript{518} Cf. HAH I, a477 and HAH IB, a187.
\textsuperscript{519} WP, a729.
\textsuperscript{520} PC, p.232.
\textsuperscript{521} WP, a127.
All coming centuries will look back on it with envy and awe for its perfection. 

Napoleon's campaigns had shattered the pleasant succession of feints, sieges, and manoeuvres typical of the wars of the eighteenth century. War had been a refinement, a recreation for gentlemen generals, now it was a struggle waged in earnest, engulfing the lives and feelings of entire peoples. Descending into this abyss of barbarism they will emerge more brutalised but also more passionate, and therefore more fruitful subjects for culture when the principles of refinement are rediscovered.

In these remarks Nietzsche adheres to the Ideal of Cultivation that owes more to the warrior than to the scribe. War has been the companion of culture; and the classes devoted to its conduct, idle and eager to praise their own merits, externalising their excellences in codes of courtly conduct, poetry, and music, figure prominently in the history of civilisations. Nietzsche's is the last of the generations of Europe for whom the conduct of war is the preserve of a specific class, rather than a profession due to the reformation of warfare brought about by Napoleon. That is why he regrets the passing of noble manners, and maintains that "culture that rests on a military basis still towers above the so-called industrial culture." 523 The question remains however as to whether this kind of class-based militarism is in any way reflective of heterogeneity, for surely it would have the very opposite effect. A military order of any kind must make homogeneity the basis of its organisation and leads us to wonder whether Nietzsche is not unsympathetic to its existence within the culture-state.

**Homogeneity - The Importance of Mediocrity**

If heterogeneity is needed for a culture-state, so is some level of homogeneity. Nietzsche abhors the 'mediocrity' of the masses or mass institutions like the state, mainly in his youthful period. After the middle period he regards such idealism with abhorrence. "Hatred for mediocrity" he then maintains, "is unworthy of a philosopher" and "is almost a question mark against his 'right to philosophy'." It is precisely because the philosopher is exceptional that he has to "keep the mediocre in good heart." 524

Far from making war on the rule the exceptional individual should grasp that the continued existence of the rule is what makes the exception possible. 525 So, just as the economic and material foundation of culture demands that the broad mass of men must work to supply cultivated leisure to the few, the same principle can be applied even in a more spiritualised sense, to the conduct of science and art for example. "A high culture can stand only upon a broad base, upon a healthy and consolidated mediocrity. Science - and even art work in its service and are served by it. 526

It is not commonplace ability or talent that makes you mediocre; even gifted mediocrities are possible. The criterion is the degree of 'greatness' of your 'spirit'. The mediocre, he believes, do not have tragic vision; they have not the power to confront the irrecconcilable polarities of existence and behold them beyond moral categories. Unable to accommodate or understand these oppositions, they seek to define only a small corner of being as the whole, and reject the remainder as some form of aberration or 'evil'. Unable to live with what they call evil and without appreciating its necessary role in existence they seek to destroy it entirely. "Commonplace men can represent only a tiny nook and corner of this natural character: they perish when the multiplicity of elements and the tension of opposites: i.e. the preconditions for greatness in man, increases. That man must grow better and more evil is my formula for this inevitability." 527 Such men have not composite natures, they are individually only bits and fragments of human nature, needing to be added together to amount to something. It is only when they are taken en masse that they make possible a base or foundation of civilisation from which synthetic individuals may work to perfect nature.

Nature needs homogeneity because all life is intrinsically hierarchical, and the greater part of it always plays an invisible and subordinate role. Living structures are pyramids of subordinations: that a few rule over many is a law of efficient functioning inherent in the design of the animalcule as the arrangement of human society. What makes life possible makes society possible. Nothing could exist without unconditional rule by a small part of the body over the greater part, so long as the greater part keeps to narrowly defined tasks and purposes, and performs these for the grander edifice of which it has no notion.

The willingness of mediocrity to subordinate itself is what makes it serviceable to artist-statesmen. Great individuals are rare and unpredictable, but homogeneous groups are malleable and calculable. They are agents of stability and are needed to construct mighty and enduring social edifices. But if the mediocre are unwilling to submit to knavery and slavery then building becomes more difficult. Nietzsche laments the decline in the modern world of a willingness he believed existed in antiquity and in medieval times. Because of this he expects that an entire world of possibility will disappear. The modern fragmentation of the Holy Roman Empire and the diminution of Church powers have

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522 GSR, a362. 523 GSR, a40. 524 WP, a893. 525 CT WP, a894. "...the continued existence of the rule is the precondition for the value of the exception." 526 WP, a664. 527 WP, a881.
given way to freer circumstances in which people are only prepared to subordinate themselves on conditions, *i.e.* contractually, with proviso’s of self-interest." Now, there will be no pyramid building, no grand political architecture. "When this subordination is no longer possible, he says, a multitude of astonishing results will no longer be attained, and the world will be all the poorer."528

Not entirely despondent, Nietzsche recalls that homogeneity can be encouraged by means of universal moralities and eugenics. Artist statesman can *educate* a population by encouraging it to behave in accordance with certain laws and applying principles of eugenics allows him to *breed* a calculable type. Morality, which "emphasises the power-instinct of the herd" disparages individuals and stifles the instinct for tyranny.529 Laws, as codified forms of morality, channel the behaviour of the masses to favoured outcomes, so that when an artist statesman, a Solon or a Lycurgus, has an image of the best type of citizen, he turns to legislation as the first means for producing him. Laws, backed up by the physical force of the state, constrain and direct behaviour, and because they reduce every living action to an abstract principle, they are perfect vehicles for encouraging homogeneity.

Eugenics, practised in many societies since antiquity, must also play its part. The question of marriage is a concern of the community not just individuals and in the interest of producing a calculable humanity we must be responsible for ensuring that unsound partnerships do not take place. Nietzsche himself recommends "...a medical certificate preceding every marriage and endorsed by the communal authorities... every marriage warranted and sanctioned by a certain number of trusted men of the community, as a matter of concern to the community."530 Marriage has a far more serious purpose than the happiness of individual couples; it is, when properly considered, the grand vehicle for breeding a race to rule and one which can be ruled: "In marriage in the aristocratic, old aristocratic sense of the word it was the question of the breeding of a race ... - thus of the maintenance of a fixed, definite type of ruling man: man and woman were sacrificed to this point of view."531 The control of breeding must be invested with a central authority, not merely to enforce a rule but to prevent all forms of miscarried life. Strict breeding practices would ensure that those who exhibit declining or decadent tendencies should not be allowed to procreate: "Society, as the great trustee of life, is responsible to life itself for every miscarried life - it also has to pay for such lives: consequently it ought to prevent them. In numerous cases, society ought to prevent procreation: to this end, it may hold in readiness, without regard to descent, rank, or spirit, the most rigorous means of constraint, deprivation of freedom, in certain circumstances castration."532

**Doctrines of Homogeneity: the Rise of Socialism**

Nietzsche is certain of the need for homogeneity as a principle of social organisation, but is not always sympathetic to doctrines that hail it as virtue. Hence his response to socialism, whose rise in modern Europe he regards as significant, paralleling the growing power of the state and of democratic movements, is unambiguously hostile. Recalling that, prior to his collapse in 1889, no socialist party on earth had ever held power, or had given palpable demonstration of its capacity for good or the evil, his attitude is based entirely on encounters with socialist doctrine. Recall too that Nietzsche was familiar only with revolutionary and international socialism rather than social-democratic parties that were to become a reality only after the turn of the century.

There are two main reasons for this hostility. One is socialism's intention to increase and centralise state powers, and the other to consider the welfare of the community at the expense of the individual. Socialism, he says, would make the state an even greater despot than what it already is: its efforts are reactionary for it "desires as much state power as despoticism has possessed, and surpasses the despoticism of the past insofar as it aims at the complete annihilation of the individual who must be integrated as an organ within the general community."533 It wishes to make use of the despoticism already existing as a survival of the reign of kings, but would press this to lengths never before conceived. It would demand the total submission of the citizenry before the state. In its efforts to hold power socialism will have to conduct reigns of terror, for it has dispensed with myths and the principles of piety toward religion and the state which the old despotsisms employed to keep their subjects in order. The dependence upon terror would indicate that socialist systems could only ever exist for relatively short periods. The application of terror would be a reflection of its political despair. Hence, socialism, "...as it can no longer count upon the old religious piety towards the State, but must rather strive involuntarily and continuously for the abolition thereof - because it strives for the abolition of all existing states - it can only hope for existence occasionally, here and there for short periods, by means of the extremest terrorism."534

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528 HAH I, a441.
529 WP, a720.
530 WP, a733.
531 WP, a732.
532 WP, a734.
533 HAH I, a473.
534 loc. cit.
There is a badly concealed ‘will to negate life’ in socialism that will always bring it to negate itself. Nietzsche is confident that it will never be more than an experiment, nor will it dominate the hearts and minds of people for great durations. It is an aberration that may provide a few instructive lessons for the history of political forms. In many places in Europe it may bring off ‘occasional coups’ and “there will be deep rumblings in the stomach of the next century... the Paris commune... was perhaps no more than a minor indigestion compared to what is coming.”

**Socialism as an instructive experiment**

In some degree experiments with socialism should be welcomed as a practical demonstration of the harm such a system will do. ‘The earth is large enough and man still sufficiently unexhausted; hence such a practical instruction and demonstratio ad absurdum would not strike me as undesirable, even if it were gained and paid for with a tremendous expenditure of human lives.’ But the death knell of socialism is already sounded by the rising power of the masses. Indeed socialism is paradoxically preparing its own impossibility through its influence among them. The present political powers, fearful of this, attempt to gain the sympathy of the masses by promising them welfare and freedoms and make it unnecessary for them to recourse to the more extreme measures advised by Socialist doctrine. Nietzsche has in mind here the generous social welfare system introduced by Bismark in the early years of the German Reich. The combination of fear and counterthrust only hastens the onset of democracy and enlarges the size and power of a middle-class that has no need of socialism.

Nietzsche anticipates the reforming social-democratic parties of the West that will attack the accumulations of wealth and privilege through parliamentary majorities and thereby decrease the distance between those with property and those without. These parties will make terror unnecessary. The outcome is that ‘all political powers nowadays attempt to exploit the fear of socialism for their own strengthening, yet in the long run democracy alone gains the advantage, for all parties are now compelled to flatter ‘the masses’ and grant them facilities and liberties of all kinds, with the result that the masses finally become omnipotent. The masses are as far as possible removed from socialism as a doctrine of altering the acquisition of property. If once they get the steering-wheel into their hands, through great majorities in their parliaments, they will attack with progressive taxation the whole dominant system of capitalists, merchants, and financiers, and will in fact slowly create a middle class which may forget socialism like a disease which has been overcome.’

As socialism undermines itself while struggling to gain the sympathy of the masses, it also generates opposition by making the state absolute in human affairs. Should socialism ever successfully attain its end it will demonstrate to all witnesses what the consequences of unbounded state power might be and will thereby stimulate, in reaction to it, a party advocating the reduction of the same. Socialism may therefore ‘serve to teach, very brutally and impressively, the danger of all accumulations of State power, and may serve so far to inspire distrust of the State itself. When its rough voice strikes up the war-cry ‘as much state as possible’, the shout at first becomes louder than ever, - but soon the opposition cry also breaks forth, with so much greater force: ‘as little State as possible.’

Although varieties of nationalist socialist doctrine already existed in Nietzsche’s day, his knowledge of European socialists was that they were opposed by the nationalistic parties. This was then largely the case in Germany where liberals and conservatives had strongly aligned themselves with the nationalist cause, while socialists remained internationalists. Each side, he thought, deserved the other. ‘In the one camp (socialist) they desire to work as little as possible with their hands, in the other (nationalist) as little as possible with their heads; in the latter they hate and envy prominent, self-evolving individuals, who do not willingly allow themselves to be drawn up in rank and file for the purpose of a collective effort; in the former they hate and envy the better social caste, which is more favourably circumstanced outwardly, whose peculiar mission, the production of the highest blessings of culture, makes life inwardly all the harder and more painful.’

This is no anticipation of the fusion of both doctrines in the Fascist world-view, but a rejection of each for its own failings. The threat of socialism has therapeutic value however, if only to a Europe grown sickly and effeminate. ‘...it delays ‘peace on earth’ and the total mollification of the democratic herd animal; it forces the Europeans to retain spirit, namely cunning and cautious care, not to abuse manly and warlike virtues altogether, and to retain some remnant of spirit, of clarity, sobriety, and coldness of the spirit - it protects Europe for the time being from the marasmus feminismus that threatens it.’

But in essence, socialist doctrine promises nothing for culture, and must never be adopted by a politics of cultivation.

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335 WP, a125.
336 loc. cit.
337 loc. cit.
338 HAH II, a292.
339 HAH I, a473.
340 HAH I, a480.
341 WP, a125.
**Pro and contra democracy**

Socialism is merely one manifestation of the modern democratic movement and its equalising individualism and homogenising collectivism. Although hostile to socialism he is sometimes ambivalent about democracy, or at least about its effects. There is no doubt about his distaste for democratic principles and politics. The genteel scholar abhors the vulgarity of the demos and those who seek its rule; his attacks on democratic politics are as vehement in his youth as in his maturity. His epithets are familiar and unremarkable, at least not for someone urging an uncompromising and unforgiving elitism. Democracy is ‘barbarism’; it flatters and gives free reign to the instincts of the ‘herd animal’; it is a type of rule which features all the vices of the masses: myopia, vulgar enthusiasms, a proclivity for idolatry, arbitrary violence, the manifesting of bad taste and ugliness in private and public places, generally lower powers of discrimination...

At times he concedes virtue to democratic forms, or at least criticises them in more generous spirit. Of universal suffrage, still no more than an idea in mid-nineteenth century Europe, he complains that it is impractical because it is not supported in practice by the majority of people; this is demonstrated by the fact that whenever a vote is actually held most people do not even go to the polls.\(^542\) He scornfully dismisses parliamentarianism since it merely provides the public with permission to choose between five basic political opinions and flatters those who like to seem independent, as though they had won their opinions for themselves. Ultimately it really doesn’t matter whether the herd is commanded to have one opinion or permitted to have five, since whoever really deviates from the five opinions and stands apart will always have the herd against him.\(^543\)

In his most liberal phase, in *Human All Too Human*, he allows that democracy *does* strive to create and guarantee independence for the majority. For this reason, he believes political suffrage must be withheld from both the very rich and the very poor, as these are the two most intolerant classes. Democracy must always ensure that these classes are disenfranchised, because they will always strive to undermine it. Similarly democracy must prevent all measures that aim at party organisation. For the three great foes of independence, in that sense, are the “have-nots, the rich, and the parties. - I speak of democracy as of a thing to come. What at present goes by that name is distinguished from older forms of government only by the fact that it drives with new horses; the roads and the wheels are the same as yore. - Has the danger really become less with these conveyances of the commonwealth.”\(^544\) In the same mood he concedes that democratic institutions usefully quarantine against tyrannical desires, although they inspire a society with little else than enervating tedium.\(^545\)

Regarding human ‘rights’ he merely notes that, quite clearly there is no such thing; no inner principle of rights in nature or society, simply one’s *power* to assert oneself. We only have rights when we have enough power to force a treaty with an opposing power. That someone should demand ‘rights’ without a foundation of power supporting them makes no sense. If socialists demand equal rights for the subject caste it simply reflects their covetousness. The demand comes from below, and is made by those who are no position to bargain. It is only when representatives of the governing class say “*We will treat men equally and grant them equal rights*” that socialism can ever be based on justice.\(^546\)

The argument of socialists that the unequal division of property is the consequence of injustice and violence committed by one class over another is correct, but they see only a special case, and this is not permissible. The entire history of civilisation is built upon violence, slavery, deception... and all of us inherit a past that cannot be altered. To demand immediate forcible redistribution of wealth, as many socialists do, commits an injustice as great as that of which the propertied classes are accused. To achieve a fairer distribution of property gradual transformations of opinion are necessary; by this means justice can be strengthened and the instinct for violence weakened.

**The inevitability of democracy**

As he grows more convinced of the irreversible nature of the democratic trend Nietzsche tries to understand its implications. A new world is at hand that barely comprehends the principles of the ancien régime. Like the decline of Christianity, the rise of science, technical progress, and the breakup of the old empires, modern democracy is yet another aspect of Europe’s rejection of the middle ages. The old orders of rank are being effaced steadily and with little violence, and no longer hold uncanny power over men’s feelings.

To be sure, for some time the agents of the ancien régime will launch occasional counter-attacks. The monarchs and emperors of Europe, for example, imagine that they can restrain democracy by putting their nations on a war footing: the perception of national peril excuses their tighter grip on the state. These agents actually seek war for they realise that their existence in times of peace is tenuous. *The*

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542 HAH II, a276.
543 Cfr, a174.
544 HAH II, a293.
545 HAH II, a389.
546 HAH I, a451.
steady progress of democracy slowly nullifies, without violent means, the power of monarchy and emperor, so that these remain only as an ornament on the dress of democracy. A superfluity which democracy allows itself as a venerable tradition, a relic etc. In order to avoid the danger of this nullification, kings hold by their teeth to their dignity as war-lords. To this end they need wars, or in other words exceptional circumstances, in which that slow, lawful pressure of the democratic forces is relaxed. But these actions are futile; the entire process is so inexorable that even those who oppose it encourage its ascendancy by using the means that democratic thought has developed.

Nietzsche's certainty of a democratic future affects his vision of a culture state. In the middle and later period he accepts that democracy unintentionally forms the basis of great culture. Although the democratic work of the present generations will bring ever more distressing degeneration of intellect and taste in public affairs, it will build an edifice able to endure all manner of crises and to support the future of culture. It seems "that the democratisation of Europe is a link in the chain of those mighty prophylactic principles which are the thought of the modern era, and whereby we rise up in revolt against the Middle Ages. Now... is the age of Cyclopean building! A final security in the foundations, that the future may build on them without danger! Henceforth, an impossibility of the orchards of culture being once more destroyed overnight by wild, senseless mountain torrents! Dams and walls against barbarians, against plagues, against physical and spiritual serfdom!" This will involve the immense labour of centuries, and if democrats merely see democracy as an end in itself it should not offend those engaged in the politics of cultivation. The former cannot yet see "the gardener and the fruit, for whose sake the fence exists." The practical results of increasing democratisation will be monumental. A European league of nations will arise, in which "the individual nation, delimited by the proper geographical frontiers, has the position of a canton with its separate rights." Democratic Europe will negotiate new administrative boundaries - cantons rather than nations - according to rational criteria which pay no heed to tradition or precedent. "The corrections of frontiers that will prove necessary will be so carried out as to serve the interests of the great cantons and at the same time those of the whole federation... To find the standpoints for these corrections will be the task of future diplomats, who will have to be at the same time students of civilisation, agriculturalists, and commercial experts, with no armies but motives and utilities at their back." The peoples of new Europe will take small account of previously existing nations. Even memories of these will fade because the democratic régime, with all its craze for novelty and experiment, will obliterate any feelings for the past.

The democratic movement, following the spreading tentacles of capitalist economy and revolutionary transport and communications networks, forces the integration of Europe. If democracy can bring this result its existence will have been justified, but that does not mean it is destined or desirable to be maintained. For the tasks of the next century, Nietzsche declares, the methods of popular representation and parliaments are the most inappropriate imaginable, but it would certainly be a kind of goal, redemption, and justification for the democratic movement itself if someone arrived who could make use of it. Democratic Europe awaits new Caesars and new Napoleons; statesmen with the formative powers of artists who will use the democratic mass, this intelligent slave class, to produce social structures of awesome grandeur, dedicated solely to the pursuit of culture.

**Hierarchy - Order of rank**

Nietzsche's desire for a high culture of duration, of grand social structures able to resist time, must surely exclude social heterogeneity. If the lumbering structures created by mediocrity are needed by culture, would they not also obliterate the agonistic anarchy on which culture depends? How can individuality exist over and above the homogenous mass? Nietzsche tries to reconcile this confusion using a stratagem he calls the 'order of rank'. It would, he imagines, be possible to incorporate both heterogeneous and homogenous social structures by creating entirely separate higher and lower castes.

Within the order of rank lower castes serve culture by permitting their herd instincts to flourish. Over and above them another caste renounces such instincts and occupies itself with individualist experiments. It is not so much material differences but vast gulfs of consciousness that separate them: your position in a caste would be determined by 'the quantum of power' you embody. No graduation or scale of ranks but a simple unbridgeable division between two great classes; one governed by the laws of homogeneity the other pursuing a careless heterogeneity. The distance between them would be so great that there could never be any interaction, or vertical movement of individuals from one to the other. They would represent wholly distinct races of mankind with their

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547 HAH II B, a281.
548 HAH II B, a275.
549 HAH II B, a292.
550 loc. cit.
551 PC, p.226.
552 WP, a534.
553 WP, a558.
own physiology and character; one, the slave class, being weak, obedient, intelligent and diligent and the other, the master class, stronger, more experimental, and richer in spirit and energy. Where homogeneity would be enforced by the former, heterogeneity would be favoured by the latter.

He believes the potential for this development is growing in Europe. This caste system is already being prepared. Hoping that modern decadence and decay portend an experimental individuality, he is convinced that Europe is growing more homogenous. Both developments, desirable and complementing each other, will tear the continent into halves that will constitute his beloved order of rank. "The homogenizing of European man is the great process that cannot be obstructed: one should even hasten it. The necessity to create a gulf, distance, order of rank, is given eo ipso - not the necessity to retard this process. "As soon as it is established, this homogenising species requires a justification: it lies in serving a higher sovereign species that stands upon the former and can raise itself to its task only by doing this. Not merely a master race whose sole task is to rule, but a race with its own sphere of life, with an excess of strength for beauty, bravery, culture, manners to the highest peak of the spirit; an affirming race that may grant itself every great luxury - strong enough to have no need of the tyranny of the virtue-imperative, rich enough to have no need of thrift and pedantry, beyond good and evil; a hot house for strange and choice plants."

The later Nietzsche's principles of social organisation contradict those that dominate the modern world. Like Hegel, he sees justice in the preservation of estates and castes and the equilibrium of classes, though only in order to serve the higher end of creating genius. Notions of justice or right for each individual have no place in a system which looks even beyond the commonwealth or national good and beyond mankind itself. In order to consolidate a social organisation to breed genius we may even need, in the shorter term, to suppress genius itself; there must be periods in which homogeneity, the values of the herd, must dominate the drives of powerful individuals: thus, the "most fearful and fundamental desire in man, his drive for power - this drive is called 'freedom' - must be held in check "The This is why ethic, with its unconscious instinct for education and breeding, has hitherto aimed at holding the desire for power in check: it disparages the tyrannical individuals and with its glorification of social welfare and patriotism emphasises the power-instinct of the herd."

Furthermore, order of rank involves the question of "the degree of power that the one or the other should exercise over others or over all, and to what extent a sacrifice of freedom, even enslavement, provides the basis for the emergence of a higher type. Put in the crudest form: how could one sacrifice the development of mankind to help a higher species than man come into existence."

Nietzsche's desires an enduring social organisation to produce great individuals, but recognises that periods of high culture are brief and do not recur for generations. A society organised to conserve the results of these brief episodes of genius does not necessarily create genius. In any system a long stasis must be endured until punctuated by brief interludes of brilliance: as a spring flowering after a long winter. The long periods of seeming inertia are as necessary as the brief but spectacular bloom. This is why Nietzsche still hankers after a utopia of durable organisation that can breed genius continually. It is also why he sees the idea of order of rank, typical of bureaucratic, priestly and military organisation, as most fruitful, and why he can assert that "the maintenance of the military state is the last means of all of acquiring or maintaining the great tradition with regard to the supreme type of man, the strong type. And all concepts that perpetuate enmity and difference in rank between states (e.g. nationalism, protective tariffs) may appear sanctioned in this light."

Conclusions

It is hard to see how such a perceptive observer of the past could arrive at conclusions at odds with historical example. Wherever and whenever cultural awakenings have occurred in the west, there have been higher and lower classes, but not more than what is usually found. If anything, in the civilisations of Greek antiquity and the Italian Renaissance, based as they were on the organisation of the city-state, class boundaries were inclined to blur and social mobility prevailed. The fragility of the city-state's independence and power, even at its most oligarchic and aristocratic (as in Venice), led it to seek and employ talent of any provenance. Their dynamism was predicated the rivalry between parties in the state, and between states themselves due to the need of aristocratic classes to defend their privileges and power against the demos. This occurred, but never to the degree it did within medieval Europe's caste-like feudal structures, and certainly never in the caste systems of Asia. Even when slavery was practiced in city-states, which presented a rigid caste structure, it was not unusual for slaves to rise and shake off the infamy of their origin.

An outstanding exception to this pattern in antiquity was Sparta, where an awesome divide, almost an intractable class war, separated Spartans and their subjects the helots. This city-state had notable successes in war but in almost no other department and produced few extraordinary individuals.

354 WP, a898.
355 WP, a720.
356 WP, a695.
357 WP, a659.
358 WP, a729.
Sparta was a fossil, and in the long run was punished for its inflexibility. In the less rigid institutions of Sparta's rival, Athens, diverse talents flourished and, despite military defeat at the hands of Sparta and later Macedon, remained a centre of cultural achievement for centuries to come.

In early modern Europe it was in the towns, with their comparatively liberal institutions (even the medieval city was a place of elaborate hierarchies) that employment for talent was found. Ability strutted and postured in the townhouses of the bourgeoise and *bourgeoified* aristocracy, not on the dismal estates of the feudal aristocracy. The celebrated *sovereign individuals* of the Italian Renaissance deported in the most urbanised country in Europe where the feudal impositions of the Holy Roman Empire barely existed as a concept. Class divisions and social hierarchies flourished, and nowhere more methodically than in Venice (which for all its commercial and martial vigour, did not produce the abundance of genius of smaller Italian cities), but talent could always rise, not because it had to struggle more, but because it was not thwarted. The middle classes are by nature more ambitious than those lower to them, for the riches and grandeur of inherited privilege are within sight. The lowest classes observe their lords across a gulf that neither diligence nor capacity can bridge. Aristocracy in the city-states were essential as instigators, preservers and consumers of talent, but in no way proved that there was a need for rigid caste structures that Nietzsche imagines.

Remarkably Nietzsche did not foresee the flaws of a rigid caste system. By his own principles, it is contest that separates the excellent from the mediocre, so the culture-state would have to ensure a modicum of equality at the outset that many do not become disheartened at the advantages of a few. This state would have to be supremely *heterogeneous* and permit those from the lowest orders to rise to prominence by virtue of their abilities. Fluidity of rather than rigidity caste would be the key to success, and families must ascend or descend rapidly in the social scale according to their proficiency. Friction and factionalism, disharmony between classes and individuals is a minor discomfort measured against the aggregate of virtù a nation of self-sufficient individuals would possess. However, agonistic instinct is quickly undermined in a polity based on caste, which would have to enforce strict moral codes to promote uniformity among members, and to keep others in their place. Such a heavy overlay of morality would, according to Nietzsche's own observations, snuff out the development of conscious, self-willed individuals. As he is prone to asserting, the strongest will always get away. But could there be a more discouraging way of encouraging the production of *sovereign individuals*?

Do we expect that the strongest and best are always from the upper caste, despite their education and breeding? A durable system of social hierarchies would stifle individuality in every caste, even the most privileged, and inheritance would triumph over talent, heaping honours on the undeserving. Did not the caste system of Germany and Europe, though not as extreme as that recommended by Nietzsche, produce social ossification? For all his posturing before blue-bloodedness Nietzsche is no lover of privileged bone-heads. He resents their power like any capable and ambitious burgher.  

In his deepest instincts as scribe and intellectual, Nietzsche is a meritocrat. His aristocracy is not that of property and privilege, but of the 'spirit'. It is the utopia of merit he seeks: a place where only the best rule, the perfect utterance of which occurring in Plato's *Republic*, has been an eternal wet dream of the scribes, or what we today call *intellectuals*. Nietzsche shares the ancient prejudice to admire power and prestige gained by virtue and ability and to despise merely inherited privilege. Scribal civilisation, based on the principles of professionalism and therefore invariably bureaucratic in character, is much attached to ‘orders of rank’ and the establishment of *stages of merit*, along which an individual passes to higher grades of power and status. Being nurtured in such a civilisation (and nowhere more advanced in nineteenth century Europe than Prussia) he shares the disposition of professional classes, like soldiers, officials, or priests to see the world across legions of serried ranks.

Although not oblivious of the problem of accommodating the contradictory forms of caste and merit, Nietzsche never deals with it thoughtfully or methodically. Plato, when considering the same in the *Republic*, believed individuals from a higher class should sink to a lower one if they were found to be unfit, and that others could be elevated. Nietzsche accepts this idea in principle, but does not point to a mechanism for accomplishing it. Like a thousand other scribal utopians before and after, he never indicates how genius can rule without being usurped or corrupted, or how the movement of merited privilege could be prevented from ossifying into mere inherited privilege.

He can say at last, albeit feebly, that there "should be an interchange between the two castes, so that on the one hand the dailer and less familiar intelligent and families and individuals are lowered from the higher caste into the lower... and the freer men of the lower class obtain access to the higher..."  

He also recognises that superior 'blood' and breeding is not always the preserve of aristocracy and that "the

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554 Nietzsche professes not to admire the practice of bowing and scraping to titles, of which the Germans have been historically culpable. But he notes that 'the smallness and baseness of the German soul was not and is not a consequence of the system of small states; for it is well known that the inhabitants of much smaller states were proud and independent: it is not a large state per se that makes souls freer and more manly. The man whose soul obeys the slavish command: 'Thou shalt and must kneel!' in whose body there is an involuntary bowing and scraping to titles, orders, gracious glances from above - well, such a man in an 'Empire' will only bow all the more deeply and lick the dust more fervently in the presence of a greater sovereign than in the presence of the lesser..." PC, p.219.

558 HAF I, 439.
peasant is the commonest type of noblesse, for he is dependent upon himself most of all. Peasant blood is still the best blood in Germany - for example, Luther, Niebuhr, Bismark.

From the same standpoint he can even go so far as to say that "the lower classes of unlearned men are now our only hope. The learned and cultivated classes must be abandoned, and along with them, the priests, who understand only these classes and who are themselves members of them."

Thus it is the bureaucratic and not the republican forms of meritocracy that dominate his perception of ideal social organisation, and make him interpret even the high achievements of republican civilisations as merely species of the former. He sees the virtues of the early Greeks, as a superior and purified version of those historically characteristic of German civilisation since the Middle Ages and which were still so even in his own lifetime despite it undergoing the most radical transitions. It is the deep-rooted vestiges of the Holy Roman Empire within modern German institutions and political culture that Nietzsche recalls when he envisages an order of rank. The Holy Roman Empire, like Prussia on a national level and like, for example, eighteenth century Russia after the reforms of Peter the Great, was administered by a bureaucratic aristocracy. This peculiar form of aristocracy is not uncommon in cosmopolitan empires, where a centralised ruler presses an existing property-tied class, an aristocracy of inheritance, into the service of administration and imposes on it stratifications typical of bureaucratic organisation: ranks, divisions, grades, such that it also shares the form of a meritocracy. The natural egalitarianism among aristocrats in simpler social organisations (as pares cum paribus) is supplanted by forms of precedence and rank. This type of aristocracy represents a separate caste within the civilisation, but within itself is stratified by grades of merit and distinction.

The demand for an aristocratic caste ruling over a vast mass of clever slaves recalls the medieval system of Germany, the spirit of which breathes still in nineteenth century Prussia. Bureaucratised aristocracy provides both the class of reaction and reform: the Junkers, the only class able to institute political change: a class of administrative artists working on a sullen mass which, resisting in spirit, finally yields to its capable control. Although he reinterprets the patterns of German medievalism in modernity he also embraces political developments like democracy in the short to middle term as necessary stages on the road to a newer and higher species of feudalism.

If Nietzsche can never resolve his contradictory reflections on the need for heterogeneity, homogeneity and hierarchy, he is not alone in German political thought.

560 PC, p.222
561 PHF, PAT, p.104.
Religion and Enlightenment

In his youth Nietzsche gave much thought to the relation between religion, myth and community and the dilemma that rational search for truth undermines our need for comforting illusion. The concern that rational thought can undermine widely held beliefs that bind a civilisation, is one natural to all enlightenments. When old myths are no longer believed, the first result is metaphysical discomfort. Everything else about the world then seems questionable, and old injustices that the myths may have justified now seem outrageous. When intellect is liberated from tradition it questions the old constellations of power and hierarchy and its political offspring are revolution and rebellion.

Writing after a century of European revolutions and 'irrationalist' reaction to Enlightenment, and himself prickled by metaphysical anxieties, Nietzsche is sensitive to the political implications of declining belief. If not endorsing unconscious embrace of superstition, he insists we need some degree of illusion in order to live and work. His explorations of this theme in the sphere of private conscience are novel but in the public sphere of politics, the policy of 'conscious-illusion' has an ancient and illustrious ancestry best known, after Plato, as the 'holy-lie'. Most of Nietzsche's thoughts on the relation of politics and religion are governed by this principle.

Nietzsche's Attitude to Religion

Nietzsche's is famous as the author of one of the most vociferous diatribes against Christianity ever penned, The Antichrist. None of the Humanists, none of the philosophes or Aufklärers, indeed few European intellectuals have ever attacked so viciously a belief that has always been, if not intellectually significant, then certainly politically powerful. The attack, all the more startling insofar as it did not, as was usual, belabour easily disposed of dogmas or episodes of Church corruption, impugned the very character of Jesus and Christian ethics. But if its intemperance was novel, its direction was ancient, and in the vein of Classical moralists like Tacitus or the Emperor Julian, and indeed all afterwards who, like the Humanists of the Italian Renaissance, tenaciously preserved antiquity against Christian goodness. Even at Christian civilisation's zenith in the Middle Ages, surreptitious unbelievers were sensible not to commit their private misgivings to print. As the ages slackened the chains, unbelief strayed to greater audacities. Where the humanist Boccaccio, in the tale of the three rings, could intimate that one religion was as good as another, Goethe centuries later is less reticent and openly declares cultivation superior to religion:

Wer Wissenschaft und Kunst besitzt
Hat auch Religion;
Wer jene beiden nicht besitzt,
Der habe Religion.

There is only a short distance in feeling from Goethe's lofty disdain to Nietzsche's eruption, which disposes of Christianity as the "one great curse, the one great intrinsic depravity... the one immortal blemish of mankind." Many argue that Nietzsche's pious upbringing (his father, who died when he was young, was a Lutheran pastor), means he remained a Protestant; that his overt antipathy to religionoverlay a profoundly Lutheran spirituality. This is a moot point. Indifference to religion was common among Aufklärers, many of whom had studied in seminaries or whose fathers had been clergymen. Nietzsche was entirely typical in this regard, and that indelible sense of reverence, piety, greatness, immensity or eternity, is not always a religious impulse, even if theologians seem to think it is.

Nietzsche's 'spirituality' is secular and parallels rather than originates in his religious background. The secular spirituality of the Ideal of Cultivation has always existed alongside religious impulses, and the ever-recurring antagonisms, recriminations, and even reconciliations between these rivals determine the intellectual character of the west. Both share origins in a ground of psychological need more fundamental than exposure to the Ideal of Cultivation or Protestantism, or any other body of belief.

Early in his life, his indifference to Christianity could still remain partisan, and in this he was a creature of his milieu. Undoubtedly he preferred Protestantism, or perhaps it would be fairer to say
that he despised Catholicism with the ferocity of a provincial pastor. Writing to his friend Rohde in 1875, he steams with indignation after having heard that a mutual friend was contemplating the Roman path and even of becoming a priest. "...I should blush for shame", he says, 'if I were suspected of having had anything to do with Catholicism, for there is nothing I hate with a more deadly hatred...Oh, our excellent pure Protestant air! I have never in my life felt my dependence upon the spirit of Luther so strongly as I do now..."^566

Four years later, in his 'middle period' and his prejudices softened, he writes to Gast, saying of Luther "that it is a long time since I have been able with honesty to say anything to his credit". He attributes his change in part to material which Jacob Burckhardt had drawn to his attention and notes that "at present, the fact that we prefer Luther as a man to Ignatius Loyola strikes me as being no more than our national taste in north and south!"^567

The volte face rotates cleanly: in his final phase he declares Catholicism superior to Protestantism."^568 In his most charitable assessment he advises that Protestantism arose waywardly out of the same vitality that produced the Renaissance, but because it occurred in the backward north of Europe, it could only express itself as religion rather than as high culture. "In the Reformation we possess a wild and vulgar counterpart to the Italian Renaissance, born of related impulse; only in the retarded north, which had remained coarse, they had to don a religious disguise; for there the concept of the higher life had not yet detached itself from that of the religious life."^568 But by this time Nietzsche was more bitterly anti-German and this over-towered, but did not undermine his anti-papism.

The sympathy he later extends to Catholicism doesn't hold when he reflects on the relation between religion and the State. In this he condemns the church’s hypocrisy for destroying the character of original Christianity, and transforming unworldly doctrine into a powerful worldly institution. Yet he can admire it for the same reasons and, at times, actually compares the institution of the church favourably against that of the state. In comparison ‘a church... is above all a structure for ruling that secures the highest rank for the more spiritual human beings and that believes in the power of spirituality to the extent of forbidding itself the use of all the cruder instruments of force; and on this score alone the church is under all circumstances a nobler institution than the State."^570

It is a common nostalgia among European Romantics that the institution of the church is deemed nobler than the State. The memory of the order the medieval church supposedly imposed on Europe has always charmed Europeans weary of national wars. Unlike the secular provincialism of states and nations the Church offers a universal aim in the highest interests of humanity. The 'spiritualised' form of the united Europe yearned for by intellectuals since the eclipse of the Imperium Romanum, seduces Nietzsche's sensibilities as it does early nineteenth century converts to Catholicism like Friedrich Schlegel or Chateaubriand. But these sensibilities do not overcome his certainty that the vision and institution of the Church are based on false and fictitious needs. Belief in the necessity of salvation, demands a form of distress that has to be fostered, and ruins the health and intellect of Europe. If it were possible to replace false premises with genuine ones, new institutions could arise, mimicking the medieval institution, but casting it into the shade. It is the shell and structure of the church that is admirable, not the feelings that nourish it. It is only in this respect that it surpasses the nation state.

The Need for the 'Holy-Lie'

The dilemma of 'conscious-illusion' is that 'illusion is a necessity of life for a sensate being' just as it is 'necessary for the advance of culture'. Every civilisation must be held together, not merely by state power and allegiance to the state but by commonly held falsehoods or 'myths'. Between 1871 and 1873 Nietzsche examined these questions in depth, seeing parallels between contemporary events and antiquity. Just as the European Enlightenment had undermined the basis for a universal Christian order and set the continent in turmoil, secular forces also undermined the old mythical foundations of the Greek state.

Governance of the early Greek state was aided by myths or religion: injustices, customs good and bad, were set down by divine agency and not to be questioned. In early Greece, to the detriment of culture, myth served each individual state, and thus separated rather than unified the Greeks. By eroding these myths the Greek enlightenment brought on crises of civil strife and national wars.

In this hour of danger, when the polis could no longer hold itself together, it was then that the pre-Socratic philosophers, acting as cultural statesmen urged a pan-Hellenic and tragic outlook. They saw that a new type of spiritual cohesion, which could not be corroded by scepticism like the old myths, was needed to draw the disparate elements of culture to harmony.

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566 SL, to Rohde, 28 February 1875, p.103.
567 SL, to Gast, 5 October 1879, pp.125-126.
568 WP, a87.
569 WP, a93.
570 Ck.,a358.
571 HA II, a476.
The philosophers perform this task in different ways.

Thales is the first to struggle against myth in the name of science and wisdom, and in doing so struggles against the polis, which is founded on myth.\footnote{SSW, PAT, pp.145-146.} \footnote{LOC. CIT.} \footnote{SSW, PAT, pp.131-132.} \footnote{SSW, PAT, p.146.} \footnote{SSW, PAT, pp.131-132.} \footnote{SSW, PAT, p.146.} A "How was it possible for Thales to renounce myth? ...If the polis was the focal point of the Hellenic will and if the polis was based upon myth, then abandoning myth meant abandoning the old concept of the polis. Now we know that Thales proposed, though he did not accomplish, the foundation of a league of cities: he ran aground on the old mythical concept of the polis. At the same time he had a foreboding of the enormous danger to Greece if this isolating power of myth continued to keep the cities divided. In fact, had Thales brought his league of cities into being, the Greeks would have been spared the Persian wars and therewith the victory and predominance of Athens. All of the early philosophers took pains to alter the concept of the polis and to create a Pan-Hellenic way of thinking.\footnote{PPS & Outlines, PAT, p.157.}"

Heraclitus wants to rip "down the barrier separating the barbaric and the Hellenic in order to create greater freedom and to broaden narrow points of view."\footnote{TP, PAT, p.57.} He opposes pliancy and excessive sociability by pride and solitude.\footnote{POLYPH, op. cit., Book VI, 56.} \footnote{H AhM I, a72.} He struggles against myth insular as it insulates the Greeks from the barbarians and he even ponders a superhellenic world order.\footnote{SSW, PAT, p.146.}

Democritus opposes science against myths that had become idle or cold abstractions, and the strict ascetic views of Pythagoras, Empedocles and Anaximander oppose the overly cosy myths that had coddled the people and made them superficial, and thus led the Greeks into danger.\footnote{SSW, PAT, pp.131-132.}

The relation of post-Socratic philosophers like Plato to myth is more ambiguous. At one point Nietzsche acknowledges that Plato "requires the lie for his state",\footnote{SSW, PAT, p.146.} as we know from references to the 'noble lie' in The Republic, but at another he declares that Plato "denied the culture of the beautiful lie"\footnote{SSW, PAT, p.146.} and desired instead "a state governed by dialectic", a view more readily applicable to Socrates, and which after all comprises a major part of the discussions in the Birth of Tragedy.

Plato's exposition of the 'noble lie' is the earliest confession that rulers exploit belief in myths to control the masses. Another is provided by Polybius who, in his analysis of Roman government tells us that deliberate promotion of religious belief and ritual among the masses by the aristocracy, clearly shows the superiority of the Roman commonwealth. "...the very phenomenon (i.e. religion)" he says, "which among other peoples is regarded as a subject for reproach, namely superstition, is actually the element which holds the Roman state together. ...Many people find this astonishing, but my own view is that the Romans have adopted these practices for the sake of the common people. This approach might not have been necessary had it ever been possible to form a state composed entirely of wise men. But as the masses are always fickle, filled with lawless desires, unreasonable anger and violent passions, they can only be restrained by mysterious terrors or other dramatisations of the subject. For this reason I believe that the ancients were by no means acting foolishly or haphazardly when they introduced to the people various notions concerning the gods and belief in the punishment of Hades, but rather that the moderns are foolish and take great risks in rejecting them."

The same principle is repeated over the ages. That modern Caesar, Napoleon, observed that no power could become "legitimate without the assistance of the priests", and filed the Bible and Koran in the Politics section of his library. When a satisfactory religion hasn't been to hand, as the history of totalitarianism attests, politicians will simply invent them.

Nietzsche claims, along with pragmatists and utilitarians and those of conservative or paternalist politics that religion is handmaid to good government. A paternal ruler ensures that superstition among the masses crystallises as a single religion in which all believe excluding, of course, the rulers themselves. Paternal government needs to preserve religion: "Absolutely paternal government and the careful preservation of religion necessarily go hand in hand. In this connection it must be taken for granted that the rulers and governing classes are enlightened concerning the advantages which religion affords, and consequently feel themselves to a certain extent superior to it, inasmuch as they use it as a means; thus freedom of spirit has its origin here."

Nietzsche endorses using the holy lie to contain the lower orders. Rulers must consciously encourage illusions from which they themselves would resist. Masters will adopt the tragic view of life and urge slaves to enjoy the consolations of faith. Secular government will always promote preserve religion in times of loss, destitution, terror, and distrust. These are the times when the consolations of religion are most needed. Because the state itself is unable to mitigate spiritual afflictions, it leaves this role to
faith which checks and soothes the sources of discontent, like an ice-pack an inflammation.

**Religion in the Modern State**

But Nietzsche is confronting a new idea of government. Paternalistic forms of government are waning, to be displaced by forms of democracy, where the placidity of people is not guaranteed. When no upper class guides the lower, and government is merely the instrument of popular will, what we think of religion will be reflected by government. As faith diminishes the exploitation of religious impulses and consolations for political purposes becomes more difficult. When the state cannot derive further advantage from religion, or when too many religious denominations prevent the state from adopt uniform measures toward them, it must begin to treat religion as a matter of private conscience and leave it to individuals to decide their position.

The tendency of the state to privatise religion and to allow religious toleration may cause further sectarianism and hostility. In *Human All Too Human* he observes that the advance of democracy and the religious sectarianism that follows it is responsible for state-worship in modern Europe, and most particularly, in Germany. This is because, in the democratic milieu, the governing classes in Europe continue to make religion a private affair: a sentiment which, almost against their will, gives an anti-religious character to their policy. Witnessing the indulgence shown by rulers toward the many sects and seeing how the State washes its hands of religious controversy, religious people who formerly adored the State as a thing half sacred - being in partnership with church - grow hostile toward it. They rail against the secular turn and oppose the State wherever they can in the name of religion. Their intransigence before new developments and their opposition to secular ordinances drives the irreligious parties further into the arms of the State, which is their one protection against the organisation of the church. State-worship in consequence, becomes almost a surrogate faith.

There is danger in this. Nietzsche warns that if secular parties eventually check the influence of the religious ones their enthusiasm for the State will also abate. The pious and reverent attitude toward the State will fall away. Individuals will see only how the State can serve their self-interest and will use all means to obtain influence over it. An intense rivalry between parties will arise that will undermine the permanence of any significant undertaking. Projects that “require the silent growth of future decades or centuries to produce ripe fruit” will be tossed aside since nobody believes that their party will remain hold power for more than a few years and do not wish to undertake anything that will not reap immediate profits or prestige. Likewise, nobody will feel any obligation to a law other than to submit for the moment to the power that introduced it.

For every law established, there will be those who will immediately set to work to undermine it by forming a new majority. The secularising of democratic politics will end in the distrust of all government, and make way for the decay of the state itself. "...the interests of the tutelary government and the interests of religion go hand-in-hand, so that when the latter begins to decay the foundations of the State are also shaken. The belief in the divine regulation of political affairs, in a mystery in the existence in the existence of the State, is of religious origin: if religion disappears, the State will lose its old veil of Isis, and will no longer arouse veneration. The sovereignty of the people, looked at closely, serves only to dispel the final fascination and superstition in the realm of these sentiments; modern democracy is the historical form of the decay of the State."  

That the state should decay is not to say that chaos would prevail: "the wisdom and selfishness of men are the best developed of all their qualities; when the State no longer meets the demands of these impulses, chaos will least of all result, but a still more appropriate expedient will gain mastery over the State."  

Most probably there would be a turn from public to private forms of office. The new varieties of rule would work to drag all responsibilities away from the State and back into the theatre of private endeavour. Hence, in a remarkable passage, Nietzsche predicts the death of the State, through the privatisation (if we may lapse a’ la mode for a moment) of all public institutions. It is “the insight into the useless and harassing nature of these short-winded struggles” which will “drive men to an absolutely new resolution: to the abolition of the contrast of ‘private and public’. Private concerns eventually absorb the business of the State; even the toughest residue which is left over from the old work of governing (the business, for instance, which is meant to protect private persons from private persons) will at last some day be managed by private enterprise. The neglect, decline, and death of the State, the liberation of the private person (I am careful not to say the individual), are the consequences of the democratic conception of the State; that is its mission.”

When private enterprise, as business and welfare, eventually assumes all the old duties of government a new leaf in the story of humanity will be turned. Many organising forces in human history have died out, and the state would not be singular in that regard. The gens or clan was mightier than the power of the family and ruled and regulated before the latter existed. Today the idea of the right and might

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134

583 loc. cit.
584 loc. cit.
585 loc. cit.
of the family, supreme in Roman times is enfeebled by the advance of the state. In a similar way a later generation will see the state become meaningless. But this eventuality would take place over the longest durations and we should not begin pushing for its realisation too quickly: a long train of developments are yet to be encountered. Therefore let the state continue on until its usefulness and power is spent and the seeds of the new order have already sprouted. "Let us, therefore, trust to the "wisdom and selfishness of men" that the State may yet exist a good while longer, and that the destructive attempts of over-zealous, too hasty sciolists may be in vain."586

Conclusions

For the rulers of a culture-state to maintain an order of rank and commit lower castes to drudgery for generations without resort to violence, they must convince these castes that their drudgery is justified. They need to employ myths and perhaps even folk-religion consciously to support their rule.

It is an axiom of government that "there can be neither society nor culture without untruth."587 The modern problem, according to Nietzsche, is that it is neither possible nor desirable to use Christianity for this purpose due to a general weariness in regard to religion. "People", he maintains, "have finally grown tired of and exhausted by the weighty symbols. All possible forms of Christian life have been tried: the strictest and the most lax, the most harmless and thoughtless and the most reflective. It is time to discover something new, or else one must fall back into the same old cycle over and over again. Of course it is difficult to emerge from the whirlpool after it has spun us around for a few thousand years. Even mockery, cynicism, and hostility toward Christianity have run their course."588

Therefore new lies have to be invented to console the weak and empower the strong. The lie that, as a would-be politician of culture, Nietzsche devises and hopes to serve the latter purpose he calls the eternal return. The new secular folk religion that must be clearly avoided is that of nationalism, which is rapidly filling the interstices of faith once occupied by Christianity.

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584 loc. cit.
585 TLES, PAT, p.92.
586 PHT, PAT, p.103.

135
'And, between ourselves, I did not hate the French, although I thanked God that we were free from them. How could I, to whom culture and barbarism alone are of importance, hate a nation that is among the most cultivated of the earth, to which I owe so great a part of my own cultivation? Altogether ... national hatred is something peculiar. You will always find it strongest and most violent where there is the lowest degree of culture. But there is a degree where it vanishes altogether, and where a person stands to a certain extent above nations, and feels the weal or woe of a neighbouring people as if it had happened to his own.'

The emergence of German nationalism

Goethe's remarks concerning the occupation of Germany by Napoleonic armies prefigure and inform Nietzsche's own reflections on nationality; a matter of fateful interest to nineteenth century Europeans. They show clearly that Goethe, though sensitive to the contempt compatriots showed him for his inertia during the German wars of liberation, observed nationality through the prism of the cosmopolitan Ideal of Cultivation, and this inhibited his support for national liberation. Love of higher culture got in the way of his patriotism. He resented the French for depriving Germans of their liberty, but could not hate them on account of their taste and accomplishment. Cosmopolitanism of this sort was alien to the Romantic generations, and it isolated Goethe in his later years. As described in Meinecke's work, German nationalism developed along lines dictated by Romantic sentiment; so that from the fulminations of Fichte in his Addresses to the German Nation, to Thomas Mann's diatribes in the Meditation of an Unpolitical Man, spitting like a cat at the superficialities of western civilisation, the cosmopolitan Ideal of Cultivation continued to lose ground in Germany.

German nationalism involved much more than a growing sense of national pride or commensurate contempt for nations of lesser accomplishments. Simple chauvinism is a historical constant that ebbs and flows over centuries. What was so remarkable about it was that it had existed as a cultural form long before it acquired a political nature.

To compensate for their backwardness of their empire the Aufklärer took immense consolation in the cultural success of the Germans, who, it was felt, expressed their greatness through culture and did not need a Reich, did not need to have colonies, or to conquer the world. They were a 'nation of culture' not a political nation. Schiller encapsulates this haughtiness when he observes that "the German Reich and the German nation are two different things. The majesty of the Germans never rested on the heads of their princes. The German has founded his specific value elsewhere than in the political sphere; and even if the imperium collapsed, the dignity of the Germans would remain unassailed. There is a moral greatness; it dwells in the culture and character of the nation, which are independent of its political fortunes. This Reich flourishes in Germany, it is in full growth, and in the midst of the Gothic ruins of an ancient barbaric constitution the forces are taking shape,"

Schiller's apolitical appeal to the cultural greatness of the Germans was amplified and altered by the Romantics through their obsession with history and hermeneutics. As German nationalism acquired political ends, a doctrine, a principle of life was encoded, which initially had only a few parallels but afterwards became the intellectual justification for every variety of irredentism.

The determination by intellectuals to experience the Ideal of Cultivation as the feeling of 'Germanity' and ultimately to demand the political unity of German nations, was replicated to some extent by pan-Hellenist intellectuals in antiquity. Unlike the Germans the Greeks did not maintain that there was anything so subtle about Greek culture that it could not be transferred to others. There was no hermeneutic impasse, preventing foreigners from understanding or acquiring it. For German Romantics, German culture was accessible only to German peoples, because nationality was the key to the creation of all aspects of culture, even law and politics.

If modes of cultivation are organic to the nation, as opposed to something universal to all mankind, only national culture can be deeply felt whereas everything cosmopolitan is eclectic, sham and...
superficial. If this was not exactly its intention the idea was destined to undermine tolerance and promote bigotry. To peevish minds it became an excuse for believing that only your own culture mattered, whereas more generous minds, such as Herder's, allowed that the great variety of national cultures, taken to their individually highest level, adorned and enriched humanity as a whole.

Nietzsche's Response to German Nationalism

If the conjunction of cosmopolitan ideals of cultivation and national assertiveness caused discomfort to Goethe, who did not live to witness German political unity, how divisive was it in one growing up when nationalist sentiment and imperial destiny and the drama of national unification was playing to packed houses? Nietzsche was witness to the reversal of the events of Goethe's time: now Germans were trampling the French underfoot, and Germans claiming to have the higher culture. In these times, how much a cosmopolitan and how much a national mystic was Nietzsche? Did his Ideal of Cultivation draw from principles accessible to all peoples, or did he feel that there existed a nationally private higher culture that could be apprehended only by those participating in it?

For Nietzsche, higher culture is not the preserve of a few races or nations, yet not all nations are equally equipped. However different national cultures may be, 'higher culture' is more universal, simply because it requires universal preconditions like class differences. It would be inconceivable it could exist without a ruling class able to create an ethos of nobility and noble valuations. Language and custom can little alter fundamental human divisions of power and the values they generate, however unique or ineffable they may be. Thus aristocracies of different nationality, sharing as they do similar values, aspirations and manners, are less foreign to each other than they are to the lower classes with whom they share a nation and language. Nietzsche's culture-state does not have to be a nation state. This idea would have been incomprehensible to his contemporaries, as it would be today.

Investing energy and sentiment in the service of a national ideal, threatens the universal Ideal of Cultivation. Nietzsche's fondness for Germany never deforms his feelings for the greater Ideal. The weight of these values stifles his youthful intentions to work for the betterment of world culture as a German, and his hopes that Germans can lead Europe to the highest attainments, an obsession that dogs him from childhood. Everything he does, from the founding of the cultural society 'Germania' as a teenager, to the composition of the Un timely Meditations reflects this obsession until his loyalties are betrayed. Afterwards, he feels he can only work for culture as a European, as someone belonging to a misccegenating Europe where nationality counts for nothing. The rupture occurs dramatically after France's defeat by Prussia in 1871. In the early months of the war his contempt for the French is equals to that of any countryman. After the German's embarrassingly swift victory, introspection leads him to question its value. He shares the disquiet that plagued Goethe during the wars of liberation: that the Germans, having allegedly demonstrated superiority in no other place than the battlefield, and with still much to learn from one of Europe's most cultivated peoples, are arrogantly stomping them down. Encouraged no doubt by the unsatisfactory reception accorded his books in his own dear Germany, he eschews the hybris swelling in the breasts of his countrymen.

Exiling himself from Germany, firstly in Switzerland and thereafter in France and Italy, his disposition toward other nations warms, but being neither completely at home as a Swiss, an Italian or Frenchman, he contrives a greater homeland that accommodates his love for other European nations, such that he could eventually declare that he was "... not nearly 'German' enough, in the sense in which the word 'German' is constantly being used nowadays to advocate nationalism and race hatred and to be able to take pleasure in the national scabies of the heart and blood poisoning that now leads the nations of Europe to delimit and barricade themselves against each other as if it were a matter of quarantine."393

This new European homeland synthesises the spirit of its north and south, of its profound seriousness and its artistic vivacity, of its power to know and its capacity to give form. The idea of the concert of European nations, according to Nietzsche, has never been alien in the realm of culture, for there Europe has always been one. All of the greatest intellects in its troubled history have worked towards the idea of a united Europe and have actively borrowed from and given to each other. Thus, "to make Europe a centre of culture, national stupidities should not make us blind to the fact that in the higher regions there is already a continuous reciprocal dependence. France and German philosophy. Richard Wagner and Paris (1830-50). Goethe and Greece. All things are impelled towards a synthesis of the European past in the highest types of mind."394

This traffic has existed between individuals and nations. So much have national styles cross-pollinated in Europe that it is impossible to imagine how great individuals from any nation could have existed without this liaison. Europe, Nietzsche believes, is greater than all the petty states that compose it, just as the best men are individually worth more than the nations from which they spring.

393 CR, a377.
394 PC, p.227.
Nationalism is therefore doubly insidious: it makes you blind to all the good outside your country, poisons your feelings to what is foreign or alien, and devours the energy and talent for a petty cause.

Nations, or national states do not matter other than in the role they play in Great Politics. The goal of greater power for a single nation is myopia unless it has regard to the fate of all mankind. Nietzsche asks of the German nationalists whether “any one can interest himself in this German Empire? Where is the new thought? Is it only a new combination of power? All the worse if it does not know its own mind. Peace and laisser aller are not types of politics for which I have any respect. Ruling, and helping the highest thoughts to victory - the only things that can make me interested in Germany. What is it to me if the Hohenzollern are there or not?”

Nietzsche complains of Germany’s entrance into European politics. The new nation’s eager grasping after empire has deprived it of the abilities of its best young men, which might otherwise be diverted to culture. Cultural nationalism had been supplanted by political nationalism and education, the foundation of culture, has been placed in the service of the German Reich, to produce clever bureaucrats and functionaries. The nation’s finest are being used up in the service of the state. All this would not matter if human energies were boundless, but if you use them to accumulate military power, play politics or engage in economic activity, you will certainly lose it for other things. “…a nation that sets about practicing high politics and securing a decisive voice amongst the great Powers... constantly sacrifices a number of its most conspicuous talents upon the ‘Alter of the Fatherland’ or of national ambition, whilst formerly other spheres of activity were open to those talents which are now swallowed up by politics...the political growth of a nation almost necessarily entails an intellectual impoverishment and lassitude, a diminished capacity for the performance of works that require great concentration and specialisation ...

The evidence was plain. Germany, a nation possessing unparalleled potential for culture was deliberately making itself stupid. Where in the new Germany were the great men of culture of the old duchies and principalities? By becoming a great power a nation of great thinkers had, so to speak, decapitated itself. ‘Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles’ signalled “the end of German philosophy...” As ironic proof of the fact Nietzsche points to the example of France which, though in political and military decline, was reaching new levels of importance as a cultural power.

If this seems fairly straightforward, Nietzsche always says something that seems to cast clarity into confusion. European nationalism and its arms race is unhealthy, but he also sees merit in the illness. A barricaded Europe, with many hostile camps may make Europeans more warlike, and therefore more virile. It will help Europe shake off the effeminacy of modern ideas, democracy, equal rights, and permit “the manliest men” to rule: this being “the natural order of things.” Wars caused for the most myopic of reasons, national enthusiasm, will be justified by serving higher ends. Out of its experience of the terrible dangers of war Europe will inherit stronger individuals who can produce a robust culture. “The condition of Europe in the next century will once again lead to the breeding of manly virtues, because men will live in continual danger. Universal military service is already the curious antidote which we possess for the effeminacy of democratic ideas, and it has grown up out of the struggle between nations.” Such remarks do not however subvert his anti-nationalist views. He still regards nationalism with contempt, but occasionally sees a higher utility for it.

Nations and Culture

This is not to suppose that Nietzsche’s politics of cultivation was concerned only with dangers posed to cultural progress by nationalist doctrines; he was closely concerned with the question of nationality in its own right and more than usually interested in how nations figure in the formation of culture, much in the way individual personalities do. This interest is attested by the inclusion in Beyond Good and Evil of an entire chapter entitled Peoples and Fatherlands. An inveterate analyst of national psychology, he indulges that hobby of all intellectuals: the distinction and definition of national character and types. With all the attendant dangers it poses even to the subtlest intellect - though assuredly there is not a soul alive who has not engaged in it – it was an obsession in Nietzsche’s case, and his works are littered with related observations and reflections like the following:

“As Frenchmen reflect the politeness and esprit of French society, so do Germans reflect something of the deep, pensive earnestness of their mystics and musicians, and also of their silly childishness. The Italian exhibits a great deal of republican distinction and art, and can show himself to be noble and proud without vanity.” Or: “Toward a characterisation of national genius in relation to what is foreign and borrowed: the English genius coarsens and makes natural everything it takes up; the
French makes thin, simplifies, logicizes, adorns; the German confuses, compromises, confounds and moralises; the Italian has made by far the freest and subllest use of what it has borrowed, and introduced a hundred times more into it than it took out of it: as the richest genius which had the most to bestow.\footnote{WP, p.831.}

These otherwise unremarkable observations show how discussion of nationality orbits about the Ideal of Cultivation. Previously unremarkable performance by nations to produce genius does not disqualify them from future greatness. But of one thing he is sure: that the endeavours of a few have surpassed all others, and it is on these that his studies concentrate, with the intention of investigating their customs, morals, politics, history, and what he generally referred to as blood or breeding. Nations of genius concern Nietzsche as much as individuals of genius; and probably more so since a single great individual may always be accounted an accident, but a nation of many great individuals must be doing something that can be learned.

Nietzsche never explicitly states what a nation is, so we have to examine his assumptions. The 'nation state' is definitely not his starting point. In fact, he derides those who define nationality in this way and seek to discover for each modern nation a pure source and lineage. "Nation - men who speak one language and read the same newspapers. These men now call themselves 'nations', and would far too readily trace their descent from the same source and through the same history; which, however, even with the assistance of the most malignant lying in the past, they have not succeeded in doing."\footnote{WP, p.226.}

It is not geography, or political frontiers or even a single language that makes a nation. Only the modern trend toward monolingual nation states encourages such an idea. If anything, Nietzsche's understanding of nation is best expressed by the term volk, or people, which suggests something less structured and more fundamental than 'nation state'. A 'people' is what he regards as the unit of human association succeeding, in order, the family, the clan and the tribe. It is the larger, looser and more complex association that permits many tribes and settlements to recognise each other as similars, as having some equivalence through language, race, customs, or common experience, which distinguishes them from other stranger groups.

A volk need not have a formalised state system, and may be no more than an aggregate of tribes or clans. Its area of habitation may be vast or minute, its population dispersed, concentrated, or scattered among the populations of foreigners. Germans or Italians, may be spoken of a single people, without ever having constituted a nation state before the nineteenth century, and Jews of the Diaspora may be considered one even though no original Jewish state existed. A people represents a calculable 'breeding' milieu, a source for certain types of valuation and therefore of culture.

The relation of races to culture

Like the vast majority of nineteenth century intellectuals Nietzsche believes that race has a role in forming national character and therefore culture and that the indefinable spirit of a nation is somehow related to its 'blood', which is the assumed medium for biological inheritance before genetic theory. Just as individuals inherit their character from progenitors, the same must apply to a nation. There is an inner core to a nation’s character that cannot be changed by environment. In the absence of any other cause we go to this immutable substrate to account for the mysteries of national traits. It must be why, for example, taller and fairer north Europeans are allegedly more phlegmatic while shorter and darker southerners display more vivacity. It must be the blood, it must be inherited nature. It is the explanation you find when you have no other.

Nietzsche accepts this paradigm and reworks it with his own nomenclature, suggesting that history is crowded with examples of master or noble races, and attendant slave races. The separation is fundamentally the outcome of success or defeat in war. Master races are bold, adventurous, accustomed to conquering and ruling others; slave races are habitually conquered and subject. Their respective success causes them to attach different values to life and living, which – as he suggests is virtually bred into them. Master races consequently maintain a culture of noble manners and higher élan while slave races harbour eternal rancour against their oppressors and against life itself.

The separation is eternalised by the master/slave class relationship formed when one people conquer another. Most aristocratic and serf relationships in history are the result of a warlike, possibly barbaric people, conquering and enslaving a weaker, perhaps more civilised one. Soon the externals of culture merge, and conqueror or conquered start to borrow each other’s language and customs. A distinct nationality is formed which owes its existence to the synthesis of cultural elements from both peoples. Race is therefore forgotten, yet is somehow built into the nature of social stratification. In one piece of provocation Nietzsche speculates that the racial inheritance of the lower classes of Europe is evident in the development of modern ideas, the democratic movement and the call for equality. These lower classes, he suggest, are descendants of the pre-Aryan peoples of Europe, who were
subsequently conquered and suppressed by the war-like and fairer Aryan peoples sweeping into the continent from the East. Today, they are fighting back through the medium of modern ideas, therefore: "the same is true of virtually all of Europe: the suppressed race has gradually recovered the upper hand again, in colouring, 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?" 603

Here we might shudder and cross ourselves. The terminology employed here: Master race, Aryan and so on, seems to portend and possibly shape twentieth century National Socialist doctrine. However contemporaries would neither have been shocked nor inspired. The Aryan was already enshrined in nineteenth century scholarship, and Nietzsche's speculations contribute nothing. Undoubtedly, Nietzsche accepted that the imperialism of the Europeans, a brutal yet 'noble' racial quality, may be attributable to the predatory instincts of Aryan ancestors. "The Europeans", he says, "imagine themselves as representing, in the main, the highest types of men on earth... How the European has established colonies is explained by his nature, which resembles that of a beast of prey." 604 But he is far from suggesting that this beast of prey, die blonde besteie, is necessarily only an Aryan possession.

In The Genealogy of Morals he observes that at the 'bottom of all these noble races the beast of prey, the splendid blond beast prowling about avidly in search of spoil and victory; this hidden core needs to erupt from time to time, the animal has to get out again and go back to the wilderness: the Roman, Arabian, Germanic, Japanese nobility, the Homeric heroes, the Scandinavian Vikings - they all shared this need." 605 Naming diverse races makes it clear that the master-slave dichotomy is not merely an outcome of Aryan supremacy over others. He is no Nordic supremacist, nor 'race' theorist like de Gobineau or H. S. Chamberlain. As is well known, he actively opposed race theories by solemnly vowing "...to associate with no man who takes any part in the mendacious race swindle." 606 He makes this vow for two reasons: to correct the simplifications and falsifications of history committed by race theorists, and to oppose an apology for mischievous bigotry.

Race theories cannot adequately explain the development of modern Europe. The Europeans are neither one pure race, nor comprised of groupings of pure races. Throughout the continent 'bloodlines' are overlaid and intermingled after centuries of migrations and conquests, therefore: "what quagmires and mendacity must there be about if it is possible, in the modern European hotch-potch, to raise questions of 'race'?" 607 Nietzsche allows race a part in the production of culture but opposes extremist claims of its importance and while indulging eugenic fantasies and acknowledging the need for good 'breeding' to produce genius, he reviles simplistic reduction of culture to racial causes.

Perturbed by the bigotry of racist theorists, most of whom are from the north of Europe, he notes that they are so intent on proving the heights of civilisation were reached in their own patch that they achieve nothing more than intellectual peevishness, smug indolence, and the retardation of high culture and European unity. Blind to the enduring greatness of the south or to the Jews, both pathfinders of European civilisation, their pursuit of racial purity is the most pathological form of eugenics. Europe was made great by the mixing of its 'races'. There is no place on the continent settled by a single people, untainted by invasion or contact with others. Any attempt to preserve the separateness and 'purity' of peoples would, of necessity, produce the unsatisfactory human specimens. The quality of a race is never constant, it may actually have been improved by interbreeding other races mixed with its own, but by stagnating if it has nowhere to expend its powers.

The mixing and blending of different races is proven to be the more successful breeding policy. Nietzsche cites the Greeks as an example of successful miscegenation that blended many races, including Aryan and Semitic elements to invigorate their biological inheritance. Occasionally, his endorsement of miscegenation is a taunt to German racial purists. In contempt of the Germans' ancient sense of superiority over the Slavs, he suggests at one point that Bismark, the icon of Teutonic virtue, is one 608 and asserts that German 'blood', generally inferior on account of the loss of the best individuals over centuries of volksverwandtung, may actually have been improved by interbreeding with Slavs. "Let anyone look upon the face of Germans. Everything that had manly, exuberant blood in it went abroad. Over the smug populace remaining, the slave-souled people, there came an improvement from abroad, especially by a mixture of Slavonic blood." 609

His most consistent concern is the increasing volatility of anti-Semites in modern Europe, for the level of their rancour is a gauge of cultural decadence. Their primary motivation is envy and

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603 GM, 1.5.
604 PC, p.215.
605 GM, 1.11.
606 PC, p.226.
607 loc. cit.
608 PC, p.222.
609 loc. cit.
Italians of the Renaissance recreated the culture of the ancient Greeks, then we understand what it might take in order to create their genius. It is our task to recreate their character where possible.

In his personal life, Jews offered more intellectual sympathy and assistance while Germans forsook him. In *Ecce Homo* he complains that he sought in vain from Germans "some sign of tact, of délicatesse in relation to me. From Jews, yes; never yet from Germans." This point is laboured in diatribes against the Germans in his last years and during his insanity, for he was to announce in one of the epistles to Jacob Burckhardt written at the time of his collapse, that he had "abolished Wilhelm (the Kaiser), Bismark and all Anti-Semites."

Nietzsche does believe that race plays a role in culture, but uses this claim provocatively on occasions just as he suggests that diet or physiology affects the spiritual life; i.e. as a counterblast to the idealism that holds spirit or mind to be autonomous or dominant. But also he takes pains to disassociate himself, in work and in personal life, from those who use simple racial formulae as the key to history and civilisation; this as much out of respect for science as for any dislike of bigotry.

### The example of extinct nations

Nietzsche said much about some European nations, little about others, and almost nothing about the rest of the world. Entirely Euro-centric, he never travelled outside of the continent and never sought to do so. His narrowness is based on the reality that the culture of the European nations now dominated the earth. The history and health of that culture must be understood in order to forestall or enhance certain outcomes and even the example of extinct nations like the Greeks and Romans is useful for instruction.

The ancient Greeks win all the medals, not least for inventing the *Ideal of Cultivation*, and thereby becoming the spiritual fathers of Europe. Their history and literature are an unfailing resource for the study of culture. He believes that when we understand something about the national character of the ancient Greeks, then we understand what it might take in order to create their genius. It is our task to recreate their character where possible.

The same applies to the Latins and their descendents who take pride of place after the Greeks. Lacking sympathy for the Romans during his youth, believing that although they took aboard the Greeks' intellect without receiving their incandescent spirit, he later admires them for the soundness of their political instincts, for their strength and nobility. "Nobody stronger and nobler has yet existed on earth..." he says, and adds that 'every remnant of them, every inscription gives delight..." To both civilisations, whose nature and destiny became intrinsically intertwined, we owe the discovery of and foundation of Europe as a political entity. They provided "every prerequisite for an erudite culture... nobility of taste, methodical investigation, genius for organisation and government, the faith in, the will to a future for mankind..."

### The Latins

The successors to the Romans in Europe, the Italians and the French have privileged place. The Italians of the Renaissance recreated the *Ideal of Cultivation*, and if not bettering the Greeks, their achievement is unmatched in Europe. Here Nietzsche's opinions are shaped by Jacob Burkhardt.

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610 Recall the example already cited in Chapter XIV (TGS, EG, p. 15), where he refers to the existence of a state-less, selfish money-aristocracy.
612 EH, III, COW-4.
613 SL, to Jacob Burckhardt, 6 January 1889.
614 GM, I-16.
615 AC, a59.
In Turin during his last years of sanity, he rarely speaks of Italy other than with affection and regards the nation as a home of and school for culture. Probably he indulged misgivings about the future of the new Italian nation state, unable perhaps to determine what its political role in Europe might be. He notes that this is so “most spiritual and refined culture and the leading school of taste”. He was in the period of Louis XIV that France acquired its esprit, the virile, aristocratic culture which schooled European taste. But today, it is a “coarse and stupid France that trundles in the foreground”, increasingly subject to democratic convulsions and German ideas. Still, the French have a capacity for artistic passions and superiority to the rest of Europe in their “ancient, manifold, moralistic culture” that endows them with “a psychological sensitivity and curiosity of which in Germany, for example, they have no conception...” Finally, they are superior in that their temperament, thanks to their geographical position, is a synthesis of the north and south of Europe, preventing them from succumbing to the dreary spirits of the north by indulging the contending vivacity of Liguria and Provence. This composite nature “makes them understand many things and urges them to do many things which an Englishman will never understand.”

If France has become weaker and more decadent than almost any other nation in Europe, it continues to effect significant intellectual and artistic accomplishments.

The Slavs

To the east of Europe, he sees the Slavs, despised or feared by German intellectuals, as an inchoate mass whose power may sway the destiny of Europe. Their still barbarous nature suggests a degree of vitality not yet properly harnessed but which promises greatness. When his anti-German feelings are ascendant Nietzsche equips himself with Slavic origins, mainly because his name sounds Slavic - a flawed etymological assumption - and because, outside of Germany he was always taken for a Pole. He was, he believed, the descendent of Polish aristocrats; an acceptable distinction since the Poles were reputedly the “Frenchmen among the Slavs.”

It was also another Scipionic rebuff to the Germans, for it deprived his countrymen of their right to his genius. But it did not indicate what he really thought about the Slavs, and most importantly of their greatest nation, Russia, whose world-historical destiny intrigued and confronted him. Like many other western Europeans he feared the empire’s growing power. Nietzsche perceives, as de Tocqueville had done, that Russia and the United States would contend with the Europeans for domination of the world. When contemplating this he poses a number of possibilities for Europeans to consider.

At times he thinks Europe should unite with Russia which, he says, is “the only power today which has durability in it, which can wait, which can still promise something... the antithesis of that pitiable European petty-state politics and nervousness which with the foundation of the German Reich has a critical phase...” Russian stillness and capacity to consider duration, which he admires so much in a political order, should set an example to the Europeans. The Russians have grand designs, but Europeans cannot see beyond their borders, and squabble with each other over minutiae.

European nations should awaken to the positive threat that Russia poses to their security, and unite against its menace. All the more because it is an untutored Russia that may overwhelm Europe, a nation still endowed with a political milieu that actively suppresses genius and forces intelligence to flee its borders. The Russians have the greatest potential for genius, but their systematic repression of individuals nullifies any credit they may have established. “In Russia there is an emigration of the intelligence. People cross the frontier in order to read and write good books. Thus however, they are working towards turning their country, abandoned by the intellect, into a gaping Asiatic maw, which would soon swallow our little Europe.”

Here creeps the ancient European fear of Asia: the ageless apprehension that the populous civilisations of the Near-East or the tribes of Asiatic steppes - from whence came those ‘Aryan’ ancestors of the Europeans themselves - might again loose themselves on the West. The periodic eruptions that sent nomadic hordes of Huns or Mongols, or the disciplined armies of Islam, flowing westward has taught Europe’s intellectuals that their continent is a little peninsula jutting from a larger mass. And when they are haunted by some un-named foreign dread invariably they look eastward for

820 BGE, a208. 821 BGE, a254. 822 loc. cit. 823 loc. cit. 824 EH, I-3. 825 EH, III-2. 826 TI, p.93. 827 BGE, a208. 828 HAII H, a231.
a menace to explain it. They even invented a theoretical justification for their fear which, if it is not founded on the naked sense of racial difference, supposes that Europe should gird itself against the intrinsic decadence of Asiatic politics.

The West’s idea of oriental civilisation, originated by the Greeks and inherited by European scholarship, is of cruel despots ruling vast masses kept in physical and intellectual servitude. It was applied to the Persians and Indians by the Greeks, to Islamic civilisations by Renaissance intellectuals and to China by nineteenth century westerners. For Nietzsche, the orient has produced the religions, mysticism, and pessimism he associates with decadence. This is manifest in his occasional unflattering references to the Chinese whom he customarily pictures as clever and industrious slaves, labouring under the directions of traditional despotism and the teachings of Confucius, a slave moralist of genius. His fear of Russian despotism must therefore be regarded in the same light. Were the geo-political aims over Europe realised by Russia, Europe might be incapable of sustaining any robust intelligence thereafter. Otherwise, if it does not decide to menace Europe, Russia will preoccupy itself with wars in India and Asia. It might even collapse through “internal eruptions, the explosion of the empire into small fragments, and above all the parliamentary imbecility...”

The Anglo-Saxons

Qualms aside, he is certain that the spirit of Russia and the Slavs in general, is profounder and more certain of genius than that of continental Europe’s other great foe, the Anglo-Saxons. If the Slavs suffer from an excess of barbarism the English are otherwise afflicted. In Russia, the despotism of a single individual suppresses genius; in England it is a general culture of ‘mediocrity’ that accomplishes the same. For the English, there is seldom a word of favour; indeed his judgement is harsher than for the Germans. Nothing he says is new; continental intellectuals have long said of these islanders that they are “no philosophical race”, that they lack “real power of spirituality, real depth of spiritual insight”.

The English mind is coarser, and gloomier. Ignoble utility supervenes in everything it conceives and does and because it lacks any spiritual depth it still clings fiercely to Christianity. It is from England that Europe has received all its stultifying mechanistic ideas concerning nature and causality (not a fair accusation in light of the generous French contribution to the same). Nietzsche notes that, where the French may be regarded as the architects of Europe’s noblesse, the English have designed most of its forms of vulgarity, in particular ‘modern ideas’ which represents the greatest threat to high culture in Europe, all the more insidious because it undermines its peoples from within: “...the English, with their profound averageness, have once before brought about a collective depression of the European spirit: that which is called ‘modern ideas’ or ‘the ideas of the eighteenth century’ or even ‘French ideas’ - that is to say, that which the German spirit has risen against in profound disgust - was of English origin, there can be no doubt about that.”

What applies to the English also applies to their descendents, the North Americans. Both pose a spiritual and physical threat to Europe and to the fate of high culture everywhere. “England’s petty spiritedness,” he warns, “is the great danger now on earth. I observe more inclination toward greatness in the feelings of the Russian nihilists than in those of the English Utilitarians.” What continental Europe needs in order to overcome this threat and ensure its dominance of the world is “an outgrowth of the German and Slav races, and we require, too, the cleverest financiers, the Jews, for us to become masters of the world... We require an unconditional union with Russia, together with a mutual plan of action which shall not permit any English schemata to obtain the mastery in Russia. No American Future!”

Elsewhere he mentions that England’s colonies would be needed to help with Europe’s domination of the world, thereby inferring English political cooperation in a united Europe. But these are passing reveries not firmly held convictions. They indicate the depth of his distaste for the Anglo-Saxon world, in keeping with a major stream of German philosophy and scholarship from the end of the eighteenth century: which, as we know, characterised the English and even the Latins as superficial rationalists and mechanists.

The Jews

Though stateless and dispersed throughout the nations, the Jews exert a formidable financial and cultural influence. Nietzsche advises us that any “thinker who has the future of Europe on his
conscience will, in all the designs he makes for the future, take the Jews into account as he will take the Russians, as the immediately surest and most probable factors in the great game of forces.”

Nietzsche is divided over their legacy and influence: Europe owes much to them, “good and bad, and above all the one thing that is at once the best and the worst: the grand style in morality.” As a consequence, from youth to maturity he exhibits strange reversals in his estimation of Jewry. The younger Nietzsche is not sympathetic and refers to it obliquely as “a selfish stateless money aristocracy.” Yet praises the ancient Hebrews. After the middle period, as his anti-Christianity hardens he blames the Hebrews and praises modern Jewry for what he had once condemned it.

In the later period he poses the history of Europe as a grand antagonism between the spirit of Judea and of Rome, which is to say, between the values of Judeo-Christianity and of Classical civilisation. As the inventors of Christianity, a religion that has deformed the European mind for two millennia, the Hebrews conducted a major assault on the culture of antiquity. The Bible, as the literary source of this misdemeanour, codifies the inverted value system of what was quintessentially ‘a slave nation’.

Weak enough to be subjected and oppressed by successive empires - Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, the Jews powerfully resist cultural extinction by calling good the values that reflect their position as slaves, and bad the ‘noble’ values of their masters. This enables them to pose an alternative to the dominant values of antiquity. By this means, “… a people ‘born for slavery as Tacitus and the whole ancient world says, the chosen people’ as they themselves say and believe - the Jews achieved the miracle of inversion of values thanks to which life on earth has for a couple of millennia acquired a new and dangerous fascination - their prophets fused ‘rich’, ‘evil’, ‘violent’, ‘sensual’ into one and were the first to coin the word ‘world’ as a term of infamy. It is in this inversion of values... that the significance of the Jewish people resides: with them there begins a new and dangerous fascination.”

This revolt, spreading like virus in the form of the Jewish inspired religion of Christianity, extends far beyond its origins, and becomes the voice of slave classes throughout the Roman Empire. Slaves and masters too are seduced by it, with the result that ultimately Rome itself, which crushed the Jews in their homeland, becomes the servant and actor of Jewish values: more ironically still, the capital and epicentre of Christianity throughout the world.

Unsparing of the rancour of the ancient Hebrews and their contribution to the destruction of antiquity, Nietzsche does not participate in contemporary orgies of anti-Semitism. He praises the contributions of Jews to classical culture in Europe. And if not entirely devoid of anti-Semitic impulses in his youth, sharing Wagner's distaste for Jewish financial acumen, he later takes pains to point out how the Jews have more than redeemed themselves for producing a 'redeemer'.

A cautious even handed discussion in Human All Too Human indicates the evolution of his views. “Every nation”, he notes, “as does every individual, has unpleasant qualities, the Jew no less than any other” and cites as an example the behaviour of the young 'Stock-Exchange Jew', which he suggests might be ‘the most repulsive invention of the human species’. At this stage still in the grip of his objection to Jewish business enterprise, rather than Hebrew slave-morality he then praises the very things he was later to condemn. He reminds us that much is to be excused in a nation that has had, “not without blame on the part of all of us... the most mournful history of all nations, and to which we owe the most loving of men (Christ), the most upright of sages (Spinoza), the mightiest book, and the most effective moral law in all the world? ” In character with his later opinions he observes that it was the Jewish free-thinkers, scholars and physicians of the Middle Ages who defended enlightenment, at great personal sacrifice, when the clouds of Asiatic mysticism were sweeping Europe. In the great war of Occident and East, they provided the link in the chain of culture that unites modern Europe with antiquity. His concludes that: “if Christianity has done everything to orientalise the Occident, Judaism has assisted essentially in occidentalising it anew; which, in a certain sense, is equivalent to making Europe’s mission and history a continuation of that of Greece.”

With the numbers of Jews in Europe increasing, particularly in Germany, as a result of general westward flight from pogroms and persecution in Russia, the clamour of western anti-Semites was growing more excited. The “distasteful and shameful” immoderation of their feelings against an ill-used minority did not belie the need for caution regarding the admission of Jews into Germany.

Unlike Italy, France and England, where the social digestive system was stronger and large numbers of Jews could be absorbed without threat to local culture, Germany could not arrive at such a happy accommodation. Germany is still weak and uniformed, while the Jews are an aerea perennis: “beyond all doubt the strongest, toughest and purest race at present living in Europe” and know how to prevail under the most adverse conditions.
The Jews could, if they wanted, and as the anti-Semites believe they do, even now rule over Europe, though they are undoubtedly not working to that end. If anything, according to Nietzsche, they are wishing 'with some impatience' to be assimilated into Europe and to put an end to their wanderings. This he feels, is a sign of a weakening of the Jewish instincts, and ought to be accommodated and selectively met by the Europeans, as he alleges the English nobility were already doing. The financial acumen and spirituality of modern Jewry could constitute as significant an ingredient in the breeding of a European mixed race, a master race, as any other national remnant. What is more, in a united Europe the 'Jewish problem' would not arise for it only really exists within the system of national states. Yet another reason, he might add, for the abolition of nation states.

The Germans

A tour of Nietzsche's Europe must include Germany. How close and troubled is his relation to his fatherland: how much love and hatred, high hope and disappointment as, in his youth, he believes Germany can lead Europe to a renaissance of the Hellenic spirit. His writings voluminously attend to the problems of German culture. The youthful works, including the Birth of Tragedy and the Untimely Meditations almost exclusively deal with such problems, and the later works obsessively go back to them, despite his obvious search for a more cosmopolitan readership. His mode of address to the Fatherland, evolving from scolding to mockery, never conceals his certainty that German political developments must necessarily affect the shape of Europe.

Germany's geographical position assures its people of a vital role. As the heartland of the continent, all other European cultures flow into and through it. This historical position dominates the entire character and culture of the Germans and makes it intrinsically complex as they are made up of many races and cultures, and materials borrowed from many nations. Nietzsche believes that "the Germans may well be the most composite people on earth..." and remarks that the German soul is 'above all manifold, of diverse origins, put together and superimposed rather than actually constructed..." As a people they represent "the most tremendous mixture and mingling of races, perhaps even with a preponderance of the pre-Aryan element, as the 'people of the middle' in every sense, the Germans are more incomprehensible, more comprehensive, more full of contradictions, more unknown, more incalculable, more surprising, even more frightening to themselves than other people are - they elude definition and are for that reason alone the despair of the French." Every writer thinks his own nation more complex than those with which he is less familiar, but Nietzsche believes complexity abides so profoundly in the nature of his countrymen that it amounts to a metaphysical tendency: the German he says, as opposed to the Latin, is spiritually adjusted to conditions of incompleteness, of Becoming. The strength of Latin civilisation is in endowing every moment with immediate significance; its emphasis on the present, on Being, causes it to invest its culture with perfect and completed forms. The Germans, however exist both in the past and in the future: 'they are of the day before yesterday and the day after tomorrow - they have as yet no today.' Not only is it that they have not arrived at a completed cultural form, it is also that they place significance precisely in the sense of becoming and development, and are for that reason the greatest exponents of the historical sense among the European nations. The ruling idea of 'development' is a German discovery and is its greatest endowment to European intellect. It is the German capacity to accommodate antithetical notions in the idea of 'development' that has hitherto constituted their profundity, though this quality is progressively diminishing.

Nietzsche distinguishes between an older Germany of rustic virtues and a new German state of insidious ambitions. Old Germany effortlessly gave forth geniuses of music, philosophy and poetry: Händel, Bach, and Beethoven, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, Goethe and Holderlin. These individuals of the 'strong German type' – here Handel, Leibniz, Goethe and Bismark are mentioned were capable of "existing among antitheses" and "full of the supple strength that guards against convictions and doctrines by employing one against the other and reserving freedom for itself." The new German however, is no longer intellectually or psychologically robust. He is shallower, full of convictions and petty ambition. No longer content to be considered profound like his predecessors, he expects to be admired for exhibiting dash in politics or war. When he is of an intellectual bent he turns to scholarship rather than culture and is happy to occupy a twig on the tree of learning. In new Germany philosophy is replaced by the fragmented disciplines of scholarship and science, which impede the development of fuller and richer natures. The ambitions of the new German nation-state to engage in grand politics and strut the world-historical stage draws the best way from culture and into political, bureaucratic and military service.

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637 PC, pp.218-219.
638 BGE, 234.
639 loc. cit.
640 BGE, 240.
641 WP, 484.
642 TL, p.60.
However Nietzsche will concede that even new Germans retain some of the old virtues. “The new German represents a great quantity of inherited and inculcated ability” he says, but in what? Clearly, “it is not a high culture that has here gained ascendency, even less a fastidious taste, a noble ‘beauty’ of the instincts.” What redeems his countrymen is that they possess ‘more manly virtues than any other country in Europe can exhibit.’ And among the Germans it is the Brandenburg and Prussian nobility, and the peasant of certain North German districts who “comprise at present the most manly natures in Germany.” So long as they retain this virtue Germans can hope to fulfill some role at the forefront of European culture.

The aberration of German nationalism does not fully obscure the signs pointing to an overcoming of the national states in Europe. German contribution to this fusion would be essential, for it is, Nietzsche believes, the Germans’ ancient prerogative, by virtue of their position in the heartland of Europe to act as mediators of culture, as translators and conduits between nations. The Germans’ “hereditary position as interpreters and intermediaries between nations”, which has endowed them with their complex character and spirit, should become their justification in a united Europe.

Nietzsche is less forward-looking in this remark than nostalgic. Within it we see a hint of the pride of the eighteenth century Germans that although not especially adept on the battlefield or in politics - such ephemeral achievement being left to other nations - they were unsurpassed in poetry and philosophy. They believed their intellectual virtue could be attributed precisely to the fact that they were situated at the centre of mankind and therefore embodied the complexity and qualities of all other nations. In the German mind Germany was the mind of all mankind. It did not require the thundering of Fichte, who turned this notion into a philosophical system, to assure humanity of this, for it was already a conscious feeling among the Aufklärers. Schiller for example (whom Nietzsche may have been unconsciously echoing, as one feels he so often does), calls the Germans blessed in their position at the centre of Europe: they were the ‘kernel’ of mankind, taking and perfecting everything coming from the nations all around. “It is the destiny of the German” he says, “to perfect in himself general humanity, to wreath the lovely blossoms of other peoples into a crown. The centre of Europe’s peoples, he is the kernel of mankind, as they are the flower and leaf...”

### The Mission and Future of Europe

These reflections on the roles of nations leave us with two key observations. The first is that the idea of nationality is as inimical to culture as the idea of the state and that both, being in most instances necessary evils, are perhaps most favourably, preliminary stages to something greater. The culture-state does not have to be, and more desirably should not be a national state. Accordingly, he looks to a past when each nation contributed a certain strength or virtue to the commonwealth of Europe and to a future when this will occur as a conscious policy of European statesmen. The second observation is that Nietzsche’s politics of culture is supra-national for Europe, but not for the world. He is not a true cosmopolitan, but a Europhile and it is unlikely that he would have wished to be anything else.

For Nietzsche, the world is not Asia, not Africa, not Australia, not the Americas, but Europe. Over and beyond the petty national wars and empire building of the European states he sees “the United Europe” preparing itself “slowly and unhesitatingly” as the “only real work, the one impulse in the souls of all the broad-minded and deep-thinking men of this century - this preparation of a new synthesis, and the tentative effort to anticipate the future of ‘the European’...” Foremost of the aforesaid broad-minded and deep-thinking men, among whom can be listed Goethe, Beethoven, Stendhal, Heinrich Heine, and Schopenhauer, was Napoleon who, “as one of the great continuators of the Renaissance”, wanted to unify Europe in order it may become “mistress of the earth.” That Europe should rule the world as a continental block, is the pivotal concern of Nietzsche's politics of cultivation, or what he calls great politics, in order to continue the project of the Greeks.

By preferring citizenship of a united Europe he renounces citizenship of the world. Only Europe can continue the progress of man. However remote it grows from antiquity in time and intellect, the great Greek Ideal of Cultivation - the boldest and clearest expression of humanity yet conceived - still rests in its bosom. It is only the form of culture discovered by the Greeks, organised by the Romans and inherited by the Europeans that will enable humanity to progress beyond its own nature. If it has not always consciously lived by this ideal, Europe remains its sole repository. For the good of its own peoples as for mankind in general, the continent must retain its economic and military dominance and continue to exert power over other peoples, and oppose the accumulating might of its barbaric offspring, the Russian Empire and the United States of America. To this end Europe must act
aggressively and must actively promote itself as “mistress of the earth”.

How to Unite

Even as Nietzsche was writing the continent was preparing for the bloodiest wars in human history. Elsewhere, superstates like Russia and the United States of America are forming, but Europe cannot crawl from its own imbroglio. If Nietzsche regrets Europe's enormous expenditure on arms, he also anticipates the beneficial effects of fratricidal war among its nations. The possibility that Europe might be unified by military conquest does not elude him. He had praised Napoleon's briefly successful effort to do so and Napoleon as one who understood Europe's destiny better than anyone since he himself embodied the grand tradition of antiquity and the Renaissance.650

When he speculates on world-historical developments Nietzsche leaps from conjecture to conjecture. At one moment he sees a German-Russian master state ruling Europe, China and India as a way to overcome the impasse of European political fragmentation. 651 At another he thinks the problem can be solved by Europe becoming subject to Russia. Russia would be the granite in relation to Europe as Rome to Greece: the Russians as Roman masters providing the political stability and security of a great northern continental state and the Europeans as Greek slaves educating and intellectually dominating their masters.652

Mostly he thinks of Europe as commanding its own political destiny and commanding militarily the world. Unification need not be enforced by a single military power but would arise naturally from forces already at work. Europe is working towards unity from many different directions. Nineteenth century technical advances in travel and communication were bringing diverse peoples closer: “With the freedom of travel now existing, groups of men of the same kindred can join together and establish communal habits and customs. The overcoming of ‘nations.’ 653 The increase of commerce, industry, increasing effectiveness of transport and communications is so weakening European nationalities that eventually there must emerge a mixed race, the European. Right now the mutual enmity of those nations counteracts this tendency, but fusion is taking place slowly against occasional counter-currents. The present nationalist tendency in Europe is a dangerous unnatural condition of extremity and martial law, “proclaimed by the few over the many, and requires artifice, lying, and force to maintain its reputation. It is not in the interests of the many (of the peoples) as they probably say, but it is first of all the interests of certain princely dynasties, and then of certain commercial and social classes, which impel to this nationalism; once we have recognised this fact, we should just as fearlessly style ourselves good Europeans and labour actively for the amalgamation of nations.”654

The last consideration is that Europe can no longer sustain many separate and competing economies. Eventually these states will see that mutual economic interest will inevitably draw them together: "the small states of Europe - I refer to all our present kingdoms and 'empires' - will in a short time become economically untenable, owing to the mad, uncontrolled struggle for the possession of local and international trade. Money is even now compelling European nations to amalgamate into one power. In order, however, that Europe may enter into the battle for the mastery of the world with good prospects of victory (it easy to perceive against whom this battle will be waged), she must probably 'come to an understanding' with England. The English colonies are needed for this struggle, just as much as modern Germany, to play her new role of broker and middleman, requires the colonial possessions of Holland. For no one any longer believes that England alone is strong enough to continue to act her old part for fifty years more; the impossibility of shutting out homines novi from the government will ruin her, and her continual change of political parties is a fatal obstacle to the carrying out of any tasks which require to be spread out over a long time. A man must today be a soldier first and foremost that he may not afterwards lose his credit as a merchant. Enough; here, as in other matters, the coming century will be found following in the footsteps of Napoleon - the first man, and the man of greatest initiative and advanced views of modern times."655

The Culture-State of Europe

Nietzsche offers slim little guidance as to how the new Europe comprising great powers, their colonies and imperial possessions will look. He foresees current European territorial states like England, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy fragmenting into cantons that would form units of local administration. The boundaries of these cantons would be based on rational geographical, economic and cultural principles and would have an integrity they do not now possess.
as mere provinces of these states. It is not clear however, whether he means that discrete cultures or nationalities like the Basques, or Tyroleans should become separate cantons, or whether it should reach down to the boundaries of Europe's traditional pays and communes.

In the European culture-state power would be centralised and decentralised: the greater functions of government assumed by a Pan-European government that would only loosely supervise the cantons, which would have greater freedom to arrange their own affairs. Nietzsche never discusses whether these administrations should be monarchical or democratic. The principle of redefining the nature of the territorial units seemed more important: that the modern territorial state be subsumed by the larger entity and caused to decompose into the elements it had once forcibly united. Control by the territorial state would then disappear and be replaced by units exerting greater independence at the local level and the most overwhelming world-historical aims at the highest. Ultimately a single European world empire would entail the extinction of all territorial states and empires and the cantonising of all peoples, but subject to the values and culture of Europe. The great promise of the new territorial divisions would be to diminish the role of nationality in the affairs of government and create a truly cosmopolitan world.

Two possibilities emerge: one would be the atomising of the world as a result of a world-government which, being under no external security threat would fragment, but with each fragment sharing a residue of the higher culture that Europe had imposed on it. This speculation is never elaborated.

More consistently he sees a continuously administered world-state in which two different species of mankind would arise: one representing the lower order of clever slaves, the specialists who, in their one-sided development, would constitute the machineries of economy and government. Above this class would be an aristocracy of synthetic individuals, able to cultivate themselves and lead the whole of mankind to ever higher levels of accomplishment. Hence, “on that first road which can now be completely surveyed, arise adaption, levelling, higher Chinadom, modesty in the instincts, satisfaction in the dwarfing of mankind - a kind of stationary level of mankind. Once we possess that common economic management of the earth that will soon be inevitable, mankind will be able to find its best meaning as a machine in the service of this economy - as a tremendous clockwork, composed of ever smaller, ever more subtly 'adapted' gears; as an ever-growing superfluity of all dominating and commanding elements; as a whole of tremendous force, whose individual factors represent minimal forces, minimal values. In opposition to this dwarfing and adaption of man to a specialised utility, a reverse movement is needed - the production of a synthetic, summarising, justifying man for whose existence this transformation of mankind into a machine is a precondition, as a base on which he can invent his higher form of being.”

In its final form, Nietzsche's Europe will consist of many cantons, having strong local powers, but governed by a loosely organised pan-European aristocracy. And what does this arrangement recall, or rather, monstrously magnify other than that millennial apparition: the Holy Roman Empire?

The hankering for a united Europe has existed among many Europeans ever since the destruction of the Imperium Romanum. It has come close to realisation a number of times: firstly by the Carolingian Holy Roman Empire, then in the Middle Ages by the ecumenical rule of the Church and, ever so briefly, by would be conquerors such as Napoleon and Hitler.

What is unusual is that Nietzsche should desire this precisely when the power of territorial states in Europe was about to reach its zenith and nadir in the two world wars that they were to initiate. What is typical is the way in which his imperial cosmopolitanism joins so consistently and fluently with the Hellenist variety of the Ideal of Cultivation. The icon of heroism he admires and the type of culture-state he imagines have always been historical partners. Both ideas flow undilutedly down a furrow of speculation that has existed for millennia, and in modern Europe, for at least six hundred years.

Nietzsche himself is only dimly conscious of the continuity of his thought in this regard, and does not see how he is magnifying and superimposing the pattern of the Holy Roman Empire, and the particular Ideal of Cultivation for which it has most affinity, on modern circumstances. Yet it is precisely this fact which makes him think that he is more forward-looking than any of his contemporaries, and causes him to believe that his thought embodies a new event in world-history.

\[\text{Source: WP, 1866.}\]
16 - The politics of spiritual reform

"... men can consciously resolve to develop themselves toward a new culture; whilst formerly they only developed unconsciously and by chance, they can now create better conditions for the rise of human beings, for their nourishment, education and instruction; they can administer the earth economically as a whole, and can generally weigh and restrain the powers of man. The new, conscious culture kills the old, which, regarded as a whole has led an unconscious animal and plant life..."

Nietzsche's Activism

Nietzsche wants to build a culture-state because he does not wish high culture to be the offspring of chance or blind experiments. Rarely does nature bring forth a genius and even more rarely does it brings forth an entire people of genius. In every other department of life we are used to making nature serve our purpose. Yet we leave chance to achieve something so essential. By creating a culture-state, we can ensure that genius and high culture is brought forth by conscious effort. But no European power employs its institutions, or arranges its society with this as its priority. Philosophers, the most conscious human beings, the would-be artists of society, have suggested how a cultivated society might be conceived and achieved, but nobody heeds their advice. The philosopher needs to know how to make them listen, or better still how he can change the world.

These considerations confront Nietzsche at every stage of his life. Much as he seeks to discover and describe the social structure that best supports culture, he is also determined that it should exist, or at least begin to exist, now, in his own time. As with most theoretical youth, he suffers the pangs of Hamletism, wherein a powerful urge to accomplish something is thwarted by intellectual confusion over what should be done (the same problem young Marx appeared to have suffered and allegedly overcame) But he soon learns to classify any distinction between the vita activa and the vita contemplativa is something Asiatic. The Greeks understood the matter better.

Again he warns himself against overly fond contemplation of other theoretical worlds: "You should not flee into some metaphysics, but should actively sacrifice yourself to the culture which is developing. For this reason I am strongly opposed to dreamy idealism"

Even when most isolated, the focus of his thought is to somehow shape the development of Europe and believes that his publications may accomplish this. Outside and unconnected from political parties and cultural movements, unable and unwilling to participate in practical political activity he sees himself, through his writings, as an immense force for change. The easy megalomania of ideas sweeps him to lofty prophesies of his role and stature in the history of the politics of cultivation.

This form of activism is profoundly characteristic in German intellectual tradition. In the early period, when he is convinced that spiritual reform is possible through art and education, he believes that communicating ideas will change people and drive reform institutional renovation. In the later period, he is more attached to what he calls the "politics of virtue" or what we might refer to as the policy of breeding genius, which assumes that ideals can only be created in specific environments. The only way to ensure adoption of a certain ethic is to have people inhabit a world in which they can be naturally, spontaneously predisposed to it. Nonetheless, in spite of his new bias toward material change, he continues to write and think in a way that suggests he is convinced that by communicating ethical ideas he can reshape the world.

The Modality of Change - Reform rather than Revolution

Regardless of whether "spiritual reform" or "breeding" is the agent for change, Nietzsche is consistent in that he thinks the process should always be evolutive; consisting of slow incremental advances rather than abrupt schisms, and that the immediate hunger for action must accord with the most distant far-sightedness. You do not rid yourself of the past with a blow but grow out of it slowly and determinedly, abandoning the worst but retaining what is best.

In yet another of those self-defining notes of the early 1870's he sets himself two tasks: "to defend the new against the old, and to connect the old with the new." Continuity and conscious management

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657 This is what he implies, for example, when he says that...the production of genius is indeed dependent upon the fate of a people[volk]. For dispositions toward genius are very common, but the concurrence of all the necessary favourable conditions is very rare. SNW, PAT, p.140.
658 HAH I, a254.
659 loc. cit.
660 loc. cit.
661 HAH I, a235.
of change is characteristic of the Aufklärer, though not necessarily of Germans in general, as the convulsive history of the nation attests. At least we can say that, in the nineteenth century, those attached to the Aufklärer's politics of cultivation abhorred revolution and there are many reasons why this remained so in Nietzsche's case.

Static Cartesian consciousness favours revolution. Those who are historically conscious are by their nature prone to track evolution and development and better disposed to the idea of reform. They seek out other agents of change than the dazzling feats of statesmen and generals such as technological innovations, changes to trading and economic relationships, new religious practices… The cumulative effect of small actions and the unintended consequences of actions that are better observed by the historian in hindsight than those who lived through the changes. The ahistorical Cartesian sees only an unsatisfactory set of circumstances that can be reversed quickly by extraordinary measures: a single violent act or coup d'état.

As the Aufklärer von Schlozer observes: history's value lies in drawing you away from the "blind admiration of individuals, realms, peoples, and events..." "One will", he says "be liberated from the taste for the stories of wars and will perceive with enlightenment that greater revolutions have often resulted from the quiet musings of genius and the gentle virtue of the man of wisdom than from the violence of all-powerful tyrants... one will awake from the slumber in which our education had steeped us to realise that the present perfection of our loaf of bread, piece of printed paper, pocket watch, bill of exchange, planet globe, and hundreds of other things has been the result of discovery after discovery over thousands and thousands of years through which the human spirit has steadily advanced.657 This is the attitude to history that affects how Aufklärers seek to change the world or engage in politics.

Nietzsche inhabits the Aufklärers historiced consciousness and heightens its intensity. Read any of his aphorisms and invariably its point is to remind us that something is a development, and if it was always thus it will not always remain so. He delights in revealing how what seems eternal is provisional, and boasts of having the longest views and most distant perspectives of the past and future. There is nothing that is not the result of accumulations of small, perhaps inconspicuous events or processes. In prophetic mode he delights in pointing to favourable developments that might arise from something that is undesirable now. He gleefully seeks to be two or three steps beyond the obvious as if to say: "you see the evil coming and cover your eyes; I look a step beyond and see the good that will come out of it".

But both Nietzsche and the Aufklärers wanted to believe that individuals can make history. Reformism clearly has to permit that possibility. Social change as a machine process as Hegel and Marx envisaged destroys the spirit of activism. Reformers may not slay dragons but their eloquence and example might persuade a dragon to go elsewhere. Superior action for reformers is not political or military but spiritual and intellectual. Those who change the world bring new values, ideas and beliefs into it. Traditional men of action are merely their actors and puppets. History then, is a curious combination of environmental processes and Heldenleben, where the heroes are not conquerors but men of culture. Aufklärer historiography exaggerates the significance of the philosopher, thinker or religious leader and their affect on the world because there is a need to believe that spiritual reform is the best means for transforming the world.

Awareness of the details of the past lengthens the field of consciousness in time and space; it pushes forward as well as backward. A sense of history devalues the present, by referring back to a golden time, or forward to a utopia that is to come. The present is a moment of incompleteness and imperfection that is justified or condemned according to its relation to the past or future. Where the mood the mood of a people is agitation, criticism and optimism, as it was in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they justify themselves by working for the future. Utopia is no longer an impossible or unrealisable, but something attainable by conscious and sustained efforts over generations. The image of the ideal could be seen as real because "the utopian image was placed in future time and within the boundaries of European and German space."658 That change in consciousness is clearly indicated by the fact that, after the Aufklärers, utopias were set increasingly in the future. Before this such images were invariably cast in an unreal abstract world, in a remote past or place, in a golden age, a faraway island.

The idea that civilisation can improve has always existed: in the Renaissance, in the high Middle Ages and even in antiquity. But among educated Europeans of the nineteenth century, what we normally refer to as the belief in progress became pervasive. This idea of supposes that change for the better is attained incrementally by many small achievements. The Aufklärung represented one strand of this general European consciousness. What distinguished Aufklärers is that their "progress" develops the Ideal of Cultivation and poses spiritual goals rather than material ones. For the Aufklärer

657 TOS II, III, p.135.
658 PHT, FAT, pp.120-121.
659 Z, p.77.
660 NHSZ, p.86-87.
progress is not bigger or faster trains, but more virtue, art, knowledge, and wisdom. All of the imperfections of contemporary humanity can seem tolerable in the light of what is to come.

Nietzsche shares the Aufklärer outlook and believes progress is the realisation of an Ideal of Cultivation. He looks to continuous regulated development of humanity, initially through elevation of its spiritual life, but later through the more material processes of breeding whose purposes are nonetheless to produce a spiritual affect. The toleration of evil implicit in his doctrine of reform is again radically exaggerated, so that pain, suffering and hardship are necessary primers for the acquisition of almost any virtue. Those who consciously plan human destiny must coldly assume that the course plotted for mankind must inevitably entail untold injustice and suffering for many, before the desired result is attained.

In metaphysics, Nietzsche’s urgent need to defy becoming is reflected in his formulation of the idea of the eternal return which unites being and becoming. In politics it is reflected in his emphasis on the importance of enduring social structures: those that weather the vicissitudes of history. We must favour civilisations that last the longest because “…duration is a first-rate value on earth…” What makes a stable social organisation necessary is that fact that genius, the most valuable thing of all, is a brief incandescence. The individual genius lives and passes on but if there is no society to preserve the impress of his actions they are lost forever and he may as well have not existed. Society alone can preserve the memory of genius, and memory is the medium that alone preserves value.

Nietzsche’s great problem is that epochs of high culture are as short-lived as the lives of geniuses. Periods of invention and brilliance are almost always succeeded by decadence. The Greeks and the Renaissance show that when exhaustion follows even former accomplishments are threatened: “What does the Renaissance prove? That the reign of the individual has to be brief. The squandering is too great; the very possibility of collecting and capitalising is lacking; and exhaustion follows immediately. These are times when everything is spent, when the very strength is spent with which one collects, capitalises, and piles riches upon riches…” The survival of culture depends on a society that can secure and incorporate the remains of brilliance, as an investment for a future when high achievement again becomes possible.

But attachment to duration, which must surely degenerate into unthinking veneration of tradition, also retards development and shackles genius. Change would have to occur if the system were to survive, but it would have to be accomplished without undermining the higher objectives. Nietzsche acknowledges that no outstanding cultural epoch can be sustained at its highest levels for any duration, individuals and nations in periods of mediocrity can labour in good conscience in preparation for those to come. An individual may never live to see the effects of his actions. The greater part of history consists in difficult, protracted preparations that are finally justified by brief flames of culture. Change has to be managed so that it does not damage the sense of continuous purpose in a society dedicated to the Ideal of Cultivation.

This is something difficult to accomplish in a world restless with haste and obsessed with novelty “…what is dying out is the fundamental faith that would enable us to calculate, to promise, to anticipate the future in plans of such scope, and to sacrifice the future to them - namely the faith that man has value and meaning only insofar as he is a stone in a great edifice; and to that end he must be solid first of all, a ‘stone’…” A base of enforced mediocrity must be created that can always exist in spite of internal and external threats. In antiquity, in spite of the brilliance of the Greeks, only the empire of Romans was able to promise such a base and in modern times only the system implemented by Napoleon could have yielded the same promise. Unfortunately, according to Nietzsche, Rome’s great edifice was brought down by Christianity and barbarism, and Napoleon’s by the Germans.

Nietzsche’s reforming disposition is informed by Prussian history, where change is implemented time and again - often with great success - by princes and bureaucrats, and seldom by the masses. The Prussian state managed change more carefully than in any other European nation, always with an eye to preventing ungovernable eruptions of social forces. Prussian intellectuals were used to seeing a few powerful officials reshape the economy or state, not least because officialdom was the most progressive element in that state. The natural timidity of these intellectuals (their aversion to revolution seemingly justified by the violent excursions of the French revolution) led to a preference for slow, imperceptible mining of the state’s foundation, and made them instinctive Fabians. Many Aufklärers like Schiller, who had initially blessed the revolution, recanted after hearing of the atrocities and looked on mass eruptions with fear and suspicion.

Nietzsche’s contempt for the events of 1789 is deepened by his contempt for the "modern ideas", in whose name they were staged and led him to tar all revolutions with the same brush. Since revolution implies that authority is overthrown from below it is the inevitable recourse of the desperate against the privileged. This runs counter to his reflex to favour the privileged before hearing from the other.

666 PHI, PAT, pp 119-120.
667 FEI, p 88.
668 TUS, EGP, p 9.
side. Native conservatism is strengthened by early life-experiences. Nietzsche’s father did not live to influence his son directly, but was apparently devastated that Friedrich Wilhelm IV, after whom his son was named, was forced by the revolutionaries of 1848\textsuperscript{669} to drive around Berlin with a cockade in his hat. The son’s antipathy to direct action was abetted by a household of conservative women. He had his own opportunity to hear of and regret revolutionary action during the Paris commune of 1871 when it was reported, falsely, that the Louvre had been burned down. His immediate response was a sorrowful lament that a few minutes of vandalism could arbitrarily destroy the great work of ages.

In his middle period Nietzsche devotes many passages to denouncing the continuing appeal of revolution among contemporaries. It was, he argues, the revolutionary spirit of Rousseau that undermined the reforming and fundamentally constructive programme of "enlightenment". Rousseau’s idealism inspired political dreamers to overthrow all order in the belief that a beautiful humanity would arise from under the carapace of civilisation. This superstition justified the violence of destructive people. Enlightenment became bound to this violent and abrupt sensibility, and as a result it too became violent and abrupt. It no longer worked for liberation and progress but for tyranny and barbarism. By attaching to itself revolutionary doctrine it worked against itself. Had the reformist principles inherent in the movement been followed then "...enlightenment... if left to itself, would have pierced silently through the clouds like a shaft of light, long content to transfigure individuals alone, and thus only slowly transfiguring national customs and institutions as well."\textsuperscript{670}

This position is unchanged in Nietzsche’s later period and in 1887 he notes that the nineteenth century has progressed beyond the naive revolutionary ideals of the preceding hundred years. The stronger disposition toward realism and materialism among his contemporaries is, he believes, a good sign that reformism is gaining back its position. The nineteenth century has become "more and more decisively anti-idealistic, more concrete, more fearless, industrious, moderate, suspicious against sudden changes, antirevolutionary; more and more decisively the question concerning the health of the body is put ahead that of “the soul”: the latter being understood as a state consequent upon the former, and the former at the very least as a precondition of the health of the soul."\textsuperscript{671}

The predisposition to change by reform suggests the classical or great style that he associates with genius. In this mode power is applied to attain a certain end by the coldest and freest consciousness, with the longest and broadest perspectives of its effects. Having this form of “freedom” means you command and resist unnecessary compulsions; that you act always with moderation, with calm and deliberation. The genius of classical style eschews sudden change. Thus "... when perfect resoluteness in thinking and investigating, that is to say, freedom of spirit, has become a feature of character, it produces moderation of conduct: for it weakens avidity, attracts much extant energy for the furtherance of intellectual aims, and shows the semi-usefulness, or uselessness and danger, of all sudden changes."\textsuperscript{672}

**Comparative History and the Greeks**

To change culture, or create genius you need to understand how culture and genius arises. Since high culture can only be known from previous examples a science of culture must exist before a politics of cultivation, and it can never be anything other than a type of historiography. To predict the outcome of human actions you need the fund of examples that only history provides. Nietzsche arrived at these conclusions early in his life and they affected his decisions about how he was to lead his life. His life’s mission is to understand, by means of historical studies, the circumstances in which genius flourished or was diminished. In the composition of *The Birth of Tragedy* and more profoundly in notes during the period 1871-1873 he explicitly draws parallels between conditions for culture in ancient Greece and modern Germany. In the later period he reminds himself of this correlation when,

\begin{itemize}
  \item 670 TGS, EGP, p 10.
  \item 671 TGS, EGP, p 12.
  \item 672 TGS, EGP, pp 9-10.
  \item 673 GMB, 1:7.
  \item 674 HAH I, a474
\end{itemize}
asking “where has the plant man hitherto grown up most magnificently?”. He answers that “for this question the study of comparative history is necessary.” 675 This clearly echoes the Aufklärer archetype established in modern Europe by Machiavelli whose Discorsi drew models for contemporary political action through methodical study of Livy’s Republican Rome, his preferred culture-state. In Nietzsche’s case the importance of writing history is evident in the career he chose. As one endowed with a strong artistic impulse and keen to satisfy it in some way, he nevertheless chose to become a scholar, specialising in the science of reading and elucidating ancient texts. More noteworthy is that the object of his philological labours were Hellenic texts, the products of the civilisation he sees as the highest example of culture. His familiarity with these texts is intimate676 and he attaches unparalleled significance to what they tell him. “The Greeks are the chariot drivers of every subsequent culture"677. So much depends upon the development of Greek culture, since our entire Occidental world received its original impulse therefrom.678 That they are so distant is immaterial. Even its ruins provide us with the means to understand modern realities. Simply by observing the process by which the Greeks achieved their culture we moderns may be able to accomplish the same: “Greek antiquity provides the classical set of examples for the interpretation of our entire culture and its development. It is a means for understanding ourselves, a means for regulating our age - and thereby a means for overcoming it."679 In some sense, most of Nietzsche’s work is a commentary on or rewriting of history, an observation not lost on his respected colleague at Basel, Jacob Burckhardt, who once remarked to Nietzsche that “fundamentally of course you are always teaching history.”680

Burckhardt and Hypollite Taine, two contemporaries with whom Nietzsche believes he shares close intellectual kinship (normally professing preference for the company of the expired) were among the foremost historians of his century. He makes this feeling clear in two letters sent to Taine and Burckhardt on 20 and 22 September 1886 respectively, along with copies of his recent book, Beyond Good and Evil. The letters declare the respect he has for them and the intellectual ties he believes they share. He actually mentions Burckhardt to Taine saying: “Den Allerwenigsten jedenfalls, den wirklichen Räthselrathern, den historischen “Zeichendeutern”. Dabei dachte ich zum Beispiel an meinen verehrten alten Freund Jakob Burckhardt in Basel; nehmen Sie es wohlwollend auf, hochverehrter Herr, daß ich dabei auch an Sie gedacht habe, dessen Muth, Feinheit, Ausdauer und geistige Umfänglichkeit innerhalb unsres zweifelsüchtigen Europas zu den bestbewiesenen Thatsachen gehört.”681

Despite the coolness with which Burckhardt treated him, Nietzsche is certain he is pursuing a similar line of research. Burckhardt was one of the profoundest living scholars of the Italian Renaissance and Greek antiquity, and Nietzsche undoubtedly owed much of his historical education to the older man.

In the letter of 22 September Nietzsche confesses that “Ich kenne Niemanden, der mit mir eine solche Menge Voraussetzungen gemein hätte wie Sie: es scheint mir, daß Sie dieselben Probleme in Sichte bekommen haben. - daß Sie an den gleichen Problemen in ähnliche Weise laborieren, vielleicht sogar stärker und tiefer noch als ich, da Sie schwiegersamer sind. Dafür bin ich jünger... Die unheimlichen Bedingungen für jedes Wachsthum der Cultur, jenes äußerst bedenkliche Verhältniß zwischen dem, was "Verbesserung" des Menschen (oder geradezu "Vermenschlichung") genannt wird, und der Vergrößerung des Typus Mensch, vor Allem der Widerspruch jedes Moralbegriffs mit jedem wissenschaftlichen Begriff des Lebens - genug, genug, hier ist ein Problem, das wir glücklicher Weise, wie mir scheint, mit nicht gar Vielen unter den Lebenden und Todten gemein haben dürften.”682 He sees Burckhardt as a researcher into the nature of culture like himself: wishful thinking perhaps for although the aloof and ironic older man shared the younger’s Ideal of Cultivation, he was by no means an activist and did not conduct his investigations in order to guide reforms.

The Vehicles of Spiritual Reform

Spiritual reform requires that we study history before we act. It begins with the luminary, the master, the teacher, the genius divulging new thoughts to disciples to pass them on to laymen who, once exposed, adopt new ways of living. It is individuals who must be transformed rather than institutions, and preferably persons of influence like princes, bureaucrats and businessmen. These inhabit the

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674 TGS, EGP, pp.10-11.
675 WP, p.717.
676 loc. cit.
677 WP, p.718.
678 WP, p.717.
679 TGS, EGP, p.11.
681 TGS, EGP, p.15.
682 loc. cit.
world of ideas and actions, can reshape institutions and widen the circle of influence, leading to more material changes in the organisation of the state, institutions, customs, laws and so on all in accordance with the ideas of the luminary.

In Germany this idea of spiritual reform is in sympathy with the personal Ideal of Cultivation and the cosmopolitan Kulturstaat. The inward Ideal of Cultivation turning itself outward confers on the external world its own etherealised character. Inordinately optimistic about the power of ideas, German intellectuals of the eighteenth century thought that they could seduce the powerful and never raise a finger in anger. A poem, a lecture at the podium, a sermon from the pulpit, a book, a play, all these could change the fate of millions when a big man listens. When princes are altered, the rest follows. The majority of the Aufklärers were communicators by profession: teachers, academics, pastors, writers, artists, critics and so on. And in a land where the pulpit had ostensibly launched the greatest revolutions - Luther's most particularly - it was not difficult to deny the notion had legs. To change the world you didn't need to harangue a parliament, or build barricades, simply present your opinions consistently and interminably through education, science, literature, and art.

Would Nietzsche have written a word if he did not think he could sway the world? In Ecce Homo he claims his books are "fishhooks", written to snare others, not it is to be admitted, the masses, but individuals capable of appreciating and disseminating his ideas. But if he feels that "individuals are the bridges upon which becoming depends"; they also have to be giants - giants of vocation: not as doctors, firemen, or plumbers, rather as geniuses of culture: artists, philosophers, statesmen, teachers... When we look at its vocational substance it is evident that genius in itself is nothing more than an embodiment of the spiritual reformer himself. The genius of culture communicates through words, books, sounds or artefacts and impresses his ideas and feelings upon others. In Nietzsche's work the influence of genius justifies all human existence, wherein "every human being... only has dignity insofar as he is a tool of the genius, consciously or unconsciously...".

That anyone can be acted on by genius is predicated on the fact that "...every individual is affected by an overall philosophical justification of his way of thinking and living...". When you reshape a person's justification for living, you transform them inwardly, and thus, outwardly as well. But Nietzsche also considers a strategy more in keeping with the organic or republican model of the culture state. This holds that a virtue can be bred in us by enacting laws or promoting morality that affect the way we conduct our lives. Morality, as an external force, molds the inner life so that eventually the desired virtue begins to mature and grow internally of its own volition; essential if a morality is not to decline into empty ritual. The more communal approach of "law-giving moralities" is reckoned by Nietzsche to be "the principle means of fashioning man according to the pleasure of a creative and profound will, provided that such an artist's will of the first rank has the power in its hands and can make its creative will prevail through long periods of time, in the form of laws, religions, and customs."

During the middle and later periods, he begins to argue that changing our nature depends on creating the material circumstances in which a preferred virtue can flourish. This did not however replace his unconscious obsession with spiritual reform, notably evident in his call for a "revaluation of all values". Gestures at materialism do not represent a revolution and throughout his life, he analysed, criticised and polemised against artists, writers, philosophers, religions for holding certain values. Seldom did he give general attention to the political and religious institutions that embodied them and when he does, it is more often in his private correspondence than in his published work. His ideas of spiritual reform coincide with three vocational possibilities that continually preoccupy him during his life: namely the artist, the scholar or educator and the philosopher. Nietzsche embraced or - in the case of artist - secretly longed to embrace each of these vocations at all stages of his life.

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683 TGS, EGP, p. 16.
684 WP, p.2729.
685 TGS, EGP, p. 17.
686 TGS, EGP, p. 18.
687 TLES, PAT, p.92. See also SSW, PAT, p.139. ‘With his demand that philosophers occupy the throne, Plato expressed a thought which was formerly feasible: he hit upon the notion after the time when it could be realised had passed.’
Art was Nietzsche's earliest interest. A capable musician and adequate composer, it was in poetry and literary style that he was most accomplished. He strove to make each of his books works of art as well as of scholarship or philosophy. His teacher at the University of Leipzig, Ritschl, remarked on his tendency to plan his philological essays "like a Paris romancier." His favourite work at the end of his productive life, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, was also the one in which he had come closest to fully satisfying his poetic instincts.

Obsession with the importance and influence of art was deepened by association with Wagner, who combined artistic success with powerful political instincts and ethical objectives. Wagner's artistic prowess was like a magnet, drawing the intellectually akin into a movement that could eventually spread and regenerate German culture. Eagerly boarding the maestro's bandwagon the young Nietzsche himself dedicated a good portion of the *Birth of Tragedy*, to inciting Germans to follow the examples suggested by Wagner's art.

Understanding the younger Nietzsche's intentions in writing the *Birth of Tragedy* shows us how attached he is to the notion of reform through art. Ostensibly a philological investigation of the origins of Greek tragedy the book rapidly degenerates into a commentary on the condition of German culture, with the Greeks providing the higher example. Throughout the work he draws stated and unstated parallels between the moral condition of the Greeks and modern Germans on the assumption that music and theatre were the centre of Greek ethical life; that the profoundest ideas for living were contested on the Greek theatre; and that the Greek theatre determined what happened in the *polis*.

If this seems overstated, consider this passage, which discusses the effect of Euripides drama on the Athenians: "... Civic mediocrity, on which Euripides built all his political hopes, was now given a voice, while heretofore the demigod in tragedy and the drunken satyr, or demiman, in comedy, had determined the character of the language. And so the Aristophanean Euripides prides himself on having portrayed the common, familiar, everyday life and activities of the people, about which all are qualified to pass judgement. If the entire populace now philosophised, managed land and goods, and conducted lawsuits with unheard-of circumspection, he deserved the credit, for this was the result of the wisdom he had inculcated in the people." 689

In eighteenth and to a lesser degree in nineteenth century Germany, this would not seem as absurd as it might today. The optimism that theatres and concert halls could slowly change the spiritual life of a nation was shared by Lessing and wholly accepted by Schiller and his generation. It was Schiller, after all, who advised Prince Friedrich Christian "that a theory of aesthetics is not so remote from the need of the present time as it may seem, and that the subject even deserves the attention of the political philosophers since any radical improvement of a nation must start with the ennobling of the character, and this under the guidance of the beautiful and the dignified." 690

Schiller thought nations could be ennobled by the example of theatre and literature. Although a somewhat tendentious poet, he didn’t see the stage simply as a pulpit in the way Bernard Shaw used it, but hoped it might become a school for feelings. Exposure to beautiful examples in theatre provides more effective moral training than argument or reasoning. It refines the sensibilities of the public and transforms them into ethically superior individuals. Nietzsche, generally pessimistic about modernity, observes that in contemporary Germany "using the theatre as an institution for the moral education of the people, still taken seriously in Schiller's time, is already reckoned among the incredible antiques of a dated type of education." Yet Schiller's aesthetic optimism is in evidence throughout the *Birth of Tragedy*. For example, Nietzsche's famous distinction between Apollonian and Dionysian art poses essentially different ways of feeling that can underpin cultural activity. He places enormous importance on the effect of music, crediting it with being the foundation of tragic theatre, and therefore of an entire way of living. Likewise it is Wagner the musician whom he considers most capable of leading Germans to moral greatness, not Wagner the philosopher.

Two separate ideas about the relationship between art and politics occur in Nietzsche's work and represent different understandings of spiritual reform. The first, *art as an agent of spiritual change*, is evident in the *Birth of Tragedy* and diminishes in importance during the middle period, while the second, *art as the formal drive*, becomes more noticeable in the later period.

689 EH, III. 2.
690 BT, a11.
692 BT, a22. Cf. PHT, PAT, p. 105, where he notes that "Pericles speaks of the Athenian festivals, of beautiful and costly domestic furnishings, the daily sight of which cheers away gloom. We Germans suffer greatly from this gloomy disposition. From the influx of beauty and great ideas, Schiller hoped for a secondary effect in the realm of moral elevation - a moral by-product of aesthetic elevation. Conversely, Wagner hopes that the moral powers of the Germans will one day be turned to the realm of art and will demand seriousness and dignity in this realm as well..."
693 TP, PAT, p.16.
**Idea 1 - Art as an agent of spiritual change**

The idea of art as an agent of spiritual change is related to the theme of conscious-illusion or the "holy lie" that appears in all Nietzsche's work and supposes that a horizon of myth or illusion has to surround a culture in order for it to flourish. In naïve cultures religion provides the myths, in higher cultures such as that of Hellenic antiquity, art provides it. Nietzsche considers that the myths constructed by Greek tragedians healed, protected and reconciled competing forces within the polis. “Art masters ecstasy and the formal drive” in a people and harmonises impulses which, if left unguided, would lead to chaos and the collapse of society.

A central thesis of the *The Birth of Tragedy* is that artistic myths were destroyed by an unguided drive for scientific knowledge, which with its naïve optimism that truth may be found, endangers myth and strips culture of what it needs. When it is realised that truth is a fiction, the final result of the unbounded pursuit of knowledge is nihilism. For the purpose of living “art is more powerful than knowledge, because it desires life, whereas knowledge attains as its final goal only - annihilation”

The immense schism between values and knowledge, between wisdom and science, between the artistic drive and the knowledge drive proves that it is “impossible to build a culture upon knowledge.” The superior Hellenic culture degenerated into Alexandrian culture precisely because the Greeks allowed the knowledge drive to dominate.

Comparisons made between ancient and modern civilisation in the *Birth of Tragedy* allow us to glimpse into the political mind of the younger Nietzsche. Firstly he equates Hellenism, or artistic culture, with the influence of aristocracy on the polis and scientific optimism, or Alexandrianism, with the influence of democracy. In modern terms, art is for the ancien régime with which he is in sympathy, and science for liberal democracy, which he detests. In notes made while writing the book, he observes that it was the tyrants - Cleisthenes, Periander, and Peisistratus, who had promoted tragedy as popular entertainment in Athens, while Solon, the democrat, desired moderation and had a great antipathy to tragedy. The real culprit in the swing from one type of valuation to the other though is Socrates, with whom he credits the destruction of tragic drama, especially by way of his influence on Euripides. This changed the way tragedies were performed and understood. Through Euripides the deep tragic view of the earlier theatre was replaced by Socrat's rationalist viewpoint. In the long run the philosopher's influence was to destroy the naive impartiality of ethical judgement, promote dialectical verbiage and loquaciousness, wrench the individual from his historical bonds, and even eventually annihilate the science that was the great strength of Alexandrian culture.

This passage from the Birth of Tragedy shows how he sees this process taking place:

"Now we must not hide from ourselves what is concealed in the womb of this Socratic culture: optimism, with its delusion of limitless power. We must not be alarmed if the fruits of this optimism ripen - if society, leavened to the very lowest strata by this kind of culture, gradually begins to tremble with wanton agitations and desires, if the belief in the earthly happiness of all, if the belief in the possibility of such a great intellectual culture changes into the threatening demand for such an Alexandrian earthly happiness, into conjuring up of a Euripidean deus ex machina. Let us mark this well: the Alexandrian culture, to be able to exist permanently, requires a slave class, but with its optimistic view of life it denies the necessity of such a class, and consequently, when its beautifully seductive and tranquilising utterances about the "dignity of man" and the "dignity of labour" are no longer effective, it gradually shifts towards a dreadful destruction. There is nothing more terrible than a class of barbaric slaves who have learned to regard their existence as an injustice, and now prepare to avenge, not only themselves, but all generations. In the face of such threatening storms, who dares to appeal with any confidence to our pale and exhausted religions, the very foundations of which have degenerated into scholarly religions? Myth, the necessary prerequisite of every religion, is already paralysed everywhere, and even in this domain the optimistic spirit, which we have just designated as the germ of destruction in our society has attained the mastery."

Here he draws a strict parallel between the fate of Alexandrian scientific culture and modern Germany. In antiquity slaves enabled an elite to practice cultivation. In modern Germany the working classes do the same. The Hellenic Greeks employed art and myth to establish and equilibrium between the free and the slaves and to convince both classes that this social arrangement was natural and appropriate. The Alexandrian period too needed a leisure class to pursue its science and scholarship but the nihilistic rationalism unleashed by Socrates destroyed the old values. As a result slaves could consider themselves oppressed and even equal to freemen. The effect was to overturn the productive foundation of high culture and thus even science met its end as barbaric slave values gained ascendency. Now the same thing is happening because of modern scientific optimism, where the working class, bereft of the consolations of Christianity, are rising against their masters.

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693 SSW, PAT, p.138.
694 SSW, PAT, pp. 136-137.
695 BT, a18.
696 SSW, PAT, pp. 138-139.
697 TP, PAT, p.29.
698 TP, PAT, p.66.
699 TPT, PAT, p.66.
Elsewhere the artistic spirit is given more constructive effect than merely maintaining the status quo. In that critical period in Greek antiquity between the defeat by the Greeks of the Persian invasion and the start of the Peloponnesian wars, he observes a marked tendency toward centralisation. The emphasis on the culture of the polis, in which myth and tragic art played the crucial role, kept the Greek peoples fragmented and hostile to each other. The Persian wars briefly united them, but gave greater power to Athens and Sparta who then entered a struggle for empire over all the Greeks. Had not the Persian wars interrupted their natural development union could have been achieved through “spiritual reform” and pan-Hellenic tragedy. This would have led to an even higher type of culture than before. “I think”, he says, “that if had not been for the Persian wars, they would have hit upon the idea of centralisation through spiritual reform...The important thing in those days was the unity of festival and cult; likewise it is here that the reform would have began. The thought of a panhellenic tragedy: an infinitely more fertile power would then have developed...” Again parallels can be drawn with the recent unification of the Germans by the military success of Prussia rather than through centralisation by “spiritual reform”; a lamentable event for Nietzsche, for it meant the imposition of a rigid Prussian state-culture over the whole nation.

**Idea 2 – Art as the formal drive**

In the middle period, following the break with Wagner, the emphasis on art as an agent of spiritual change diminishes, partly out of embarrassment at his previous excesses. He even questions the viability of art as a substitute religion or “holy lie” and doubts its influence at all in the present, questioning the “right...[of] our age to give an answer to that great question of Plato’s as to the moral influence of art? If we even had art, - where have we an influence, any kind of an art-influence?” In other sections of Human All Too Human he even questions the continued spiritual relevance of art, implying that its decline might actually portend its replacement by a higher form of spirituality. 

While not abandoning the axiom that “our salvation lies not in knowing, but in creating!” he is better disposed toward science, thinking of it as a preparatory stage for a higher type of creativity: “compared with the artist, the appearance of the scientific man is actually a sign of a certain damming-up and lowering of the level of life (-but also of strengthening, severity, hardness will to power).” Art is no longer a vehicle for reform, but the actual process and object of political change: the formal drive through which power is self-consciously applied. All human activity that obeys this principle may be termed art. As an undeveloped note in the Will to Power suggests: “the work of art where it appears without an artist, e.g. as body, as organisation (Prussian officer corps, jesuit order). To what extent the artist is only a preliminary stage. The world as a work of art that gives birth to itself.” The self-perfecting individual (the artist of personality) and the artist who shapes material, words, sounds, pigments and so on, are preparing the way for the higher artist of all, the artist philosopher or artist-statesman who wishes to work and form humanity itself.

For the later philosopher the tragic artist does not so much heal but justify life and is therefore still a spiritual activist in some sense. The profundity of the tragic artist now lies in the fact that his aesthetic instinct “surveys the more remote consequences, that he does not halt short-sightedly at what is closest to hand, that he affirms the large-scale economy which justifies the terrifying, the evil, the questionable - and more than merely justifies them.” Such a spirit may be needed to teach people to endure life without comforts, but more pressingly by even greater artists, the great legislators of Nietzsche’s new Europe: “those with a genius for organisation, who possess the courage to make plans that encompass the distant future, who would undertake projects that would require a thousand years for their completion.”

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696 HAH I, a212.
697 cf. HAH I, a222 and a223.
698 TP, PAT, p. 33.
699 WP, a316.
700 WP, a796.
701 WP, a816.
702 WP, a2796.
703 See WP, a795: “The artist-philosopher. Higher concept of art. Whether a man can place himself so far distant from other men that he can form them? (-preliminary exercises: (1) he who forms himself, the hermit; (2) the artist hitherto, as a perfecter on a small scale, working on material.)”
704 WP, a54.
705 OR, a356.
18 - Spiritual reform through education

Shaping ideals and habits through common instruction, is perhaps the most effective vehicle for spiritual reform acknowledged and promoted by Nietzsche. Inevitably so, because it invokes the Ideal of Cultivation itself. The culture-politician must inevitably have ideas about who in a polity should be educated, and whether this should be publicly or privately paid and administered.707

Two Educational ideals: Scholar-official and Warrior-gentleman

The aim of every polity is that the educated will confirm and further its interests. Guiding educational practice is the model of what the best citizen might be. Pedagogy is enlisted to produce such creatures either by teaching them virtues needed to support the political order, or by training them in vocations that enable the polity to function sweetly. Such training reflects the material character of the polity and the range of vocational possibilities that it permits. The cosmopolitan empire and the republican city-state produce different conceptions of the Ideal and politics of cultivation in keeping with differences in political organisation, which is also reflected in their preferred vocational models. In the crudest sense the model consistent with the cosmopolitan ideal of culture is the scholar-official, and with the republican ideal, the warrior-gentleman.

The Scholar-official

The vocation ideal of the scholar-official occurs in large cosmopolitan empires: in Hellenistic Greece, imperial Rome, Byzantium, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Catholic church throughout its history, and perpetuates the even more ancient vocation of the scribe. The scribe is the ancestor of the scholar. Scholarship cannot begin until something is written down. Likewise, bureaucracy cannot begin until records can be kept. The bureaucrat or official whether of a royal court, or a religious order (remember that offices have often been held by priests and associated with sacred duties) invariably has had scribal training. To produce the scholar or an official you must subject him to literary learning since he would be unthinkable outside of a world of manipulable symbols, records of transactions, knowledge and discoveries, codified laws, and written commands. It is his virtuosity in manipulating symbols, in learning, that he becomes a scholar and thereby gains access to a separate domain of power, alongside that of the warrior who wins his dominance by means of the sword.708

Scribal training and bureaucratic administration permit the career choices of scholarship and administration. The scholar and the official are the two ends of a continuum. The capable manipulator of symbols can choose a vocation adapted to the vita activa or the vita contemplativa, or somewhere in between. If he chooses the first he becomes an official; if he chooses the latter he becomes a scholar. The official is occupied with the tasks of administration in imperial or public service, while the scholar can drop out, turn inward and lead a monastic existence, fully immersed in composing and elucidating texts, or in disputing over them. Often enough individuals can do both as occurs in well-springs civilisations: in Mesopotamia, Egypt and the Indus valley and in China. In all these bureaucratic civilisations there were significant scholars who were also high-ranking administrators.

The scholar-official has an intrinsic belief in the power of education since it from this that he derives influence and prestige. When only a few are literate those who read and write have social advantage. The scholar-official has a natural inclination to value hierarchical meritocracy, and to believe that his social and organisational rank is determined by his own capacity. He is doing something that most would think rare and difficult. He prides himself on his intelligence and capacity as opposed to an aristocratic ranking based on blood and inheritance. Clearly this outlook would appeal to talented plebeians, and historically, bureaucracies have inducted members of the lowest classes with scribal training. It is not incidental that Nietzsche designates the scholarly vocation as essentially plebeian, though he makes this point for other reasons than to observe a general historical pattern.709

The vocational model of the scholar-official does not appear in the west until the power of the Greek city-states had withered and bureaucracies began to form in the Hellenistic kingdoms that succeeded them. This is when scholar-officials began to gather in centres of power as advisors, religious functionaries and administrators, not as a highly structured caste as occurred in Egypt and other eastern civilisations, but as an oftentimes meritocratic vocation. In clear parallel there was an unprecedented expansion of scholarship and science in this same period, which Nietzsche refers to

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707 That even autodidactism can be seen to effect political change is evident in the attitude of the cosmopolitan Aufklärers, who believed that an enfranchisement of learning, with individuals working alone or through scholarly fraternities to increase their knowledge, would raise the general level of the political body and ensure its slow and imperceptible amelioration no matter what form of constitution it may have.

708 The scholar’s power is by no means the greater. The power of the secular authority whom he serves is always assured by violence and he works in a superstructure above this foundation.

709 See BGE, a204.
constantly as Alexandrianism.

With the advance of the scholarly vocation intellectual fraternity also develops; the sociability that had been the basis of the earliest philosophical schools, the Pythagoreans and then the post-Socratic Peripatetics, Academics, Epicureans and Stoics was formalised in a way that was beyond mere philosophical allegiances. Not only was publically funded schooling introduced for the first time, but institutions of learning were established and patronised by central authorities.

The most famous of these, like the Museum at Alexandria, founded by the Ptolemys (c.280 BC) and later funded by Roman emperors provided libraries and scribes that enabled communities of scholars to theorise and dispute in monastic isolation. In pursuit of a personal and inward Ideal of Cultivation the scholar invests himself with a significance that a scribe could never know. Learning links him to nature's highest purpose. The more he knows the more he is virtuous, and indeed powerful. In a world freed of bonds to any polity other than an immense and shapeless empire the Republic of Scholars gives him a greater sense of community and place. In Hellenism this republic emerges with its own parties, laws, disputes, with individuals communing not only with contemporaries but with masters of all the centuries, who still live and argue in the scrolls of Hellenist libraries.

At the same time that monastic fraternities were forming the wandering scholar: the cosmopolitan savant who travels from city to city to meet and converse with other scholars, enters the pages of history. Subsisting only on the virtuosity of his intellect, and handing on the torch of learning wherever he can, he never really departs from the west thereafter. Although scarce for a while during the period of early Christianity, he reappears all the more ostentatiously in the Renaissance and becomes the foundation for western humanism from Petrarch until Erasmus.

In late antiquity the vocations of official and scholar were sustained by the Byzantine Empire and were adopted and perpetuated by the Christian churches, the only other organisation able to support continuously stable bureaucracies until nation states formed in the early modern period. The same active and contemplative possibilities were available; scholars could enter the church hierarchy and lead an active administrative life, or could retreat to the Christian monastery or the universities that were rising up in the 12th century. Under the aegis of the church learning was less a cultivating force than an accessory to worship, but it provided many with a living they might not otherwise have found. If it resulted in a lower order of scholarship it did provide all the preconditions for an Ideal of Cultivation to emerge later on.

Civilisations where the scholar-official dominates do not necessarily produce an Ideal of Cultivation. But once they do the politics of cultivation that arises inevitably acquires the character of scholar-officials, as occurred when the ideal re-emerged during the Renaissance and German Enlightenment.

The Warrior-gentleman

The vocational model of the warrior-gentleman is older than that of the scribe and precedes civilisation itself. Its existence is predicated on an elite, an aristocracy, whose justification and duty is warfare and political leadership. Historically it is associated with compact and dynamic power-centres: in antiquity with the city-states of Greece and republican Rome, that is, with the pre-imperial phases of those peoples' development; in medieval and early modern Europe, with the courts of Provence, the city-states of Italy and later the emerging territorial states such as England and France, all of whom had escaped for some time from either the direct hegemony of the cosmopolitan Holy Roman Empire, or the Catholic church. The basis of power with this perennial type is evidently not virtuosity in manipulating symbols but in bearing arms. The mode of education associated with it has never been strictly literary. Nor has it been merely martial.

Warrior classes invariably sublimate their conduct beyond the violence that sustains their power, to chivalric refinements, courtly manners and artistic and intellectual accomplishments.

Unlike the scholar-official, the gentleman, who is descended from the warrior, treats learning for itself as simply another aspect of cultivation, alongside refinement of sensibility and the exercise of the body. The education of the scholar-official is inherently specialist (deeper learning and subtlety like the focusing of bureaucratic function leads inevitably to specialisation, hierarchy and complexity) but the gentleman's education emphasises general knowledge and methods in order to master all situations in life. Diletantism does not reflect incapacity but is positively valued. In pre-Hellenistic Greece, where the educational foundations of the warrior-gentleman are first fully explored and paideia - the characteristic Greek Ideal of Cultivation arises, all faculties: body, intellect, and virtue are harmoniously developed. The first major Ideal of Cultivation to arise in the west therefore did not originate in a scribal milieu but in one where a class of warrior-gentlemen dominated the production of values, ideas and literature. In the polis, literacy was not confined to a scribal class as occurred in the Near-East. Hence it is no accident that the pre-Socratic poets and philosophers responsible for the breathtaking innovations of Greek thought were seldom scribes, officials, or scholars, but free citizens, statesmen, and artisans involved in public life.
Unlike the scholar-official, the warrior-gentleman does not separate the *vita activa* from the *vita contemplativa*. Nor does he separate public and private engagement. His role can only be active and his actions can only be public in character. Outside of public service he may pursue private interests and pleasures but his entire orientation is to have some effect in the wider world. Once again the form of action he can take has two different modalities and this will depend on the kind of state that he inhabits: in this respect the warrior-gentleman can either be a courtier or a free-citizen.

The courtier is a creature of the centralised state: a monarchy, empire, dictatorship, it matters not. He is already high born, and attracted to the centre of power, the court, where he discovers public roles for himself through the personal relationships he arranges there. Kings, princes and dictators may surround themselves with favourites, but there must also be those who can get things done: those capable enough of conducting military campaigns, organising diplomatic missions, passing and implementing laws. The courtier must have the manners and grace that will enable him to thrive in the thin air of the court but also have the resources and character to manage affairs in the world. From the Middle Ages to Renaissance books are written to describe the virtues of the perfect courtier. None are more famous or influential than that of Castiglione (1478-1529). His prescriptions, designed for the courts of Italy, are eagerly recited to those presenting in the royal chambers of England and France.

The free citizen is a creature of the republican state. The republican state also has aristocrats but their character is shaped by the fact that they share their higher status with burghers, respected artisans or wealthy merchants and are more commercially minded than in courtly culture. While they continue to adopt virtues consistent with a warrior class they are democratised by dealing on equal terms with all classes and factions. The free citizen is to be found in oligarchic or democratic city-states: pre-Hellenistic Athens, republican Rome, and Florence before the Medici, where power is diffused and contested by many. His manners may not be as exquisite as that of the courtier but he knows how to win a crowd by the power of his rhetoric.

The courtier and the free-citizen lead public lives and their acts are the patriotic or self-interested works of private individuals. As a result, the warrior-gentleman is more partisan, more firmly rooted to locality, to blood ties and inheritance and although he undoubtedly displays strong elitist tendencies he is less concerned for special function and hierarchy. The duties of the scholar-official however are defined and circumscribed by office and can be fulfilled mechanically.

Because the role and material circumstances of the warrior-gentleman are spontaneous and less formalised they present different forms of intellectual fraternity and education. Learning is not a full time occupation but a leisureed activity. For the scholar-official the ancient library, monastery, or the medieval university (which retained much of its original character until at least the nineteenth century) is the centre of intellectual fraternity; that is to say, a long standing institution which outlive the reputations of individuals or groups. For the warrior-gentleman it is the court and the salon, which is sponsored by individuals and endure only for as long as the sponsorship permits. Under monarchy or tyranny, where the court is the centre of power and therefore of all other aspects of existence, money flows in from the tributaries of the nation and pours out again in the form of patronage for royal leisure and refinements. In close vicinity to the court, close to the vital money source, you find associations of musicians, painters, and poets, and more importantly a culture of discrimination among courtiers. The nature of this culture is unplanned and spontaneous; it flourishes in fragility, like vegetation around an oasis, on a single source and dies as quickly should it evaporate.

A wise tyrant needs military, diplomatic, and technological talent to support his survival, but he acquires and retains that talent in essentially unbureaucratic ways. In a salon sponsored by an aristocrat or wealthy burgher, association is informal. Participants gather occasionally to commune over artistic or intellectual matters, but most are otherwise engaged.

Learned societies, another type of intellectual fraternity arising in early modern Europe, started as spontaneous arrangements among gentlemen which were later being formalised to meet the demands of the modern state. The first societies to be established in 14th century Italy were for the purpose of furthering humanist studies by amateurs. By the seventeenth century however they were established to pursue knowledge for its own sake, almost as non-clerical monasteries. The first of these later societies was founded in Rome in 1601 precisely when the city-state ceased to have any vigour and the weight of Spanish, Papal and French domination had stripped it of its independence. In other words, gentlemen no longer preoccupied themselves with politics but rather with scholarship. The same drift occurred elsewhere for different reasons. Academies established in England and France in the same century copied the Italian example and were initially gatherings of learned gentlemen. Gradually they were taken over by professional scholars or the state itself. Thus what started as an association of warrior-gentlemen became formalised with the changing character of the state to become an institution for the scholar-official.

The indifference of warrior-gentlemen to formal cultural associations also applies to pedagogy and higher education. Although the warrior-gentleman is quintessentially public-spirited, it is ironic that
public education has seldom formed a part of his interests. Formal schooling is more frequently funded by the state in imperial phases of political development, i.e. when the model of the scholar-official predominates, than in the phases of civic republicanism. Neither Republican Rome at its most patriotic nor the pre-Hellenist polis (with the exception of totalitarian oddities like Sparta and Crete) nor the Italian city-states ever funded programmes of public education. Tuition was always a private arrangement for those who could afford it, namely the elite.

The pedagogical revolution of the Sophists in fifth century Greece and the practical education they promised to aspiring politicians was effected through private tuition. On the other hand public schooling did arise in Imperial Rome as it did in Hellenistic Greece, and we need only cite the millenial pedagogical involvement of the Church, with its far flung imperial bureaucracy, to see how firm this pattern appears to be. The church jealously guarded its dominance in public schooling in Europe until the territorial states (most of them also bent on imperial expansion) began to compete for this role in the nineteenth century. The Protestant churches, which lacked the wealth and infrastructure of Rome, began much earlier to cooperate with the secular state in public education, and their schools often became integrated into the state’s educational system.

So although the republican state prides itself on the distinction of its leaders and the greater involvement of its citizens in public affairs, it is always dominated by an aristocracy who can afford to prepare families for public distinction through private tuition, whereas the bureaucratic organisation - church or state - with its wider compass of functions has need for a diversity of scribes and officials and is often willing to take these from non-elite classes. It is the state that most needs the scholar-official, and that is most likely to give life to an intellectual class that entertains ideas of reform through education, even because that class owes its existence wholly and solely to some form of public education.

**Educational models in Germany**

Models of the warrior-gentleman and scholar-official exist alongside each other in most civilisations but at any time one tends to dominate. In Germany the picture is more complicated because in classical Weimar for example, aspects of both exist even in the same head, as occurred with Goethe, whose status was somewhere between courtier and bureaucrat. But it is the scholar-official who dominates German intellectual life, even though some level of court and salon culture persists into the nineteenth century. This occurs in spite of increasing republican and patriotic sentiment as German becomes a nation equipped with parliamentary institutions.

The early dominance of the scholar-official is partly because Germany was unable to develop a pervasive republican culture until the mid 19th century: something that might have occurred had German principalities been more genuinely independent from Medieval times. Unlike the Italian city-states, which at least threw off the Imperial yoke for a time, they nominally - even mythically - continued to accept the universal authority of the Holy Roman Empire until its destruction by Napoleon in 1806. Though an effective system of imperial control was never realised, German territories affected subordination to the leaders of this cosmopolitan agglomeration.

The rule by the Catholic Church in many ecclesiastical territories (even after the Reformation) provided another source of universalist bureaucratic administration. Complex social stratifications persisted in Germany that elsewhere had crumbling and vanished, and a stiffer and more unyielding hierarchy allowed great gulfs even among the nobility, with imperial lords (Reichstandschaft), for example, having Federal privileges and a territorial nobility (Landstandschaft) possessing merely local rights secondary to those of the princes. This did not deny aristocrats and evenburgers in the free cities like Frankfurt and the Hansa their familiar public roles, but the level and intensity of civic life was muted. In Catholic lands nobles gained status and independence within the church bureaucracy, but in Protestant principalities secular vocations in administration, military, and diplomacy were preferred to the lowly duties performed by the Protestant clergy. By the late eighteenth century a large segment of the German aristocracy was able to justify itself as a "useful" class working in the public service, something that contemporary French aristocracy could not have claimed. The difference was that, while they might have assumed that they were adopting the ancient career of the courtier, their sphere of action was more circumscribed than ever, being bound by the strictures of bureaucracy. Rather than furnishing a class of courtiers, German aristocracy provided the state's principle bureaucrats who, though advantaged by birth and education, still competed for their posts with literate burghers.

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71 This is not to say that smaller political units cannot be bureaucratic in character. Certainly the city-states of Mesopotamia were of this type.
German intellectual fraternity and political reform

To prepare aristocrats and low born functionaries for public service, an educational system was developed to give universities the final and primary responsibility. As normally occurs in scribal civilisation, the role of scholar and bureaucrat were interchangeable. From the early eighteenth century, universities commoned closely with the state, and academics went from teaching commitments to advisory positions in a ministry and back. It was rare for a major scholar not to have held a significant administrative position in the educational system itself, or the clergy, or in a ministry. This occurred so commonly in Germany that the idea of reform through education became the central pillar of Aufklärer activism, for the simple fact was that the ruling official class was constituted of and had been educated by professional scholars. The Aufklärer intellectual, invariably of bourgeois or humbler birth, could take heart in this since, even if he might never rule, his tutelage of those who did, brought him into the establishment. The question of political reform based on renovation of the educational institutions was a persistent theme of Aufklärer from Thomasius to Wolfit to Humboldt, each of whom had helped to implement new pedagogical systems. The Aufklärers justifiably believed that their teaching defined the social role of the nobility and warned it of the need for reform.712

In Germany, the university, with its close relations to government, was more central to intellectual fraternity than the salon. The Aufklärer found there employment, prestige and intellectual kinship. That the vast majority of German thinkers, poets and philosophers between 1760 and 1820 taught for at least some part of their careers at university attests to its importance. There were far fewer who did so in France and England. To say that the university was a nursery for political activism seems a banality to those who lived through the 1960’s, but we must recall that up until the mid-nineteenth century, Europe’s intellectuals were only occasionally teachers by vocation or had worked in universities. In this respect, provincial eighteenth century Germany anticipated a world-wide trend and permitted the university to acquire a reputation for nesting schemers and founders of movements. The conservative order that descended on the German-speaking world after Napoleon’s defeat was constantly disquieted by the provocations of the universities. With the enactment of the Carlsbad decrees in 1819 they were watched closely and student societies or Burschenschaften that had initiated mild nationalist agitations after their foundation in 1817 were banned.713

The suppression of the universities did not deny them influence on intellectual and political change. They remained important because the middle-sized provincial capitals of Germany could not support national intellectual institutions like those of cities like London or Paris. In England and France scientific and scholarly research was directed by the national academies and learned societies; in Germany this function was vested in universities. Although learned societies existed in larger German states like Prussia (a Society of Sciences after the English and French models was founded there with princely sponsorship in 1700) they did not command the direction of research or educational practice. To compensate for the lack of a national dimension in scholarly association, a new type of fraternity, the congress or conference, began after 1822 and etched itself into the German intellectual psyche.714

Conferences for doctors, scientists, classical philologists, schoolmasters, germanists, and orientalists, ostensibly served a professional need, since each discipline needed some form of unanimity about its agenda. In reality they were also political events where scholars could partake gingerly of the forbidden fruit of liberalism and nationalism. After the 1848 revolutions conservative reaction caused even congresses to be banned, but it could never prevent universities from harbouring the activists behind the liberal and nationalist movements.

University fraternity also supported the ethos of the wandering scholar. In this, as in all previous centuries, the vocation supports a nomadic lifestyle. In eighteenth century Germany, scholars travelled widely in search of employment. Peregrinations from one principality to another accustomed them to local differences and bulwarked cosmopolitan ideals. In the next century it had the opposite affect. Service in various states now encouraged sympathy for German nationhood, and made travelling scholars the bearers of the national idea, as they chose to proclaim what the German peoples had in common, rather than their differences. For this reason, nationalism in Germany was a scholarly movement long before it ever became a popular one.

In 18th century Germany the perception that the character and capacities of the nation could be shaped by interventions in the classroom, did not just occur to scholars. Even princes and their advisers were aware of the benefits and dangers that lurked there. State-sponsored actions to reform or curb teaching institutions at every level became commonplace by the end of the century and something that secular government had traditionally neglected now became an instrument of government. The notion of spiritual reform through education was now state policy. In Prussia a Secondary School Board, 

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712 Reill, op. cit., p. 73.
713 It was the Francusia Burschenschaft in Bonn which Nietzsche was to join and to resign from in short succession. Evidently he disapproved of the society’s preoccupation with boozing and whoring and its neglect of lofty ideals.
714 p. Hunton Thomas, op. cit.
subordinate to the Ministry of Finance, was created in 1787, enabling the state to wrest control of secondary education from the church. The University of Berlin, founded in 1810, became the first completely secular institution of tertiary education in Europe.\footnote{In fact, similar developments were occurring all over Europe, but the Protestant German states led the way in thoroughness. In Catholic principalities the battle between the state and the formidable Catholic educational apparatus was more protracted, reaching new levels of intensity in the Kulturkampf of Bismarck’s time.}

Harnessing education to further national interest took another forward step after Prussia’s defeat by Napoleon at Jena.

Even the mediocre Frederick William III understood this much. He endorsed a proposal of professors seeking to replace the University of Halle that had been closed by Napoleon in 1806: "That is right! That is fine! The state must replace what it has lost in physical powers by intellectual ones."\footnote{Cited in James Bowen, A History of Western Education (3 vols), London, 1981, Vol III, p.259.} The call for educational reform was needed to equip a new generation of Prussians with technical and intellectual skills to advance the nation materially and to regenerate it morally.

Fichte’s patriotic exhortations pushed this second point interminably, though he went further than most contemporaries, even the Aufklärers, were prepared to go, by demanding comprehensive public education: "Education...", he declared, "has been brought to bear hitherto only on the very small minority of classes which are for this reason called educated, whereas the great majority on whom in very truth the commonwealth rests, the people, have been almost entirely neglected by this system and abandoned to blind chance. By means of education we want to mould the Germans into a corporate body, which shall be stimulated and animated in all its individual members by the same interest..."\footnote{Fichte, Third Address to the German Nation, tr. R. F. Jones, and G. H. Turnbull, 1922, p.9.}

Prussia gave particular priority to reforming its educational system and von Humboldt was assigned the task of implementing it. It was ironic that this arch-cosmopolitan Aufklärer should have been responsible for introducing an educational system, afterwards a model to Europe, designed to bulwark state corporatism. The fact that the doctrine of spiritual reform through education now existed as living practice made it eternally second nature to the German intelligentsia.

German scholars, seeing the state’s growing investment in education, and more than ordinary influence on the political culture of universities, believed that they were the authentic rulers of the nation. German politics is stamped and undersigned by the scholar’s conviction of superiority, for by virtue of his prowess in learning he deems himself master of the plebiate, above whom he has risen, and also the aristocracy whose inherited privileges he begrudges. Being the teacher of those who rule, he imagines that the task of ruling is really no different to the process of teaching and, having instructed the leaders, assumes that he too has the right to govern.

In Germany the ancient pretension of intellectuals embodied in Plato’s philosopher-king, finds a new innocence as the scholar dreams of a new Republic where he rules over all. None more qualified than the low-born, but ambitious Fichte could demand, beguilingly, "the necessary creation of the Republic of Scholars who, from among themselves, are to elect the sovereign ruler." Not halting at this frank espousal of scribal will to power he identifies explicitly the practice of educating with that of governing: "He [the sovereign ruler] will always be an elderly man but he has been thinking about the state during the whole of his life, about its ideas and its immediate relations in which this idea is realised. He knows the state and the things which must be done next. The senior government servants, the ministers, must also come from this highest sphere of intelligence. Planned education of the people and planned government are one and the same thing; legislation pronounces in accordance with those things to which the scholars educated the legislators. It also prepares a new education. They have already beforehand proved themselves the best educators of the people, and this gives them the right and the claim to govern the people as well. Therefore, the supreme ruler, too, can come only from this council of the highest educators of the people: they themselves have to elect him..."\footnote{Fichte is still the technocracy of the Schoolman, reeking of old books, but the Frenchman’s opens doors to the new and pungent odours of the laboratory.}

What Fichte expressed openly, was the tacit assumption of Germany’s scholars before and after, irrespective of their party or creed. But we should not exaggerate its uniqueness. The German philosopher simply suggests a national variation of the pan-European emergence of technocracy. A close contemporary in France, the socialist Saint-Simon for example, encourages a different style of technocrat by proposing a new society ruled by scientists and industrialists rather than university professors. Fichte’s is still the technocracy of the Schoolman, reeking of old books, but the Frenchman’s opens doors to the new and pungent odours of the laboratory.

The dominance of the scholar-official in Germany was balanced by the continuing vitality of salon culture in the 18th and even 19th centuries. It is perhaps ironic that in these highly bureaucratic states, private and courtly patronage should endure precisely when it had begun to diminish in England and France. The reason: in Germany there was not one large court, but hundreds, and they were not to relinquish hold of public finances to parliaments until the mid-19th century; the whim of a prince could always be counted on to secure finance for artistic or scholarly endeavours. A whim of the young prince of Weimar, Karl August, brought Goethe - then the spoiled son of a wealthy burgher family in the free city of Frankfurt, and renowned for nothing more than his verse - to be made

\footnote{Reiss, op. cit., p.122.}
finally, Minister of State: a more than favourable development in this poet's fortunate life. 719

Private salons were also important, and were sponsored by higher nobility and wealthy burghers, the latter not infrequently Jewish. In Berlin the salons of emancipated Jewish hostesses are no less supportive of Aufklärers than the court of Frederick himself. As expected, courtly culture promotes the ethos of the warrior-gentleman but borrows heavily on forms created by the French. It is the fate of this ethos in Germany that it is rarely expressed in native accents. If not the French, then eyes turned yearningly to the model of the Greek gentleman, the kalos kai agathos, to guide educational practice. Though pervasive, its existence in Germany seems artificial or forced: as an ideal superimposed on reality, rather than springing naturally and effortlessly from a material foundation. The nexus of the court with officialdom and the university was perhaps too tight and the gentleman could not avoid eating at the same table as the scholar.

The fact that Aufklärers of humble birth accepted the model of the warrior-gentleman in spite of its unnatural relation to their circumstances was reflected in the forms of pedagogy they recommended. They urged for the return to the classical Hellenic education rather than specialised vocational knowledge. Even the bureaucrats resisted simply technocratic training. Herder, who had been appointed General Superintendent in Weimar, which made him head of Protestant clergy in the state and therefore responsible for schools, pointed to this in his School Addresses, “We are men before we become members of a particular profession”, he warned, “and woe betide us if we do not remain men exercising this calling... It is not for his precious studies that a man should educate himself, but for life, for the use and application of his knowledge in all human situations and callings. What I learned as a theologian I try more and more to forget, and my office compels me to do so. Just because of that I am becoming a better tested man and more useful citizen.” 720

Although he proclaimed a pedagogy for doers and for citizens abounding in civic virtue, Herder actually favoured one more suitable for receptive and observant scholars and enlightened officials. The same affect can be seen in the reform of the Prussian educational system initiated by Von Humboldt, who explicitly made paideia the goal of education so as to raise the level of nobility and intelligence of those working for the state. Focusing on secondary and higher education, his reforms revitalised the teaching of ancient languages, which despite their foundation in Medieval legal practice and theology, were recast as a humanistic study of ancient republican virtue. The teaching of Greek, which had not been widespread, was a priority. In the same Hellenophilic spirit secondary level academic schools, considered a preparatory stage for further university studies, were renamed Gymnasia, and at the universities, whose principle purpose was to prepare students to join the bureaucratic elite, vocational training was actively scorned. Alongside the teaching of civic virtue, a larger component of mathematics was introduced at the secondary levels to cultivate in students a bureaucratic elite, vocational training was actively scorned. At bottom these reforms encouraged bourgeois children to help build and remodel the state. A pedagogy more appropriate to the warrior-gentleman was passed over the reality of a growing technocracy. As the century bore on, this technocracy served not just German government but also German business. The expansion of the commercial classes in power and numbers, with their need of specialist and technical vocations eroded the role of the classical education. Those teaching and learning paideia became an embattled enclave, resenting the lack of piety or respect which the new classes conferred on them and resented even their clumsy attempts to ape the forms of the classical education. Humanistic university departments such as philology and philosophy (in which the young Nietzsche was to work) had the strongest ethical investment in the pedagogy of paideia, and were the most embattled, for they saw themselves losing their role as instructors of the elite. In these departments ran the vehement belief that the nation’s virtues were imperilled and that reform could only be guided by a return to classical education. It was no accident that the concerns and methods of this enclave were the substance of Nietzsche’s life and work.

Nietzsche’s embrace of the scholarly vocation

Nietzsche’s politics of cultivation conforms completely with the type of German education we have described. He too superimposes the virtue of the warrior-gentleman over the ethos of the scholarly-official. His own life is an uneasy embodiment of both tendencies, but shows an emphatic drift from the sentiments of the scholar in his youth, to those of the gentleman in the later work.

719 The court of Weimar, remarkable in Europe, for the brilliant company of intellectuals who either served it (Wieland, Goethe, Herder) or were assembled in near vicinity (at Jena University, only a few miles from Weimar, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel had taught) illustrates this nexus. The university of Jena was primarily administered by the Weimar court, though neighbouring courts also had some hand in this. The careers of many intellectuals were sponsored by both the universities and the courts. Wieland, for example, was a professor at the University of Erfurt before he was brought to Weimar as a private tutor to Prince Karl August. and Schiller was a professor of history living for a time at Jena, but was mostly sponsored by aristocratic patrons. This pattern was repeated time and again.

The dominance of scholarly prejudices during his youth is not surprising, since despite his abiding interest in art, he remained as an unartistic scholar and educator until thirty-five years of age. Studying philology firstly at the University of Bonn and then Leipzig, and finally taking a professorship in this discipline at Basel in 1869 when he was twenty-four, he consciously and with deepest regret bade farewell to the possibility of an artist's life, perhaps suspecting that he might have lacked the necessary gifts for it. The decision to become a scholar was not an idle one and it did bear on his desire to engage in a politics of cultivation.

At first sight there is a preponderance of negative reasons over positive ones to draw him to this vocation. He found the idea of having to choose a career detestable, the more so as many possibilities were open to him, given that his interests were numerous and diffuse. It pained him to think of relinquishing many of them to follow a single path to the vita practica. As he notes in a letter to his mother while still at Pforta: "The decision as to what subject I shall specialise in will not come of its own accord... I happen to be in a position of possessing a whole host of interests connected with the most different branches of learning, and though the general gratification of these interests may make a learned man of me, they will scarcely convert me into a creature with a vocation. The fact therefore, that I must destroy some of these interests is perfectly clear to me... but which of them will be so unfortunate as to be cast overboard? Perhaps just the children of my heart."  

It was easy enough to omit what repelled him. It was easy to shun the path to the seminary that many of his immediate ancestors had trodden. When he began to study theology at the University of Bonn it was no more than obligation to a family tradition and the wishes of his mother, since his religious scepticism was already clear. It was also easy to refuse the vocations of bureaucrat, businessman and all other pursuits that were not sufficiently "cultivated", but from there the going was harder.

In thrall to the ideal of paideia, he finds it difficult to consider a vocation like scholarship, which demands one-sidedness in the domain of knowledge, and compromises harmonic development of body and intellect, something he imagines the Greeks mastered consummately. "The Greeks were no scholars," he tells Von Gersdorff in April 1867, "but neither were they brainless athletes... Sophocles... distinguished as he was in the domain of the spirit, was yet able to dance with grace and understood the art of playing at ball" - a marked contrast he feels, with the physical clumsiness of the modern scholar. However, he realises that choices he has already made have diminished his chances in other careers. In May 1868, he writes resignedly to his friend Rohde: "Here is no room for anxious self-examination: we simply must [become scholars], because we have before us no more suitable career, because we have closed the way for ourselves to other more useful positions..."  

If in the end his scholarly career is the result of eliminating other possibilities rather than following a strong urge, he believes that it does offer some consolations. Despite life-long diatribes against scholars he does allow a certain nobility in the vocation, in its rigour, in disciplined honesty that does not shrink from unpalatable truths. Though the unfortunate fate for every scholar is to specialise, he accepts this as a needed check on his unbridled Faustian thirst for knowledge.

Realising he cannot accomplish any sound or lasting achievement unless he narrows his focus, he sees in scholarly discipline a path to effectiveness. A discipline, any discipline, would serve to sharpen his wit and prevent him dissipating his energies. The opportunity for personal education that academic life permitted would also benefit in the longer term. If the younger Nietzsche suspects that he might leave the university eventually, it is still a path he can trod on to cultivate himself, so long as the drudgery could be endured. He listed a number of these practical benefits in the same letter to Rohde of May 1868, observing that: "We both approach this academic future without any exaggerated hopes. Still I think it possible that in the position of a professor one may acquire and maintain, firstly, adequate leisure for one's own studies, secondly a useful sphere of influence, finally a situation fairly independent both politically and socially."  

Obviously just any scholarly discipline would not suffice, and it was inevitable that he elect to study classical philology. This among a narrow range of possibilities, given the explosion of departmentation whose fragments confront us today had then only just ignited. While at Bonn, where he made his choice, the only serious competitor to philology was philosophy, as he had for a time considered taking subjects in this area. The interest in philology was raised in the first instance by his ability in Greek and Latin studies at the Gymnasium and it was natural to continue in an area where talent was manifest rather than in one where it wasn't (he had, for example, failed mathematics and was hardly inclined to undertake a mathematically based discipline).

The interest in the culture and history of antiquity reaches back to childhood. Lastly, most importantly, his concern for the Ideal of Cultivation almost commands that he obtain closer acquaintance with classical antiquity, and this could not be better obtained than through the science of
philology. In this aim he was fortunate in his teacher, Ritschl, whom he followed to Leipzig from Bonn and who was renowned for the methodical approach he brought to the study of texts. The intellectual rigour he desperately sought could thus combine with his deepest aims. There is something uncannily appropriate about it in view of his earnest attachment to the Ideal of Cultivation. Philology, the study and interpretation of texts, is perhaps the most ancient form of learning of the vocational scholar. From its extensive practice in Hellenistic civilisation, it became the queen bee of western humanism, laying the eggs from which all other learning has since hatched. The Italian humanists were nothing else if they were not first philologists, gathering, preserving and interpreting the remaining fragments of ancient books. And if they had not been, the ground for the growth of modern science would not have been prepared. In this way the young Nietzsche was transported to the world and mores of classicism, not only by his interests but by his vocation, the overlay of modern scientific interpretive methods notwithstanding. It added to an already strong disposition toward monastic devotion and piety in the tasks of culture.

By dedicating himself to scholarship and excelling in philological research, producing work on Theognis (whom he became interested in while still at school) and the sources of Diogenes Laertius, he merited election to a professorship at Basel University. Here he took the task of teaching philology most seriously. Or rather he wished to teach something larger through the vehicle of philology. The recovery and elucidation texts would mean nothing if it were not more deeply rooted in the greater goal of reforming the spirit of his students, making them apostles of a higher culture. It was with this pious intention that he operated even as a student. On nearing the completion of his studies at Leipzig in 1869 and preparing to enter into the practice of his vocation, he expresses hope in a letter his friend Von Gersdorff that he wouldn't become a blind specialist. "Philosophical seriousness is already too deeply rooted in me," he claims, referring to both his attachment to Schopenhauer and his desire to advance the cause of culture; he would prefer to "communicate to my pupils that Schopenhauerian earnestness that is stamped on the brow of the sublime man... I should like to be more than a mere trainer of efficient philologists. The present generation of teachers, the care of the coming generation - all this is in my mind."725

As teacher, he intends to wear the mantle of cultural leader, to be supremely positioned to supervise and reform the spirit of the nation through its young. He therefore awaits time "when serious men, working together in the service of a completely rejuvenated and purified culture, may again become the directors of everyday instruction, calculated to promote that culture..."726

Nietzsche’s scholarly activism

In this early period he accepts without question the assumptions of the Aufklärers that education can reform German culture. Even one institution would be enough to effect what is needed. In a letter of January 1872 to Rohde, he confides that he is seeking to make a public gesture in support of this conviction. "Let me tell you a great secret", he whispers, "and begging you to keep it to yourself; that among other things I am preparing a Promemoria about the University of Strasburg in the form of an interpellation for the Reichstag, to be delivered to Bismark. In it I wish to show how shamefully a great opportunity was lost of making a truly German Educational Institute for the regeneration of the German spirit and for the total extermination of what has hitherto been called 'culture'."727

It is not apparent that the gesture was made, but the confession indicates the character of his activism. Regenerating culture through education would involve reworking the aims of educational institutions to ensure that a select few, those capable of genius or at least of recognising it, receive correct instruction. Nietzsche's educational institutions would be "for teaching culture", as opposed to "teaching how to succeed in life".728 And as always, he sees the principle of pyramid at work: the broad base of those labouring in these institutions merely support the narrow pinnacle of the cultured few. The small number of really cultured people "would not be possible if a prodigious multitude, from reasons opposed to their nature and only led on by an alluring delusion, did not devote themselves to education..." There is, he says, a "ridiculous disproportion between the number of really cultured people and the enormous magnitude of the educational apparatus."729

Thus far his youthful responses to education follow the habits of several generations of German intellectuals. With regard to his feelings concerning intellectual fraternity, we should observe that Nietzsche craved for could never adequately satisfy intellectual companionship other than for brief periods with friends like Rohde, Wagner and Lou Salomé. His insistent hope was to discover like-minded friends and almost all of his books can be seen as attempts to secure this kind of kinship.

725 SL, to Von Gersdorff, 13 April 1869.
726 FEI, p.4.
727 SL, to Rohde, 26 Jan 1872.
728 FEI, p.98.
729 FEI, pp.33-34.
This is evident at all periods of his life. In sketches of 1873 of what were to become his *Untimely Meditations*, he plans that the essays will represent an attempt "at a construction, at historical classification, at public classification," and lastly "at [attracting] friends."

He pushes a similar line much later in *Ecce Homo* where he states overtly that all his writings after *Beyond Good and Evil* had been "fishhooks", to snare the like-minded. There are two main reasons that Nietzsche had difficulties in fulfilling these desires: his evangelical urge to multiply himself by converting other intellects (he sought friends he could dominate, but few of worthy intellectual stature wanted to accommodate him) and a somewhat prissy sociability kept him from wider circulation. He presented himself as one who could don masks in society, but possessed no Alcibiadian facility to acquaint himself in any milieu, particularly when he considered it "coarse" and "uncultured".

Unable as a child, to endure the "rougier" municipal school in Naumberg, he transferred to the more select Cathedral Grammar school. Nevertheless, attempts at conviviality with "rougier" members of his class proved unsuccessful. As a student in Bonn, in an effort to throw himself into what he called the muddy waters of life, he joined the Franconia *Burschenschaft* (student society) but retreated from the mandatory bearing and whoring. He later returned his sash to the society with a priggishly worded note of resignation. The modern *Burschenschaft*, he imagined, had compromised the lofty ideals of their original founders, the students of the Wars of Liberation.

Having tastes altogether spiritual he required intimate surroundings and friends who valued his cultural prowess. The university environment might have provided this, and it did to a greater extent at the University of Leipzig, where he discovered more congenial companions, but it wasn’t enough. The scholars were still not scholarly enough; they had narrow interests and could not communicate concerns for general culture. He complained that the university still did not provide the freedom for a genuinely radical existence that could be completely devoted to the cause of culture.

Unable to discover institutions appropriate to his needs he tried to found his own: the first during his boyhood in Naumberg when, with a small group of friends, he formed a cultural society called *New Germania*. The society’s meetings, it appears, were conducted with cultish ritual and solemnity. Nietzsche later indicates the nature of fraternity in a semi-autobiographical segment of the lectures *On the Future of our Educational Institutions*. Referring to it in the subjunctive he describes it as: "a kind of small club which would consist of ourselves and a few friends, and the object of which would be to provide us with a stable and binding organisation directing and adding interest to our creative impulses in art and literature; or, to put it more plainly: each of us would be pledged to present an original piece of work to the club once a month, - either a poem, a treatise, an architectural design, or a musical composition, upon which each of the others, in a friendly spirit would have to pass free and unrestrained criticism."

The happy memory of *New Germania* haunts him as he discusses with Leipzig friends plans to found a new monastic institution dedicated wholly to the contemplation of culture. "We shall sooner or later cast off this yoke..." he affirms to Rohde in December 1870, in reference to their irritation with academic drudgery, "and we shall form a new Greek Academy - Romundt will certainly join us in that." Apparently inspired by the grandeur of Wagner’s plans to establish an artistic capital in Bayreuth he asks whether Rohde might not be aware of it, imagining perhaps that this new Academy might supplement and parallel in scholarship Wagner’s efforts in music-theatre. "We shall then be our own mutual teachers” he continues, "and our books will only be so much bait wherewith to lure others to our monistic and artistic association. Our lives, our work, and our enjoyment will then be for one another; possibly this is the only way in which we can work for the world as a whole.

To prove his seriousness he informs Rohde that he would limit his expenditures, try his luck in lotteries and if he were to write books, demand the highest possible fees: "In short we shall make use of every legitimate means in order to establish our monastery upon a secure material basis... If only this plan would strike you as being at least worthy of consideration!"

Unsurprisingly the idea went no further. Yet it shows how deeply his early ideas of cultural reform depended on a sense of scholastic intellectual fraternity. Accordingly we should not neglect to mention his one success in founding a cultural organisation. While at Leipzig, as he was later to boast to Georg Brandes, he did play a role in founding the *Philological Society of Leipzig*. This society continued to exist for many years after his departure from the city, but of course was a specialist institution and not the monastery he devoutly longed for.

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318 Plans & Outlines, PAT, p.164.
319 EH, III, BGE-2
320 FF, p.18.
321 SL, to Rohde, 15 December 1870.
322 SL, to Brandes, 10 April 1888.
Nietzsche’s pedagogical ideas

With his youth so closely bound up with goals of learning and teaching, it was not incidental that almost all of the works of this period address some aspect of educational practice. Discounting the *The Birth of Tragedy*, itself a work of scholarship, the public lectures delivered in Basel in *On the Future of our Educational Institutions*, the essays on *The Use and Abuse of History*, *David Strauss, the Writer and Confessor*, and *Schopenhauer as Educator*, as well as a large number of unpublished philological fragments, all concentrate in some way on the effects of pedagogy.

Of these it is the lectures *On the Future of our Educational Institutions*, delivered in 1872, that deal specifically with the question of reform through education. In these talks what Nietzsche refers to as German educational institutions are fairly explicitly the Gymnasien, (what in most English translations are called ‘public schools’ or “grammar schools”) and universities, the academic stream of German education whose purpose was to develop the nation’s political and intellectual elite. It was with this stream that he had been familiar since boyhood, and it was natural for him not to overlook the purely technical stream of German secondary schooling: the realschulen, the trade schools run separately to the Gymnasien which had no pretensions to higher learning other than to equip children with specific technical skills. It was impossible at the time for a student of the Realschule to attend University, so all references to “public education” apply to higher education only, and not to elementary schooling or technical training.

The talks he presented in Basel were fundamentally a conservative attack on the educational institutions of his homeland, and oppose certain educational innovations as “distortions and aberrations of the originally sublime tendencies given to them at their foundation” which he attributes to Friedrich August Wolff. These consisted in the introduction into secondary schooling of the pedagogy of classical education, paideia, and it is explicitly the undermining of this that he attacks. The unwanted novelties stem from two seemingly antagonistic forces: “a striving to achieve the greatest possible extension of education on the one hand, and a tendency to weaken it on the other.” The first-named is an attempt to spread learning among the “greatest possible number of people”, the second would “compel education to renounce its highest and most independent claims in order to subordinate itself to the service of the State.”

Nietzsche sees the spreading of education to the masses as a democratic attack on the aristocratic foundation on high culture. He lists three main reasons for its current expansion: the greedy lust for gain and property, the memory of religious persecution, and the prudent egoism of the state. Greed is the main culprit since the growing economy sees education as useful for advancing wealth. In service to this economy education no longer addresses the eternal demand of culture, but the ephemeral need to make a student up-to-date and develop him “so that his particular degree of knowledge and science may yield him the greatest possible amount of happiness and pecuniary gain.” In the second case, the rising liberal intelligentsia sees that the best means to undermine the power of religion is to promote secular education. Recall that this perception is made during the struggle between Bismark and the Catholic Church, the *Kulturkampf*, which had broken out in Germany the year before.

The state supports itself by training officers to fill its bureaucracy and military services. Spreading the base of higher education causes its enfeeblement by dilution. Everywhere there is a haste to prepare students for life, when the task of teaching for culture requires time and patience. The effect of popularising higher education has been to turn what were institutions for culture into institutions for knowledge, and the scholar who works in them, who used to be considered cultured, is now nothing more than a narrow specialist. Worse than that, the present institutions have slipped a further step down the hierarchy. They have allowed the journalist to supplant even the scholar. With the fragmentation of knowledge as the fundamental character of contemporary civilisation, the task of cementing the divisions between specialities has actually been abandoned by the scholar and left to the journalist, who accomplishes this in the most superficial way. The journalist, the servant of the moment, the master of ephemeral knowledge, is the now the real educator of modern Germany and through newspapers distracts attention from those who should be the rightful teachers of the nation, those who are timeless, the geniuses of culture.

The onslaught on the old aristocratic pedagogy can only be contained if the number of higher educational institutions are restricted, and the numbers of teachers working in them reduced. It is only by “limiting and concentrating education” that culture can be conserved.

Independence of these institutions from the state must be assured, but most importantly, pedagogical
reform must occur in the Gymnasien where the earliest training for culture takes place. Pedagogy should reflect the aims of culture, which is not to merely acquire knowledge or develop your “individuality”, but to form yourself and your surroundings from your deepest nature. Using contemporary pedagogical jargon, he sees a drift from purely formal education (Formelle Bildung), whose object is to develop mental faculties, to one in which material education (Materielle Bildung) the teaching of facts, has primacy. The real focus of classical education however, and indeed the secret of imparting form, lies in severe and disciplined training in the use of the mother-tongue: “Every so-called classical education can have but one natural starting point - an artistic, earnest and exact familiarity with the mother-tongue: this, together with the secret of form, however, one can seldom attain to one’s own accord, almost everybody requires those great leaders and tutors and must place himself in their hands. There is however no such thing as a classical education that could grow without this inferred love of form.”341

Those who do not take their mother tongue seriously do not “possess even the germ of a higher culture.”344 The eventual independence and self-assurance of the pupil can only be attained by rigorous drill in writing and speaking German. Discipline in this early stage will render the pupil's intellect supple and vigorous when the fetters are finally removed. Thinking, the careful use of language, as he states elsewhere, “has to be learned in the way dancing has to be learned...” Yet the formal training of the mother tongue is being supplanted by an historicist-scholastic method, and German is being taught as an arid arrangement of facts: an easier task for the teacher that relies on nothing but memory and an altogether lower grade of ability. Likewise students are encouraged to seek easy individuality when they are still too immature to rightfully hold opinions. Modern teachers encourage independence of thought in those too young to consider the most important questions, whereas the main aim of education should “be the suppression of all ridiculous claims to independent judgement, and the incalculable upon young men of obedience to the sceptre of genius.”344

He proposes somewhat tautologically that “a thorough reformation and purification of the public school can only be the outcome of a profound and powerful reformation and purification of the German spirit.”345 Reforming the German spirit requires reforming of educational institutions. The genius is both the director and goal of education and Nietzsche’s pedagogy is no more than tutelage in obedience to the precepts of geniuses. Institutions can’t be assured of teaching these precepts unless the right type of educators work in them and right now such men do not seem to exist. In other respects most of this critique of modern education expresses the same anxieties that oppressed German scholars in the 1830’s and 1840’s. They had already ventured Jeremias against the cheapening of education through the materialism of the rising bourgeois class or the needs of the machine state.746 Nor does Nietzsche avoid paradoxically overlaying a classical education, an aristocratic conception of virtue, on the reality of the scholar-official.

Most leading Aufklärers wanted classical education to be offered only to a small elite. Not even Herder wanted more than that. Offering classical education to the greatest number would seem to be in the interests of the scholar, but there are other reasons why he opposed it. Possibly he saw he could gain greater leverage by concentrating this education in the minds of a powerful few than dispersing it among the many. And while professedly an aristocratic privilege; in the hands of the scholar it became a meritocratic accomplishment. Nietzsche's genius is not an aristocrat of the blood but of the spirit. Restricting access to classical education is not promoting the privilege of inheritance but provides a foundation for meritocracy by demanding recognition of, respect for and obedience to those who by force of talent scale the hierarchy of culture. In this his prejudices are inescapably bourgeois.

How Nietzsche becomes a gentleman

In later life Nietzsche's references to spiritual reform through educational institutions diminish. It is

341 FEL, p.61.
342 FEL, p.48.
343 TI, pp.65-66.
344 FEL, p.54.
345 FEL, p.67.
346 In the period 1834-36, Thiersch, an academic and prominent German liberal in the two decades before 1848, was requested by the Bavarian Minister for Education to write a report on the condition of education in the Palatinate. This report, published under the title On the Condition of Public Instruction in the Western States of Germany, in Holland and Belgium contains passages which might easily have been written by the younger Nietzsche. Consider the following example cited in R. Hinton Thomas, op. cit. pp.77-78: “The present culture of Europe is still maintained and protected only by vestiges of the old possessions of the past, by which it was founded, and by the remains of the desires and convictions nourished by them. If, however, they are completely destroyed by the tide of the new forces, surging forward with overwhelming power, let no one doubt that the rest of the edifice will become completely eroded. But the goal of the struggle against all idealistic values in the sphere of culture is barbarism and in the sphere of politics is anarchy... it is the process of the European world-order reversed, and while this aimed at building from tradition and at fashioning from it the structure of society and at deriving stability and beauty from it, the present trend sets out to abolish this structure by means of its principles and at the same time to dissolve the whole body of society, and everything that holds it together and feeds it, its atoms... He who strengthens the foundation of the old education and tries to make its superstructure firm and unshakeable, who finds in everything great bequeathed by the old before the end of the past ages the purest sources of culture for the future, and tries to make it strong and beautiful, while at the same time sharpening its reason and quickening its insight, lifting its ambition above the common and concrete and raising it up to admiration and the protection of those possessions on which our life is based - such a man stands and works for the protection of the highest possessions moulded by ideals and the traditional culture and the solidarity of order which rests upon them.”
not that he now subsequently questioned its significance as an agent of change, as he had in the case of art, merely that other agents of spiritual change, such as morality, command close attention. His complaints about modern education and his recommendations for pedagogical practice don’t change at all, only that ideas that required five lectures to divulge now can be expressed in a single epigram.

This, from the Twilight of the Idols summarises the fundamental ideas of his youthful lectures: "The essential thing has gone out of the entire system of higher education in Germany: the end, as well as the means to that end. That education, culture, itself is the end - and not "the Reich" - that educators are required for the attainment this end - and not grammar-school teachers and university scholars - that too has been forgotten...There is a need for educators who are themselves educated; superior, noble spirits, who prove themselves every moment by what they say and by what they do not say: cultures grown ripe and sweet - and not the learned boors which grammar school and university offer youth today as "higher nurses". Educators, the first prerequisite of education, are lacking... hence the decline of German culture. What the "higher schools" of Germany in fact achieve is a brutal breaking-in with the aim of making, in the least possible time, numberless young men fit to be utilised... in the state service. "Higher education" and numberless - that is a contradiction to start with, all higher education belongs to the exceptions alone: one must be privileged to have a right to so high a privilege. Great and fine things can never be common property: pulchrum est paucorum hominum. What is the cause of the decline of German culture? That "higher education" is no longer a privilege - the democratisation of "culture" made universal and common... No one is any longer free in present-day Germany to give his children a noble education: our 'higher' schools are one and all adjusted - as regards their teachers, their curricula and their instructional aims - to the most dubious mediocrity... Our overcrowded grammar schools, our overloaded, stupefied grammar-school teachers, are a scandal: one may perhaps have motives for defending this state of things, as the professors of Heidelberg recently did - there are no grounds for doing so..."347

If his views concerning education did not change in later life, his youthful belief that his personal role as a scholar and educator was significant and counted for something did. His fundamental dissatisfaction with his vocation, evident from the first, became more insistently with time. In letters to friends like Von Gersdorff and Rohde he complains again and again of the tedium of scholarship and teaching, of the lack of academic freedom348 and, in later life, looks back with revulsion on the days spent thumbing through books.

His intolerance of the minutiæ of philological research is evident in his correspondence, and in the content of published work such as The Birth of Tragedy which, brimming and overflowing with ideas, political concerns, propaganda, inflated style, concedes - and indeed, in the most contemptuous fashion - a bare minimum to the rituals of scholarship. It is not without reason that he afterwards confessed that he should have written the book as poetry. As it turned out, most who praised it when it was published were not philologists, while most who abhorred it were.

Palpable damage was done to his career by its appearance, since it prompted a virulent and not entirely unjustified attack by Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, still a young student himself but later to become one of the century’s most esteemed philologists. As a result a number of potential students were lost to Nietzsche at Basel in the shorter term, as well as prestige. Apart from The Birth of Tragedy, important a work though it is, he never again published another major philological study and his scholarly career, which began so promisingly, cannot be counted an unqualified success.

His final, irreconcilable divorce from scholarship occurred with his retirement from his teaching post at Basel in 1879, ostensibly for reasons of illness - though it gave him leisure to write without tiresome distraction - and he began a new life of seasonal wanderings in Switzerland, Italy, and Provence, subsisting comfortably enough on a pension bequeathed him by the university. No longer constrained by the classroom and the book, his scholarly dispositions begin to crack and peel away. He feels that he has stepped completely outside his former vocation and can look upon it as a mere phase of his life, even a necessary stage in his development rather than a goal gone wrong.349 And though old habits persist everything he writes now consciously, even self-consciously, displays the spirit of that other kind of being, the gentleman.

What is it that suggests this change of disposition? Firstly there is the reform of his literary style. His early writings, though overtly literary, were not inconsistent with his vocation. But they seem ponderous when compared with his new books of epigrams that appear just as his departure from academic life seems imminent. Part I of Human all too Human, the first book written in the new style, was composed while on a year’s leave from teaching duties in 1876.

The change of style not only implies a new way of thinking but a new way of living. It presages a severance with scholarship, denying at minimum that he is a scholar in mind if not in body. The epigram is least of all the literary vehicle of the scholar and quintessentially that of a gentleman of the

347 TI, pp.63-64.
348 SL, to Rohde: 15 December 1870.
349 EH, III, UM-3.
ancien régime. It is the distilment of worldly wisdom, written by men better acquainted with life than with books. His taste, he claims, is no longer German, but wholly in sympathy with the spirit of the ancien régime, with Corneille, Racine, and Molière, with Descartes, with the epigrammists Montaigne and La Rochefoucauld, and with Voltaire, to whose memory he dedicated the first edition of Human all too Human. None of them were scholars; none of them contained their lives within the walls of an academy. The location of their sociability was the salon, the court, or the battlefield. "Voltaire", he muses in Ecce Homo, "was above all, in contrast to all who wrote after him, a granseigneur of the spirit - like me." 

His new way of thinking, he claims, has nothing of the shuffling, plodding character of the scholar; intellectually it is at home with the physical discipline of the French nobleman schooled by his dancing master. His thoughts have "light feet"; they dance, for "dancing in any form cannot be divorced from a noble education." In Ecce Homo he goes so far as to describe Beyond Good and Evil as a "school for the gentilhomme, taking this concept in a more spiritual and radical sense than has ever been done." Again the use of the French word "gentilhomme" explicitly relates his thought the ancien régime, and to a type of aristocracy that Germany never possessed. Nietzsche a grandseigneur, a gentilhomme, a nobleman; his identification with the model of the warrior-gentleman may be explicit, but there is more. Listen carefully to the words "more spiritual and radical". Is this the utterance of a real aristocrat, on one of flesh, blood and property or merely the prejudice of a bourgeois lad, meditating on the quality of his virtue and talent as opposed to the inheritance he does not possess?

But this opera buffa plays on. His contempt for the idea of a vocation is singular. A gentleman of course does not have one: "a higher kind of human being... doesn't think much of "callings". A gentleman is not defined by what he is, not by what function he fills in life. Likewise his reading becomes studiously unscholarly. At university it had never been voluminous, and strayed wherever possible from his speciality. Now an eager dilettante, he reads widely for his cultivation, particularly in the physical sciences. Physical impediments taken into account, he elects to read fewer books in later life, and boasts of this in his own. Another indication of the new spirit is evident in his affectation of military pride, with his reverence for his training as an artilleryman, the discipline and simplicity of his regimen, and the increasing pugnacity of his style. Writing, he imagines as a form of duelling, as he clashes quills with the likes of Wagner, and the spokesmen of "modern ideas". His spurning of the institution, university, monastery, or otherwise, as a foundation of intellectual fraternity is fundamental to the new mood. It is in the credo of the free-spirit, absolved of all ties and formal associations. Now he reminds the reader that he belongs to a tribe who is 'homeless' and contrivedly so, for "we are too openminded... we far prefer to live on mountains, apart, 'untimely'."

The new Nietzsche is self-sufficient, able to wait for a time when he will be understood. He cultivates distance and reserve, yet grows bitter at his isolation, blaming this on German friends. Complaints about loneliness and isolation, expressed regularly enough in his youth and which might have merited the dignity of silence, now pour out in books and in letters to friends and even to comparative strangers. He writes to friends that he has no friends, no recognition, yet a voluminous correspondence with some of the most distinguished intellectuals of Europe, increasing in the later stages of his sanity - with Brandes, and Strindberg joining the fold - diminish this claim. In Peter Gast too, he possesses an indefatigable disciple who sacrifices time and energy to the master's needs. It is clear that he wanted to be thought a hermit, as someone independent and aloof from institutions, rather than to really be one,

If he chooses to embody and promote the model of the gentleman in opposition to that of the scholar, and prefers not to participate in educational institutions, he never abandons the idea of reform through education. The change in his disposition is marked by new found certainty about his real role in life and culture, the self-realisation of which provides him the deepest satisfaction, for it was not simply as a gentleman that he wants to exist but as an educator of special calibre: who stands far above the scholar, a master, a "great educator", in short, a philosopher. It is therefore Nietzsche's participation as a philosopher in the politics of cultivation that we now consider.

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373 EH, Ill, HAM-I.
374 TI, p.66.
375 EH Ill, BGE-I.
376 TI, pp.63-64.
377 GE, a377.
378 Regarding Nietzsche's perceptions of his readership, note his letter to Nietzsche to Burckhardt of 14 November 1887. (Briefwechsel 1887-1889, KGS II) where he says that he has only two readers, Burckhardt himself and Taine: "Ich habe bis jetzt nur zwei Leser, aber beide Leser." In a letter to Taine of 4 July 1887, he claims to be read only by older men, by Wagner, Bruno Bauer, Burckhardt, and Gottfried Keller.
Philosophical Titanism

The "scholar and scientist...are fundamentally different from the philosopher" who, according to Nietzsche is really: 756 a reformer who stands far above others in spiritual order of rank. As an educator of educators, he does not work within institutions but lives and thinks independently of them. The philosopher's way is from the ethos of the warrior, as opposed to the scribe and therefore, like all aristocratic culture, is generalist and synthetic. The scholar is "a jobbing workman who instinctively opposes synthetic undertakings and capacities in general", who feels wronged and diminished by the "otium and noble luxury of the philosopher's psychical economy". 758

This is how Nietzsche compares his life as a philosopher with his former life as a scholar. Yet his attention to its siren calls were not altogether a late development. When first attending Bonn University, he had considered taking philosophy before deciding to concentrate on philology. In 1871, while at Basel, he applied, unsuccessfully, for a chair in philosophy at the university. 759 Undoubtedly his firming interest in the subject followed his reading of Schopenhauer while at Leipzig, which enabled him to look at philosophy, not merely as another scholarly specialty, but as the foundation for all branches of knowledge. Moreover it could reconcile Nietzsche's disparate artistic and intellectual impulses, because its close attention to ethical questions made it a very practical intellectual activity. A philosophy like Schopenhauer's could shape or reform human life. Nietzsche glimpsed at it as a way by which he could accommodate art, scholarship and pedagogy, and harmonise his knowledge drive with his formal drive.

It is not incidental, that from the point he practices the politics of cultivation as a philosopher, his need to consider himself either an artist or a scholar recedes. Philosophy, as their true master, stands above both in the scheme of great politics. By redefining his vocation the burden of needing to specialise ceases to preoccupy him. And on leaving his teaching position at Basel in 1879 to live, in full satisfaction and self-awareness, as a philosopher, the danger posed to him by the fragmentation of knowledge and action diminishes. It is no longer broached as a painful matter in his writings and correspondence. He sees that every modern philosopher must first overcome specialisation before becoming what he is, and that if "he will let himself 'specialise'... he will never reach his proper height, the height from which he can survey, look around and look down." 760

None of this would make sense if we assume Nietzsche's understanding of philosophy was a modern one, which confines its task to synthesising or discovering certain types of knowledge. In his understanding, the philosopher is neither scholar nor priest, but a descendent of the warrior, the statesman, the legislator: those who set guidelines for living. Necessarily, the real goal of philosophy is not to determine truth, but to acquire wisdom, which is a purely practical knowledge aimed at defining a superior ethos. Philosophy that seeks truth has nothing in common with one that seeks wisdom since an ethos can never be "true" or "false" in itself, and therefore outside the claims of verity. Those who seek wisdom are in any case opposed to the pursuit of truth since they do not accept that such a thing can be found. Nietzsche's philosopher therefore does not employ the usual methods of judging actions and beliefs: he makes his assessments by criteria outside of the oppositions true and false and good and evil.

The modern philosopher has abandoned the aim of acquiring wisdom and only seeks truth. He no longer has the right to investigate all of nature as he used to, but has relinquished this to the scientists and chooses to inhabit a grimy cellar in the great castle of knowledge where he seeks knowledge of knowledge itself. He has become nothing more than a scholar, with the consequence that "science is flourishing today and its good conscience shines in its face, while... the whole of modern philosophy has gradually sunk... reduced to 'theory of knowledge'...." 761

The fact that science has mastered philosophy also indicates the progress of democratisation in the modern world. Science, once subordinate to philosophy, has turned its master into its imitator. At this point of its degradation Nietzsche demands: "How could such a philosophy rule!" 762 The philosopher who, he supposes, once gave foundations to the culture of the Greeks, is no longer equipped to legislate. "Can philosophy serve as the foundation of a culture? Yes, but now no longer: it is much too refined and sharpened. One can no longer rely upon it. In fact modern philosophy has permitted itself

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756 WP, a220.
757 WP, a220.
758 BGIE, a204.
759 SL, to W. Vischer-Bilfinger, January 1871.
760 BGIE, a205.
761 BGIE, a204.
762 loc. cit.
to be drawn into the current of modern education. It in no way controls this education. In the best cases, philosophy has become science.\textsuperscript{764}\textsuperscript{1}

That Nietzsche should conceive of philosophers this way shows how much better versed he is in the texts of antiquity than of modernity, which he reads cursorily. With the exception of Schopenhauer, he is only lightly familiar with the great Germans, Kant, Hegel, Leibniz, and acquaints himself with no more than their main ideas. Of the French, in spite of his admiration for them, he knows even less and of the English, an amount sufficient to establish his distaste for them.

He learns more of modern philosophy from the lectures of colleagues, secondary literature and historical surveys such as that of Lange. Yet his knowledge of the Greeks, and most significantly, the earliest philosophers, the pre-Socratics, is detailed and extensive; insofar as any knowledge about individuals based on fragments of their works or the hearsay of the Hellenistic age can be. His philological researches place him, perhaps more than any contemporary, profoundly in touch with the manner of thinking of the earlier Greek philosophers: Heraclitus, Parmenides, Xenophanes, Anaximander, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Pythagoras, Thales, Democritus, Socrates... By this means he reaches to the sources and foundations of western philosophy, to a philosophical heroic age, the like of which has never been repeated, to a time when the most daring leaps of imagination captured the principle ideas of science and ethics that the west has since lived by.

Throughout 1873, he worked on a subsequently aborted book he titled \textit{Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks}, with the aim of describing their achievements, which believed paralleled and necessarily derived from the same spirit as contemporary \textit{tragic} dramatists.

These philosophers, he advises, were "self-liberators", for they experienced the atmosphere of the Greek \textit{polis} and its and customs as a constraint and barrier, when it was a real danger to exhibit such traits.\textsuperscript{764}\`\textit{Every nation"}, he says, "is put to shame if one points out such a wonderfully idealised company of philosophers as that of the early Greek masters... All those men are integral, entire and self-contained, and heaven out of one stone. Severe necessity exists between their thinking and their character. They are not bound by any convention, because at that time no professional class of philosophers and scholars existed. They all stand before us in magnificent solitude as the only ones who then devoted their life exclusively to knowledge. They all possess the virtuous energy of the Ancients, whereby they excel all the later philosophers in finding their own form and perfecting it by metamorphosis in its most minute details and general aspect.\textsuperscript{765}\textsuperscript{1}

The pre-Socratic philosophers come closer than anyone else to exemplifying Nietzsche's idea of the super-human. In this short paragraph we see listed most elements of what we have demonstrated to constitute his definition of genius: "integration", "self-containment", "necessity between thought and character", "finding one's own form"... He believes that their courageous independence brought them to the foundation idea of all philosophy: \textit{that the opinions of the people are in error}. In comparison major thinkers who follow Socrates such as Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Pyro, Zeno... philosophise in the period of the decadence of the city-state, and no longer display the heroism of the earlier age. The \textit{Pre-Socratics did not share the Post-Socratics' detestable pretension to happiness. Furthermore, these early Greeks did not chatter and revile so much; neither did they write so much.}\textsuperscript{766}\textsuperscript{1}

Hellenistic philosophers feel the need to give reasons because they court the approbation of the mass and tie philosophy to dialectic and argument, and therewith to ineffectiveness. They congregate in schools and become despised. The pre-Socratic philosopher sets down laws and ideas in contempt of all justification, keeping apart from but nonetheless being held in awe by the people. Regardless of the validity of these idealisations, it is evident that Nietzsche philosophises, quite consciously, in the way he believed that pre-Socratics had done. He seeks to follow their example and accordingly does not resort to the vulgarity of argument, or logic to support his thoughts.

Lower intellects dabble in dialectic, higher ones know that the logic or grounds of an idea are already found within and will be quickly found by any who care to think. Like Heraclitus, whom he idealises above all others, he hurls down judgements as Jove his lightning bolts, as if they are unprecedented and illuminate everything. This habit, sometimes referred to as \textit{philosophical titanism}, is not just characteristic of Nietzsche or the pre-Socratics. His claim that his manner of philosophising is directly descended from the Greeks, is evidence of a more general pattern, because we cannot forget how, of all Europe's nations, Germany has always boasted that it is the truest descendent of Greece - a boast which, by the way, perished only recently with the death of Heidegger.

The starting point of \textit{philosophical titanism}, as prepared by the Greeks and perpetuated by the

\textsuperscript{764} PHT, PAT, p.123.
\textsuperscript{765} SSW, PAT, p.134.
\textsuperscript{766} PTAG, al.
German, is that popular opinion is worthless, myopic and unreal. No titan could reach this point without severing allegiance with his fellow men on the basis of his superiority. Whether an aristocrat by blood or no, he becomes one by feeling, and having no other pattern or precedent for such other than that of the warrior, transfers the love of heroism, greatness, conquest, and fame into the realm of thought. Thus the titan imagines that everything that can be done by the hero of deeds can be done by the hero of philosophy, only thoughts, unlike deeds, can travel on the wings of Mercury. Unfettered and unencumbered by the dull world of objects they go anywhere and can do almost anything. Excess then, is more than usually the outcome of a titan's speculative forays.

If he is always at minimum a warrior of ideas, he is also more than usually a conqueror eager to carve out an empire of the spirit, and a place in history. It is not merely the deluded or the mad of whom we speak, but men who have captured the ear of the most discriminating intellects. Philosophers, even relatively modern ones like Hegel, Nietzsche or Heidegger have not been so modest as to deny that their thoughts are anything less than major historical events. Nietzsche, the most disarmingly honest, believed that his speculations broke the history of mankind in two. This species of intellectual is altogether of a different type to the modern "professional" philosopher, who might, if he is lucky, quiver with elation for having discerned some tomato seed on the manure heap of truth. His is the squeaky-voiced conceit of the scholar or expert, whom the blunt-fingered philosophical titan disdainfully brushes aside.

Like the scholar the titan thinks he has the right to rule not just because he is more intelligent or virtuous, or wiser, but because his vision is vaster and he can bring purpose to life, which is intolerable if it is merely banal. To be tolerable it must be invested with feelings of immensity. So he straps chains of logic between the commonplace and the cosmos, using these to lift us up to the majesty and greatness in and around us. Having discovered such feelings in himself the titan wishes all of us to resonate with them, and thinks he can do this by exhorting and instructing us. Setting aside what this "feeling of greatness" might be, the pattern for representing them is always the same. As Nietzsche points out: "Philosophical thinking... is always on the track of the things worth knowing, on the track of the great and most important discernments. Now the idea of greatness is changeable, as well as in the moral as in the aesthetic realm, thus Philosophy begins with a legislation as to greatness... That is great she says and therewith raises men above the blind, untamed covetousness of his thirst for knowledge. By the idea of greatness she assuages this thirst: and it is chiefly by this that she contemplates the greatest discernment that of the essence and kernel of things as attainable and attained... The philosopher tries to make the total chord of the universe re-echo within himself and then to project it into ideas outside himself... whilst he feels himself swell up to the macrocosm, he still retains the circumspection to contemplate himself coldly as the reflex of the world." 767

Titanic philosophy may be the mighty confluence into which separate tributaries of knowledge empty their waters, but its procedure is not simply accretive. Polyphony is not philosophy. Philosophy seeks general ideas lurking behind branches of knowledge. It wants to find the common ground behind them and does this by "delicate selective judgement by taste, by discernment, by significant differentiation." 768 By locating the ground of being the titan can find principles by which all us can live effectively. Here again the idea of physis, which is at the core of Nietzsche's philosophy as it is with the pre-Socratics. Embracing this idea, the titan believes his duty is to live in accordance with, and to perfect his nature, and therewith the nature all around him. It is this that enables him to feel as though he is "swelling up to the macrocosm". As Heraclitus succinctly remarks, "the greatest perfection (arête) resides in thinking wisely: to speak the truth and to act in accordance with nature (physis) - this is wisdom." 769 And with this one aphorism, he encapsulates the substance of Nietzsche's ethical thought, powerfully reminding us how three thousand years of intellectual endeavour have barely altered the practice of ethical inquiry.

Since the philosophical titan is obliged to speculate in the grand style, he cannot claim authenticity if he does not also live in the same manner. Not only must he think like a hero, he must be one. How can one concerned with the conduct of life better teach than by example? The emphasis on deeds that reflect thought was fundamental to the philosophical culture of antiquity, even in the Hellenist period. Compendia like that of Diogenes Laertius are as concerned to relate the deeds and bon mots of philosophers as to outline their thought. In consequence titanic philosophy, no less than religion, honours its martyrs. In antiquity the deaths of Socrates and Seneca were models of dignity, and in the Renaissance, Giordano Bruno, recalls their spirit with his taunt to the inquisitors: that they delivered their judgement to execute him with more fear than he received it.

They admired the sage in antiquity less for what he believed than for his contempt of danger and of tyrants, for his frugality and for his self-sufficiency. The true sage did not shuffle along the corridors of an academy, but courted danger: like Heraclitus, through display of lofty solitude; or, Socrates, by

767 PTAG, a3. See also TP, PAT, p. 14: "...the task of culture is to see that what is great in a people does not appear among them as a hermit or exile" and Plato & his Outlines, PAT p.37. "the aesthetic concept of greatness and sublimity: the task is to educate the people to this concept. Culture depends upon the way in which one defines what is "great".
768 PTAG, a3.
769 Heraclitus, fragment 107, in Fairbanks, op. cit.
going into the market place; or, Diogenes of Sinope by submitting to personal privations. Being utterly persuaded by such behaviour, Nietzsche considers that philosophers who cannot sacrifice their existence to principles do not have credibility. Reflecting on Diogenes' example, he notes that "...all the philosophy of antiquity was directed toward simplicity in living and taught a certain frugality - the most important remedy against all thoughts of social revolution. In this respect the few philosophical vegetarians have accomplished more for man than all the more recent philosophies. And so long as philosophers fail to master the courage to seek a totally transformed regimen and to exhibit it by their own example, then they are of no consequence."  

Nietzsche constantly sought to present himself as existing under a radical regimen. Following his self-realisation that he was a philosopher, he was deeply dissatisfied to be teaching at a university. This occurred quite early and undoubtedly at the suggestion of Schopenhauer who was never more than a privatdozent. It is impossible, he thinks, to be entirely true to oneself in the employ of any institution, since there is always a compulsion to make concessions and surrender fragments of your integrity. For a start it is impossible to criticise or offend the institution from which you take your bread. The younger Nietzsche is tormented and embarrassed to see how many great thinkers were independent of either bureau or academy: Socrates, Spinoza, Schopenhauer, three he esteems most highly, were all free men. Peering out ruefully from behind the bars of his institution, he remarks to Rohde in 1870, that he has "become aware of the importance of Schopenhauer's teaching about the wisdom of the universities. A thoroughly radically truthful existence is impossible here. But what is important is that nothing truly subversive can ever emerge from this quarter."  

From the beginning of his career he intimates that he will eventually abandon it, but his departure is hardly crowned by dramatic or heroic resolve. Ten years after employment he resigns from his position at Basel on the grounds of ill-health, and for his pains is bequeathed, by the university, a modest but useful stipend. With the security it affords him he lives frugally yet independently, and to publish and to travel for the remainder of his days. He has not much property, yet he is not in penury. What more does a philosopher need? He does not deny that it was the accident of illness that provided him with the means to sever himself from his dependence. In a letter to Brandes he baldly states that "this illness has been the greatest help to me; it has set me free; it has restored to me the courage to be myself. My instincts are those of a brave, even of a military beast. The prolonged struggle has slightly exasperated my pride of spirit. After all, am I a philosopher? But what does it matter?"  

Notice the "titanic" form of self-representation, which reminds us of the bluster of Homer's warriors. Needing to embody heroic values, Nietzsche constructs his own life as though it were a war fought on many fronts and dramatises the events of an otherwise refined and unremarkable existence. His debilitating but hardly mortal ill health is represented as a valiant struggle of spirit against corporeal weakness; that in the face of such pains he can maintain undying cheerfulness is seen as a triumph of will. His practice of philosophy is the ride of a sturdy knight through a land of death and devils. The truths arrived at by his honest thinking, he believes, are so horrible that they must require real courage to endure them: "How much truth can a spirit endure, how much truth can a spirit dare? This slogan (a variant of Sapere aude!) he says, "became for me the real standard of value. Error is cowardice - every achievement of knowledge is a consequence of courage, of severity toward oneself, of cleanliness toward oneself..." His wandering and isolation is interpreted as spiritual and physical exile, as rejection and abandonment by his contemporaries who are shamed by his honesty and courage. In summa, he is the loneliest man who has ever lived and has suffered more than anyone else, yet above it all he rejoices in his steadfastness and his transcendence. The ethic of "overcoming", one of the most popular and influential elements of Nietzsche's work, is the material for the bragadocio of cheeriness in his later writings which is constantly saying, "You can't say I don't bear my afflictions bravely. You can't say I'm not redoubtable." Undoubtedly his receptivity to life's pains, to the loneliness of not being understood, was exceptional, but the events that inspired it were not. Without denying the intensity of his discomfort, only one compelled to enact heroic drama could publically represent private pains as major historical events. But such conduct is entirely in the character of philosophical titans.

**Philosophy and Spiritual Reform**

From his youth, Nietzsche relates philosophy to the task of spiritual reform, and the politics of cultivation. He constantly speculates on his tasks as a philosopher and how to reform his fellow men. His notebooks abound with definitions and redefinitions of the philosopher's cultural task. That these occur less frequently in the published works indicates how much they are private reflections serving a
self-clarifying purpose.

They appear in great clusters in the notebooks of 1873, when he was composing the Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks and perhaps firm his resolve in his vocation. A number are listed below, to indicate their tone and emphasis.

We learn that the philosopher:

1. - is a "brakeshoe on the wheel of time."\(^{774}\)
2. - is a self-revelation of nature’s workshop; the philosopher and the artist tell the trade secrets of nature.\(^{775}\)
3. - is the continuation of that drive by which we incessantly deal with nature by means of anthropomorphistic illusions.\(^{776}\)
4. - is seeking [not truth, but] the metamorphosis of the world into men. He strives for an understanding of the world with self-consciousness. He strives for an assimilation. He is satisfied when he has explained something anthropomorphically. just as the astrologer regards the world as serving the single individual, the philosopher regards the world as a human being.\(^{777}\)
5. - should recognise what is needed, and the artist should create it.\(^{778}\)
6. - must become the supreme tribunal of an artistic culture, the police force, as it were against all transgressions.\(^{779}\)

We also learn:

7. -...philosophy seeks to master this [knowledge] drive; it is an instrument of culture.\(^{780}\)
8. -[Nietzsche’s] general task: to show how life, philosophy and art can have a more profound and congenial relationship to each other, in such a way that philosophy is not superficial and the life of the philosopher does not become mendacious.\(^{781}\)
9. -the individual who wishes to rely upon himself requires ultimate knowledge, philosophy. Other men require a science which is slowly augmented.\(^{782}\)
10. - philosophy must be “able to concentrate a man.”\(^{783}\)
11. -[Nietzsche’s task as a philosopher is] to comprehend the internal coherence and necessity of every true culture; to comprehend a culture’s preservatives and restoratives and their relation to the genius of the people.\(^{784}\)

The multiplicity of definitions does not conceal that the Ideal of Cultivation is the common point of reference, since the philosopher’s primary duty is to sustain or improve the health of a culture. In his early work, Nietzsche describes the philosopher as a cultural physician: a person who, being inordinately wise, can diagnose an ailing culture, and recognise the correctives to restore it to health. He uses the phrase “philosopher as cultural physician” throughout his life, but most frequently in his early work, to the extent that he actually planned and began to write a book with this title in 1873, and even considered it as an alternative to what became Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks.

The idea of philosopher as physician accords with the organic metaphor of culture and the need for spiritual cohesion within a nation. If philosophers have not always fulfilled this role, he was certain that in antiquity they attempted to do so. Today, instead of supporting cultural cohesion, they actively promote the forces leading to fragmentation. “What is lacking today”, he laments, “is anything which can unite all the one-sided forces: and so we observe that everything is hostile to everything else and that all the noble forces are engaged in a mutually destructive war of annihilation. Philosophy is an example of this: it destroys, because there is nothing to keep it within boundaries. The philosopher has become a being who is harmful to the community. He annihilates happiness, virtue, culture, and finally himself. Formerly, in the role of the cultural physician, philosophy had to be in alliance with the cohesive forces.”\(^{785}\)

Nietzsche’s idealised view of the accomplishments of the pre-Socratics provides examples of how

\(^{774}\) TP, PAT, p.6.
\(^{775}\) loc. cit.
\(^{776}\) Plans & Outlines, PAT, p.154.
\(^{777}\) TP, PAT, p.52.
\(^{778}\) TP, PAT, p.8.
\(^{779}\) TP, PAT, p.22.
\(^{780}\) TP, PAT, p.56.
\(^{781}\) SSW, PAT, p.134.
\(^{782}\) SSW, PAT, p.129.
\(^{783}\) PHT, PAT, p.109.
\(^{784}\) PT, PAT, p.10.
\(^{785}\) PHT, PAT, p.121.
philosophy produces correctives and palliatives in an already vital culture. In the notes of 1873 he refers to what philosophers actually did to rescue their culture from spiritual hazard, something he rarely discusses elsewhere. The decline of myth was the main problem facing the Greek city-state when the pre-Socratics were active. Civilisation was founded on myths, which provided boundaries and stability to political structures, but they were not universally shared. Each polis had its own, entrenching its particularism and confirming its hostility to others. Undermining the scaffolding of myth in each polis meant undermining its political structure. Thus, “if the polis was based upon myth, then abandoning myth meant abandoning the old concept of the polis.”

In these circumstances philosophers opposed the old and narrow myths with equally more universal principles. Thales, for example, "proposed, though he did not accomplish, the foundation of a league of cities: he ran aghround on the old mythical concept of the polis. At the same time he had a foreboding of the enormous danger to Greece if this isolating power of myth continued to keep the cities divided. In fact, had Thales brought his league of cities into being, the Greeks would have been spared the Persian wars and therewith the victory and predominance of Athens.”

 Others worked in different ways to similar ends. Democritus, Nietzsche observes, opposed myths with cold abstractions and scientific thinking. Anaxagoras' philosophy was a mirror image of early Athen's "legislation for men who have no laws." The strict ascetic views of Pythagoras, Empedocles and Anaximander opposed the flabby cosiness of life and indeed “all of the early philosophers took pains to alter the concept of the polis and to create a Panhellenic way of thinking.”

Nietzsche depicts most of these actions as reactive and remedial. The pre-Socratics do not seek to impress an ideal form upon the polis according to presumed universal principles. They reproach harmful habits or tendencies and encourage nascent possibilities. Their thoughts and deeds, albeit in the titanic mode, are a kind of tinkering with the political organism. They might pronounce in the agora, admonish in the market place, stage plays, place books in the temples, or put virtues on public display, but in one way or another - whether to be mistrusted, revered or feared - they are heeded and their contribution is an essential component of the harmony of the polis.

As Nietzsche continued to grapple with the problem of the philosopher's contribution to the politics of cultivation the metaphor of the philosopher as cultural physician was almost entirely displaced by another, already in evidence in the youthful work, that represented the philosopher as a statesman, a legislator: one who sets down laws for the long durations of a civilisation. Such a philosopher would not literally codify laws - though he might well do so! - but would impress unwritten evaluations upon the spirit of a people until these become integral to their way of life. His evaluations would begin as moral systems, "law-giving moralities" as Nietzsche would refer to them, which would reify in political and social structures.

He concedes that philosophers embody many contradictory characteristics, but in general as he observes in an especially illuminating note of 1884, that "after having tried in vain for a long time to attach a definite concept to the word "philosopher" he had recognised at last that there are two distinct kinds of philosopher:

1. those who want to ascertain a complex fact of evaluations (logical or moral);

2. those who are legislators of such evaluations.
Those belonging to the first philosophical type referred to are essentially scholars or scientists since their interest is to “master the world of the present or the past by concentrating and abridging the multiplicity of events through signs: their aim is to make previous events surveyable, comprehensible, graspable, and usable - they assist the task of man to employ all past things for the benefit of his future.” \(^{799}\) The very process of gathering knowledge about the world involves a series of evaluations that effectively anthropomorphise it and make it familiar to humanity. This type of philosopher seeks knowledge in its ultimate, most comprehensive form, but has no effect on the world beyond this. Those of the second type however, who embody the titanic impulse, are able to employ this knowledge in the most far-reaching way, for they are “commanders; they say: “thus it shall be!”. They alone determine the “whither” and the “wherefore”, what is useful and what constitutes utility for men; they dispose of the preparatory work of scientific men, and all knowledge is for them only a means for creation.\(^{800}\)

The philosophical commanders are reformers who change the world, set up grand goals and point out paths for mankind to follow. Their evaluations are eternal reference points that guide all practical decisions about the way we live. But who are these “commanders” who accomplish such grand designs? Are they generals or politicians or bureaucrats? Do we attend when they bark an order or compose an oration? How do they actually command? Nietzsche holds that command is given by means of “law-giving moralities”, that is to say, doctrines we believe and structure our lives around. What may begin as the conscious word of a philosopher may in time, it is supposed, become instinctive and second nature to us as it seeps into our religions, customs, laws, and habits of thought. By encouraging us to believe in a certain way the titan shapes us like clay. “Law-giving moralities are the principle means of fashioning man according to the pleasure of a creative and profound will, provided that such an artist’s will of the first rank has the power in its hands and can make its creative will prevail through long periods of time, in the form of laws, religions, and customs. Such men of great creativity, the really great men according to my understanding, will be sought in vain today and probably for a long time to come.”\(^{801}\)

Between 1884 and 1885, Nietzsche uses the terms breeding ideas or cultivating ideas interchangeably with the concept of law-giving moralities. These terms attribute greater activism to legislators and suggest that their main aim is to have a practical effect on our lives, and to promote his ethos. But what legislators wish us to believe - for pragmatic ends - does not have to be the truth. The titan does not have to believe the dogma he wishes to promote. After all, are not all moralities intrinsically untrue, with no validity on earth or heaven, save in the heart of the believer? If nothing is true, lies are permitted. Useful lies that cajole or terrify us into submitting to the will of the titan.

And so we return once more to Nietzsche’s abiding interest in the doctrine of the “noble”, “holy” or “beautiful” lie. It is the prerogative of the legislator to employ myths, eschatologies, moralities, or any nonsense to achieve his ends. These were methods used unabashedly by the past titans as by priests. Unlike the dishonest liars of the present, “neither Manu nor Plato, neither Confucius nor the Jewish and Christian teachers, ever doubted their right to tell lies...”\(^{802}\)

These honest liars sought power through the lie, precisely in the knowledge that they did not possess it physically or militarily. The most extreme and clear-sighted usage of this means, outside of Plato, is to be found, Nietzsche advises, in the ancient Hindu Law of Manu of the priestly caste, the Brahmans. The whole book of Manu, he states, is founded on a “holy lie”, with the aim of breeding and maintaining entirely separate races through the caste system.\(^{803}\) Every philosopher, in his capacity as a great educator and using the guise of a truth-teller will be found to use lies. “Assuming one thinks of a philosopher as a great educator, powerful enough to draw up to his lonely height a long chain of generations... An educator never says what he himself thinks, but always only what he thinks of a thing in relation to the requirements of those he educates. He must not be detected in this dissimulation; it is part of his mastery that one believes in his honesty, he must be capable of employing every means of discipline: some he can drive to the heights only with the whips of scorn; others, who are sluggish, irresolute, cowardly, vain, perhaps only with exaggerated praise. Such an educator is beyond good and evil; but no one must know of it.”\(^{804}\)

\[\text{Nietzsche as Philosophical Titan}\]

So much for the past but is not Nietzsche also a titan, and has he not also set grand goals for humanity; therefore does not Nietzsche too tell lies? Certainly he believes that in modern Europe “a doctrine is needed powerful enough to work as a breeding agent: strengthening the strong, paralysing

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\(^{799}\) loc. cit.

\(^{800}\) loc. cit.

\(^{801}\) WP, a957.

\(^{802}\) TI, pp.58-59.

\(^{803}\) WP, a142.

\(^{804}\) WP, a880.
and destructive for the world-weary.\textsuperscript{805} His efforts to provide one however are curiously ineffe
tual.

The entire later period of Nietzsche's politics of cultivation, in which he does not oppose modern ideas, but sees them as a preparation for greater developments, can be seen as working from this principle. Modern ideas will create a new slave class, therefore let it happen and spare the labour of the coming master class. On the other hand Nietzsche's work overflows with commands as to how life

should be lived, nowhere more than in \textit{Thus Spake Zarathustra} which reeks of holiness. \textit{Zarathustra} is Nietzsche's \textit{Book of Manu}, but it is by no means a work of conscious untruth. In \textit{Zarathustra}, Nietzsche means what he says, with perhaps one exception, and that is the doctrine of Eternal Recurrence, which he describes as the "great cultivating idea".\textsuperscript{806}

Through promulgation of this idea, that the world waxes and wanes in an identical series of cycles to all eternity, he hopes that the weakest who cannot bear the notion will perish and those who can will prosper. It will, he thinks, determine the fate of races and bring the future masters to the surface, since "those who find it the greatest benefit are chosen to rule."\textsuperscript{807} The eternal recurrence will bring forward the greatest types of genius, because in order to endure the idea one requires "freedom from morality... the enjoyment of all kinds of uncertainty, experimentalism".\textsuperscript{808} one would have to be

formidably rich in spirit to exist in a universe that has no apparent purpose or destiny. The doctrine, as the perfect expression of nihilism, could only be borne by a being capable of creating his own values, who could delight in the conscious exercise of will to power.

Nietzsche was so serious about using the eternal recurrence as his own breeding idea that he planned, possibly around the period he was completing \textit{Thus Spake Zarathustra}, to write an entire book based on it. This may seem more significant than it was since he revised the scope of his \textit{magnum opus} on a number of occasions during his last years, each time preferring one theme over another, but settling most consistently for the title \textit{Revaluation of All Values}. In any event the plan of the book that he sketched is instructive since it shows systematic intention to prove simultaneously the truth of the doctrine and to demonstrate its ethical effects if it is believed; a strange combination of intentions one must suppose if he seriously intends to deceive us that it is truth.

I. Presentation of the doctrine and its theoretical presuppositions and consequences.

2. Proof of the doctrine.

3. Probable consequences of it being believed (it makes everything break open).

   a) Means of enduring it;
      b) Means of disposing of it.

4. Its place in history as a mid-point. Period of greatest danger. \textit{Foundation of an oligarchy above peoples and their interests: education to a universally human politics. Counterpart of Jesuitism.}\textsuperscript{809}

   Although there is no evidence in notes or published works to suggest that Nietzsche did not believe it, he evidently felt he could use it cynically (vide the reference to Jesuitism) as a "holy lie" to breed higher men. But if he really believes the idea is it any longer a lie?

   We could toy with this proposition at length and wonder that Nietzsche, even for a moment, actually imagined that the idea could have any ethical effect at all. Regardless of its place in his metaphysics, it is its political role that most concerns him. But can it really be seen as so terrifying? Is it a more perfectly nihilistic proposition, for example, than to believe that after death there is nothingness and after the extinction of humanity, nothingness again?

   Before Nietzsche, several generations of Europe's most earnest thinkers and poets faced and endured such infinitely more nihilistic propositions, but without arousing any orgy of psychic strength. In view of these and other considerations the eternal recurrence must be counted as one Nietzsche's strangest oddities. We acknowledge its existence and set it aside before we pass on.
20 - Breeding

If you want Utopian plans, I would say: the only solution to the problem is the despotism of the wise and noble members of a genuine aristocracy, a genuine nobility, achieved by mating the most magnanimous men with the cleverest and most gifted women. This proposal constitutes My Utopia and my Platonic Republic.

The Idea of Breeding

So significant political acts can be accomplished by spiritual reformers: individuals who, though not able to mobilise masses or armies at a command, use art, education or philosophy to make us reconsider how we think and behave. The slow process of spiritual reform using all the varieties of communication available - speeches, laws, books, music, pedagogy, paintings, or treatises - is the most certain way to exhort or seduce us into new intellectual and ethical habits, and change the material culture of artefacts, organisations and social structures into one beneficial for the production of genius and virtue. The material world will follow the spiritual one, and if people change their thoughts, they can change their circumstances.

This idea dominates Nietzsche for most of his life, but early on he also poses a contradictory view which, in his last three years of sanity, coexists with the first on equal terms but is neither reconciled nor harmonised. This belief is that new habits of mind do not greatly reshape actions, which are so wedded to material circumstances. The only way to encourage new habits of mind is to create conditions in which they can exist. So when, in Beyond Good and Evil, he states that his politics fundamentally fixes on "the serious, on the 'European problem' as I understand it, on the breeding of a new ruling caste for Europe..." the means he proposes for attaining this end are both spiritual and material in character.

Breeding, as we have described it, wherein the philosopher instils certain virtues in individuals by imposing moralities upon them, now takes on a more literal, more corporeal, and even biological meaning. Now it is supposed that the physical nature of men must be changed before his capacity for virtue can be increased. The new guiding premise, as stated in 1887, is that one must "...not... preach morality... in any form, as if 'morality in itself', or any ideal kind of man, were given; but... create conditions that require stronger men who for their part need, and consequently will have, a morality (more clearly: a physical spiritual discipline) that makes them strong."

This elaborates logically Nietzsche's view of nature and genius as will to power. With genius redefined as the consummate form of the organisation of power, the original "spiritual" conception of higher culture had to lose ground and the concept of "breeding" acquired explicitly biological connotations. Breeding statements with the physical emphasis increase in his works from about 1886, after he completes the last book of Thus Spake Zarathustra, and occur most frequently throughout 1888, his final year of stupendous productivity, when the riddles of nature and humanity seem to him utterly revealed. Most of them can be broken down into two broad types: either they refer to the breeding of genius from "without", by constructing appropriate political and social environments, or they refer to breeding from "within", by improving biological makeup. One means is environmental and the other eugenic.

Environmental Breeding: The Politics of Virtue

The idea that more virtuous, talented or energetic individuals could be bred within an appropriate political environment is one of the primary ideas of the politics of cultivation. It is manifestly the aim of many of the real and mythical, constitutions of antiquity, of Solon, Lycurgus, or Plato, and in the Renaissance the intention of Bruni and Machiavelli’s excursions into political speculation.

Nietzsche acknowledges Machiavelli as an antecedent when, in what was possibly a draft of the introduction to the intended Revaluation of all Values, he refers to the need to create what he calls a "grand politics of virtue". The treatise which was to follow and which was to deal with this subject was "...intended for the use of those whose interest must lie in learning, not how one becomes virtuous, but how one makes virtuous - how virtue is made to dominate. I even intend to prove that to desire the one - the domination of virtue - one absolutely must not desire the other; one automatically renounces becoming virtuous oneself... This treatise... posits an ideal of these politics, it describes them as they would have to be, if anything on this earth could be perfect. Now, no philosopher will be

811 BCJE, p251.
812 WP, 4881.
in any doubt as to the type of perfection in politics; that is crude Machiavellianism. But Machiavellianism pur, sans mélange, cru, vert, dans toute sa force, dans toute son appétit, is superhuman, divine, transcendental, it will never be achieved by man only approximated... 813

The allusions to Machiavellism are not to immoral application of power for its own sake, but to the Renaissance thinker’s idea of developing viri (meaning efficiency rather than “goodness”) in a population by means of political organisation. For Machiavelli the form that most guaranteed this was civic republicanism which, he believed, expected greater energy and talent from its citizenry than any other. Nietzsche, of course, does not share this view, but agrees with Machiavelli that immoral means are often needed to produce ethical affects and states repeatedly in his final years “...every means hitherto employed with the intention of making mankind moral has been thoroughly immoral...” 814

More specifically, the practice of breeding desired human types, of establishing necessary environments for such types by means of morality requires that one exist beyond all subjection to moral conditions. “The morality of breeding and the morality of taming are, in the means they employ to attain their ends, entirely worthy of one another: we may set down as our chief proposition that to make morality one must have the unconditional will to the contrary.” 815

In other words, the philosopher ruler cannot simply be a “holy liar”, a myth-maker or story-teller; he must be able to enact laws to achieve practical effects, even if they be unjust in implementation. He would not for example legislate that slothful people become energetic and industrious. A just decree has no effect without tangible causes to change behaviour, such as by rewarding or endangering self-interest. An environment contrived to punish sloth and reward industry would force or motivate individuals to acquire the desired virtue.

The philosophical ruler that wants to breed genius must operate from an ethical position “beyond good and evil”, and engage his people in the grand designs of discipline and suffering needed to accumulate the capacity to will. According to the principles outlined, high culture is possible only in a culture of the strong willed and such strength is gathered and stored by people in times of adversity, danger and distress. Pointing to the Renaissance, he complains that we acknowledge the greatness of the individuals of that epoch, but refuse to see what desperate conditions made it possible for them to exist. Merely to be an individuo was dangerous, and a proportionate ferocity and strength was needed to survive at all. No one became an individual by behaving nicely.

You cannot expect greatness without the circumstances that make it possible. To produce rare and sublime individuals, you need means that may seem opposite to this intention. The severe and restricting moralities of an aristocracy impose great physical and spiritual hardship but are actually anti-individual, and assure only that a single type or species of human begins to form within their boundaries. Yet the consolidation of a group in this way is only the beginning of a long preparatory process: it forces those within it to become stronger, like clay stiffening within its mold, awaiting the time when the hard casing can be removed. Then a different situation pertains, and you no longer need to subject individuals to hardship, as they already possess sufficient inherited strength. The ancient moralities can be relaxed, or rather, individuals grow too strong for them and are able to follow laws of their own contrivance. The interests of the group no longer have to be supported. The aim now is to protect and ease the circumstances of individuals so that all the power of generations accumulated in them is released in all forms of genius. Nietzsche outlines this process in summary in Beyond Good and Evil, showing how he imagines environmental breeding would operate.

In the first instance, he says,

“...a species arises, a type becomes fixed and strong, through protracted struggle against essentially constant unfavourable conditions. Conversely, one knows from the experience of breeders that species which receive plentiful nourishment and an excess of care and protection soon tend very strongly to produce variations of their type and are rich in marvels and monstrosities (also in monstrous vices). Now look for once at an aristocratic community, Venice say, or an ancient Greek polis, as a voluntary or involuntary contrivance for the purpose of breeding: there are human beings living together and thrown on their own resources who want their species to prevail usually because they have to prevail or run the terrible risk of being exterminated. Here those favourable conditions, that excess, that protection which favours variations, is lacking; the species needs itself as a species, as something that can prevail and purchase durability in its continual struggle against its neighbours or against the oppressed in revolt or threatening revolt, precisely by virtue of its hardness, uniformity, simplicity of form. The most manifold experience teaches it which qualities it has principally to thank... that it still exists and has always been victorious: these qualities it calls virtues, these virtues alone does it breed and cultivate. It does so with severity, indeed it wants severity; every aristocratic morality is intolerant, in the education of the young, in the measures its takes with respect to women, in marriage customs, in the relations between young and old, in the penal laws... In the end however

811 WP, a304.
812 TI, p.59.
813 TI, p.58.
there arises one day an easier state of affairs and the tremendous tension relaxes; perhaps there are no longer any enemies among their neighbours, and the means of life, even for the enjoyment of life, are there in plenty. With one stroke the bond and constraint of the ancient discipline is broken: it is no longer felt to be a necessity, a condition of existence...Variation, whether as deviation (into the higher, rarer, more refined) or as degeneration and monstrosity, is suddenly on the scene in the greatest splendour and abundance, the individual dares to be an individual and stand out. The dangerous and uncanny point is reached where the grander, more manifold, more comprehensive life lives beyond the old morality; the "individual" stands there, reduced to his own law-giving, to his own arts and stratagems for self-preservation, self-enhancement, self-redemption.\textsuperscript{a316}

Political and social environments make virtues necessary for the group and therefore possible, but when those conditions are removed, stronger individuals can find virtue for themselves. If they are not to be isolated, chance events, formations of genius can only be bred in specific environments, and if these do not exist, they must be contrived artificially. The Greek polis was such a contrivance. According to Nietzsche the Indian caste system was another. Devised by Aryan conquerors determined to perpetuate hegemony over subject races, it employed tools of environmental breeding. The object of the hegemony, as instituted by the dominant caste, the Brahmins, descendents of the original conquerors, and as revealed in the lawbook of Manu, is "to breed no fewer than four races simultaneously: a priestly, a warrior a trading and farming race, and finally a mental race, the Sudras. Here we are manifestly no longer among animal-tamers; a species of human being a hundred times more gentle and rational is presupposed even to conceive the plan of such a breeding.\textsuperscript{a317}

Two different methods for creating moral environments are implicit in the system of Manu; one, Nietzsche calls "breeding" and the other, "taming". Both employ morality but have different goals. The aim of breeding is aristocratic: to raise a more powerful and healthier class of beasts, but taming seeks to make some beasts meeker and less dangerous. Taming provides a morality appropriate to an underclass and is used everywhere by priestly hierarchies to render the human beast malleable and pliable. They have made men physically and spiritually sickly, "through the depressive emotion of fear, through pain, through injuries, through hunger,...\textsuperscript{a318}

To demonstrate that his terminology is not merely metaphorical, Nietzsche reminds us that the very different types taming and breeding produce represent "zoological terms.\textsuperscript{a319} They are literally different animals, and the differences are exaggerated further by diverging practices of hygiene and nutrition. Thus we come to the second aspect breeding: the biological foundation of genius.

**Biological Breeding: Eugenics**

Breeding from within, commonly called eugenics, is again not a modern idea. It has been practised by civilised and uncivilised peoples for millennia, being understood as simply the application of principles derived from animal husbandry to humanity.

The public practice of eugenics has either been associated with coercive states, or it has occurred at a much less visible level through the customs or design of social classes or private families. The state-sponsored forms of eugenics have almost always been the most visible and least common. A state-based breeding policy requires an exceptional centralised power that can place its own interests before those of the family. The earliest example we have, that of Sparta, famed for its robust men and women, excited the imagination of Plato, the first theoretical eugenicist of the West. This is paralleled by the religious eugenics of the ancient and indeed modern Hebrews. In modern times we see variations of the practice in the American south where economic considerations motivated landowners to breed stronger slaves, and in coercive states like eighteenth century Prussia. Frederick William I, unable to satisfy a penchant for tall grenadiers by press-ganging all over Europe, forced his tallest soldiers to marry Dutch peasant girls (the Dutch being the tallest people in Europe). Modern Germany again resorted to state-sponsored eugenic practices in the well-recorded endeavours of the Nazi epoch.

Does Nietzsche prefer authority for biological regulation to fall to the state, the community or to the family? As always his speculations present a series of vacillations and obscurities from youth to maturity. The problem is compounded by the fact that most of these occur in undeveloped notes, and were never substantially presented in his published works.

Eugenic principles are implicit in much of what he writes, even if he does not elaborate on them. This is particularly the case in his youth where his eugenic musings are most guarded. This reticence is noticeable in the incomplete essay of 1871 titled *The Greek Woman*. He recalls Plato’s demand that the state should - in lieu of marriage - arrange solemn nuptials for the bravest men and the noblest women to produce beautiful offspring. In this principle proposition, he says, Plato “indicated most...

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\textsuperscript{a316} BGE, a262.  
\textsuperscript{a317} TI, pp 56-57.  
\textsuperscript{a318} TI, p.56.  
\textsuperscript{a319} TI, p.55.
distinctly, indeed too distinctly, offensively distinctly - an important preparatory step of the Hellenic will towards the procreation of genius. Clearly his sympathy is with Plato on this point, since he savours its provocation. In his last three years of sanity, he is less fastidious, and militantly provocative. In late nineteenth century Germany and Europe eugenics was well regarded but focused on principles of race. It was widely supposed that a race's vigour depended on its purity. Nietzsche seeks to shock by insisting on miscegenation as the superior biological breeding principle. He is genuinely convinced that "race mixture" would assist a people to "...strive for fullness of nature through the pairing of opposites."

**Women and breeding**

The real focus of Nietzsche's eugenic ideas however is the institution of marriage, of which there are two forms: bourgeois and aristocratic. Both are contrivances for breeding in the environmental and biological senses.

The bourgeois form, which elevates the status of women, is the most modern and dominant, but is declining, having abandoned breeding as its highest purpose. The older aristocratic form places woman in obscurity. Privately, as suggested by his personal life, Nietzsche appears to be sympathetic to an elevated style of bourgeois marriage, but intellectually he wishes to promote the idea of aristocratic marriage as an antidote to the perceived corruption of the former.

Despite counsels against marriage for those contemplating the "free-spirited" philosophic life, Nietzsche many times considered marrying but finally did not, being unable to find anyone he deemed suitable. In writings of the middle period, he suggests that the kind of marriage he would have been seeking was a type of higher friendship, a contract for producing descendents, which diminished sexual or romantic passion as reasons for bonding. "Marriages which are contracted for love", he advises, "have error for their father and need for their mother." Later he claims that the idea of love has so usurped any real justification for the institution that it will ultimately disappear: "modern marriage has lost its meaning - consequently it is being abolished." While acknowledging how marriage permits two to gratify their sexual desires at society's convenience, and how attraction and good will will both between parties must exist prior to the formation of any bond, he considers these to be lesser issues. Fundamentally marriage must ensure that specific types of individuals are joined, not for their indulgence, but as sacrifices to the higher purpose of perpetuating family and class. Modern marriage is being subverted by the shamelessly sentimental ideal of love, as institutions in which the wife alone serves her husband's sexual needs.

This will always encourage men to choose their partners for less than the highest purpose. And if this disturbing tendency is to be avoided then the higher type of bourgeois marriage, one not founded on the mere satisfaction of sexual appetites, might have to promote and tolerate "concubinage" as its ally. Men will then turn to "nobler" women for marriage, but if unsatisfied sexually can console themselves with a more "sensual" type. Thus: "the noble and liberal-minded women who take as their mission the education and elevation of the female sex, should not overlook one point of view: Marriage regarded in its highest aspect, as the spiritual friendship of two persons of opposite sexes, and accordingly such as is hoped for in future, contracted for the purpose of producing and educating a new generation, such marriage which only rarely makes use of the sensual will, probably need a natural auxiliary, namely, concubinage. For if, on the grounds of his health, the wife is also to serve for the sole satisfaction of the man's sexual needs, a wrong perspective, opposed to the aims indicated, will have the most influence in the choice of a wife. The aims referred to: the production of descendents, will be accidental, and their successful education highly improbable. A good wife, who has to be a friend, helper, child-bearer, mother, family-head and manager, and has even perhaps to conduct her own business and affairs separately from those of the husband, cannot at the same time be a concubine; it would in general, be asking too much of her. In the future, therefore, a state of things might take place the opposite of what existed at Athens in the time of Pericles; the men, whose wives were then little more to them than concubines, turned besides to the Aspasias, because they longed for the charms of a companionship gratifying to both head and heart, such as the grace and intellectual suppleness of women could alone provide."

Here Nietzsche accepts a traditional maternal role for women, but allows that they receive greater independence and equality with men. This type of marriage remains a voluntary breeding arrangement entered into by individuals without communal or state-imposed guidelines. Eugenic considerations do not serve the more enduring sense of aristocratic lineage. They remain solely the concern of those who are bonding for the welfare of immediate descendents. There is no wider or
more distant biological goal. The choice of partner, if by minds not befuddled by lust, is left to the wisdom and judgement of a couple who seek mutual advantage in their bond.

In the later period, Nietzsche extols the virtues of the older aristocratic form of marriage organised, not for immediate descendents, but for the greater family, the most distant generations; i.e. whole classes and races. Marriage of this sort was “a question of the breeding of a race... thus of the maintenance of a fixed, definite type of ruling man: man and woman were sacrificed to this point of view. It is obvious that love was not the first consideration here; on the contrary!... What was decisive was the interest of the family, and beyond that - the class. We would shiver a little at the coldness, severity, and calculating clarity of such a noble concept of marriage in every healthy aristocracy, in ancient Athens as in the eighteenth century..."\(^{225}\)

Where this style of breeding comes to the fore, woman moves to the rear, and the community or state takes precedence in decisions regarding who should bond with whom. The younger Nietzsche makes this point effectively in the early essay The Greek Woman, where he observes that the subordinate position of women in aristocratic Greece is an indicator of the state’s power in regulating breeding practice. In the polis "the Hellenic woman as mother had to live in obscurity, because the political instinct together with its highest aim [i.e. the breeding of genius] demanded it..."\(^{226}\)

Men involved in the affairs of the polis were the sole source of regulation, as opposed to the family. Women, being house-bound, were denied access to the one source of influence they might otherwise enjoy. Nor did men seek higher friendships with their wives; such refinements could be found with freer women, courtesans. If anything, the household was where men recuperated from their political exertions, and wives and mothers found their highest function in pouring a salve on men’s wounds.

It was in the household, in the conservative atmosphere of the feminine that any respite could be had from political fractions. Only after the disintegration of the principle of the polis, Nietzsche argues, did woman attain power in the household. When the state declines, she "had to step in as helper; the family as a makeshift for the State is her work; and in this sense the artistic aim of the state had to abase itself to the level of domestic art."\(^{227}\) In other words the great work of shaping individuals, what we call the politics of cultivation, became the work of the family, where woman could exert her influence. What is arrived at is the arrangement we called “bourgeois marriage” where the state plays little part and women have made good the deficiencies of the state in their position as domestic rulers.

In the later work Nietzsche prefers a diminished role of women within the aristocratic state. His sentiments are manifestly anti-feminist, claiming that the onset of the industrial age and the decline of the aristocratic and military spirit has enabled woman to aspire to the economic and legal independence of a clerk; “Woman as clerk”, he states, “stands inscribed on the portal of the modern society now taking shape."\(^{228}\)

As a result the dominant position of women within the family has declined, and since the French revolution their influence has lessened in proportion to the increase in her rights and claims. The education of women, and encouragement for them to read newspapers and play politics undermines their essentially conserving instincts, and multiplies the damaging affects of political and social factionalism. This blunting and enfeebling of the instincts of modern men and women can only enfeeble culture. Hence it is necessary that "... a man who has depth, in his spirit as well as his desires... can think of woman only in an oriental way - he must conceive of woman as a possession, as property with lock and key, as something predestined for service and attaining her fulfilment in service - in this matter he must take his stand on the tremendous intelligence of Asia, on Asia’s superiority of instinct, as the Greeks formerly did: they were Asia’s best heirs and pupils and, as is well known, from Homer to the age of Pericles, with the increase of their culture and the amplitude of their powers, also became step by step more strict with women, in short more oriental..."\(^{229}\)

Against the modern trend Nietzsche speculates on how marriage in its aristocratic form might be reawakened and again be made to serve culture by breeding biologically superior specimens. In a note of 1888 from the Will to Power he considers measures that could be taken to this end and that “advantages of all kinds” might be made available “for fathers who bring many boys into the world, possibly a plural vote; a medical certificate preceding every marriage and endorsed by the local authorities, several definite questions must be answered by the couple and by doctors (“family history”...); as an antidote to prostitution (or as its ennoblement); marriages for a period, legalised (for years, for months), with guarantees for the children; every marriage warranted and sanctioned by a certain number of trusted men of the community, as a matter of concern to the community.”\(^{230}\)

What this sanctions is greater state or community involvement in decisions regarding marriage. The
family’s role is secondary and extinguished if the spirit of these measures is considered. He also urges prohibiting breeding to those who threaten to produce children whose lives will miscarry, intellectually or physically, or pass on congenital sickness. They must be dissuaded from breeding by any means, even the most drastic. In 1888 he advises that “there are cases in which a child would be a crime: in the case of chronic invalids and neurasthenic of the third degree... Society as the great trustee of life, is responsible to life itself for every miscarried life - it also has to pay for such lives: consequently it ought to prevent them. In numerous cases, society ought to prevent procreation: to this end, it may hold in readiness, without regard to descent, rank, or spirit, the most rigorous means of constraint, deprivation of freedom, in certain circumstances castration.”

All of the measures listed here would require a complex edifice for systematic breeding, even if it is not Nietzsche’s intention that this should be so. You would suppose that the least level of authority required to establish and police eugenic practices would be the local community, and closely thereafter the state, even though he does not say specifically that the state should be so engaged, and notes only that it should accomplished by “society”, or “trusted men of the community”. But when the private task of procreation is a matter of public interest, can it be doubted that the state would become guardian of eugenic practice?

Conclusions

In his final phase, Nietzsche’s activism is transfigured by his focus on breeding principles. This significant, but seldom acknowledged aspect of Nietzsche’s politics of cultivation, overlays his continuing emphasis on spiritual reform but also undermines it. In asserting that physical circumstances have to be created before desired behaviour can arise, he undermines the basis for spiritual reform and the philosophical titan is now a law-giver who encourages the introduction of moralities that will create those environmental circumstances. For Nietzsche, high culture, the morality of the strong, can only arise within an aristocratic caste and “the new philosopher can arise only in conjunction with a ruling caste, as its highest spiritualisation.”

Although he offers no palpable recommendations on how this might arise in modernity, he does in his later career resort to a characteristic response, perhaps unconscious, perhaps not, that allows history itself, rather than makers of history to carry us forward. Perhaps he is not unlike Marx in this respect, thinking that laws of history will take us where we want to go, without even requiring us to help it. So increasingly he looks benignly on the future of Europe, and sees in every material and seemingly unavoidable development an outcome favourable to high culture. The decadence of Europe, which had worried and chafed him for years, now portended its reversal. What he had regarded previously regarded as undesirable tendencies: democratisation, modern ideas, nationalism, were now material bases on which the new aristocracy, the new philosophic titans could build.

Fortunate conditions were being prepared for culture unwittingly by history. It merely takes a sleight of perception to recast history in this way. Was it that the diminished influence he accorded spiritual reform forced him to this stratagem? Those who no longer believe greatly in the power of contemporary individuals often recourse to the might of the process.

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831 WP, a734.
832 WP, a978.
21 - Conclusion

Ethical ideas, the underlying standpoints from which people evaluate or justify their existence, change very slowly within the long history of civilisations, and are generally invisible even to those who actively speculate about ethical questions.

For the most part, ethical discussions reflect hasty adaption by successive generations of those same underlying standpoints to their ever-changing needs. As each generation succeeds and then clashes with its predecessor over years and decades, it rarely does more than give new names to the same old suppositions, which strike it as being original and unprecedented. Only rarely are there truly profound changes that are actually at odds with these fundamental ethical standpoints. When this happens they accompany equally profound changes to the material organisation of a civilisation.

If we use the microscope and focus on an idea that concerns a single generation or individual, we see the language used to discuss it and how various protagonists defend or attack it. If we use the telescope we see how the idea gathers and shapes in the literature of civilisations over millennia, and observe long trends or patterns. Through the telescope we see the grand outline of events but miss the detail. With the accuracy of the microscope, we see a fragment but lose sense of peripheries and dimensions as a whole.

In this essay we have tried to use both instruments. We have focused on an individual, Nietzsche, obsessed with his own generational conflict, to illustrate the character of a millennial idea called the *Ideal of Cultivation*. However facile the knowledge gained by glancing investigations it does clarify the enduring nature of the *Ideal of Cultivation*, making it recognisable in all its forms, and to indicate the influences that make someone reformulate it in their milieu.

By doing this we have not sought to prove that Nietzsche was not really original or merely an unconscious stooge of his environment. Such *historically conscious* thinkers can never be dispensed with in this way, for they have the entire history of thought at their disposal and can make ethical choices determined by complex and subtle biographical factors that take precedence over environmental ones. Our aim rather is to show that even "original" thinkers like Nietzsche only ever adapt the deep structures of ethical ideas to a specific context. Fundamentally, his presuppositions are little different from those available to the thinkers of antiquity.

Nietzsche’s model of the *Ideal of Cultivation*, like that of intellectual predecessors in Germany, resembles the inward-looking ideal characteristic of the phase of Greek civilisation known as Hellenism. Both Germany until the late nineteenth century and Hellenistic Greece were essentially cosmopolitan, imperial and bureaucratic in character. German civilisation differed in retaining even as late as the mid-nineteenth century more of the vestiges of courtly power and culture than Hellenistic Greece ever did. This fact conferred on the German *Ideal of Cultivation*, or *Bildung*, a more complex character that is reflected in attempts by individuals such as Nietzsche to revert to a more purely aristocratic or courtly variant of the ideal. Imposed on this complexity was the fact that Germany in the late nineteenth century, which had subsisted for so long without a civic religion, was embracing its most modern form, namely the nationalism of the territorial state.

In a reversal of the phases of Greek civilisation, Germany was moving towards a national and republican orientation from a cosmopolitan and imperial one. The upsurge in national religion in Germany and the West reflected deeper changes in the structures of civilisation: in the modes of production, in a relentless democratic trend, in the dominance of science both as an ideology and as the bulwark of technological advance, all of which entrenched the decline of medieval animism and other-worldliness and introduced a new type of secular orientation. It was the very phenomenon of rapid transition that Nietzsche interpreted as a "crisis" in the system of values of modern Europe, and led him to conclude that Europeans no longer had a fixed idea of how they should live.

So, although Nietzsche was antagonistic to otherworldly doctrine, it was the new and dominant forms of this-worldliness that he saw as the major competitor to the *Ideal of Cultivation*. His thought can be perceived as an unusual moment in the history of this *ideal*, for it was not religion, as it has been most often, but secularism, whether of a eudemonic, corporatist, or nationalistic type that threatened it most. And just as he saw himself fighting a rear-guard action against the remnants of *other-worldliness*, he was already bouncing against another deadly foe in the eudemonic doctrine of progress; that held the perfection of nature to consist solely in improving our physical comfort.

Nietzsche believed that modern secularism had taken a vulgar turn because Europe’s old aristocracy, with the bulwark of high culture, had been undermined, and with it the principles of an aristocratic organisation of civilisation. With the base lacking, he sought, through a “revaluation of all values” to create a new aristocracy, or moralised, spectre of aristocracy, much as disaffected scribes and intellectuals have always done, believing that only those with the highest virtue and most developed faculties should rule. His active preference was for an intellectualised warrior caste, rather than what
Certainly the perturbations of the spirit suffered by nineteenth century scholars and intellectuals concerning the fate of the *Ideal of Cultivation* are little known today. What preoccupied some of the most significant students of humanity a mere two and three generations ago, is now barely comprehensible, due in large measure to the fact that they were among the last generations to be educated with classical humanist texts. It is easy to select randomly isolated individuals living between 1850 and 1950 whose work displays this concern: in France, there is Hyppolyte Taine or Ernest Renan; in Germany, scientific and philosophic examples abound: Max Weber and Georg Simmel in the social sciences, Karl Jaspers in philosophy and Thomas Mann in literature; in Spain, the philosopher Ortega Y Gasset; in Switzerland, the historian Jacob Burckhardt; in England, Matthew Arnold; in Holland, the historian Huizinga; in Italy, in this century, the reactionary Evola; in Denmark the literary critic Georg Brandes...

The list could go on in this arbitrary way but it is more instructive perhaps to follow social networks; Taine, who corresponded with Burckhardt as well as Nietzsche. Nietzsche who worked with Burckhardt and corresponded with Brandes; Jaspers, who knew and admired Weber, and so forth. Such webs of association can be spun easily when distinguished scholars of a generation or two invariably knew or knew of, or were even taught by each other. We would be exaggerating greatly however if we presumed that we do not still hear lamentations about the fate of the *Ideal of Cultivation*. These tend now to come mainly from historians and academics working in the humanities. That is, academics who have some familiarity with classical texts. There has long existed in America, for example, where the gulf between the modern and the old is always most sharply felt, a strain of cultural pessimism dedicated to berating each new generation for its ignorance of cultural excellence, or for just plain old ignorance itself.\(^{834}\) As is the way with these things, each new generation of pessimists thinks the situation is worse than it used to be.

In the face of the nineteenth century belief that the *Ideal of Cultivation* was dwindling we must ask whether today this ideal can provide justification to individuals and peoples in the new cosmopolitan and democratic civilisation of the west. If it cannot, we must ask whether it is because the new civilisation is intrinsically inimical to it, or because other secular ideals are simply more successful.

Is the democratic world incompatible, as Nietzsche believed, with this offspring of aristocratic civilisation? The question, which embodies Nietzsche’s profoundest error, is the easiest to refute, for he interpreted every historical example of high culture in terms familiar to him; namely from the perspective of the cosmopolitan empire. Burckhardt, a patrician Swiss, who had a better understanding of republican ideals, could see that it was the tension between democratic and aristocratic forms (if not the forms themselves) that provided the dynamism for the achievements of antiquity and the Italian Renaissance. If anything republics that were most democratic produced the most renowned examples of high culture: compare Athens to Sparta, and Florence to Milan to recall this fact. The view that the *Ideal of Cultivation* can only occur in a rigidly aristocratic milieu is safely diminished by looking at these examples. And it is doubtful whether any high culture could have occurred at all if the magnified class structure that Nietzsche envisaged actually existed.

There is nothing different about modernity that would prevent it from accommodating this ideal. If, at present, we inhabit an historical oddity, a large and complex civilisation that is substantially democratic, it is not, of course, without reasonably well-defined class structures. In the modern west, the principle of the separation of classes is the same as it ever was and or will be: there are still administrators and there are still servants. It is only that the gulf between them is remarkably closer, given the pervasiveness of public education, which permits individuals to transfer from one class to the other. Moreover, the complexity of hierarchies and professions has rendered the boundaries between rulers and ruled as a blurring and phasing rather than a sharp distinction.

All forms of corporation from government bureaucracies, to business enterprises, to trade unions and other professional bodies are able to exert partial powers that are counterbalanced by others. Though occasionally generally dormant civic participation can be wakened, it is fundamentally the official and the functionary, or what we call the *corporate manager*, who rules the west today. In this respect our civilisation still resembles, in its rudiments, the Hellenistic period of antiquity. This is not to say that it is fated for the same end, simply that similar ethical types are likely to exist who reflect the nature of, and shapes of power that dominate. If an *Ideal of Cultivation* were to occur here what form would it take? Who would provide the icon of heroism appropriate to it? Would it be the warrior, courtier, the republican politician or the sage?

The model of the warrior or courtier can be discounted quickly. The former lives only in cinema and popular fiction and is universally disparaged by the intelligentsia; the latter is barely comprehended,

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833 WP, p.43. He goes on to say that this was “bound to invite reflection and imitation in every respect. Again Plato: but above all the Egyptians.”

even in the profession of diplomacy where it sustained a flickering astral existence after the extinction of aristocratic society. The model of the republican politician, while it could be conceivable and attainable in the modern west, clearly does not have heroic status; it despised rather than admired. The model of the sage, as he was depicted in late antiquity at least, does not deeply touch the modern psyche, though in principle it is this which would be most accessible to modern conditions.

For all their differences, each of these models represents a type of administrator; each poses a different solution to the problem of how power is used. They are identical in another important respect: all are profoundly anti-specialist, standing outside of and above the varieties of professions and technicians. Blatantly non-expert in outlook and in the form of education they require, which values adaptability and capacity deal with the vicissitudes of daily administration. Hence, if a new icon of heroism is to be constructed from this civilisation, it would have to be based on the type who currently rules. This of course will not be the warrior, or the republican politician, or the sage, but the corporate manager, and it is on this model - however absurd or laughable it may sound - that any new Ideal of Cultivation would form, if it ever does. Nietzsche’s nostalgic desire for older models is fatuous here. For good or ill, the old ideal based on Greek texts has gone forever. The querelle des anciens et modernes that agitated intellectuals at the dawn of the modern world has been won resoundingly by moderns, who no longer even remember that there was an argument.

The qualities required of individuals engaged in administration are the same today as in every preceding civilisation. There is no reason to suppose that an Ideal of Cultivation that aims at synthetic understanding and synthetic capacity should not also arise here. Yet, scrutiny of the trends in modern education and values barely hints that it is taking place. The fragmentation of labour and knowledge is unprecedented. Nothing can be done in business or government without relying on a range of intermediaries and experts of every type and quality. Every process and every area of existence has been staked out and claimed by some career specialist or other. This phenomenon, in its necessity and in its absurdity, is integral to our civilisation and cannot be wished away. At the same time as modern civilisation offers education to all, it also promotes ignorance, narrowness, one-sidedness and the values of the expert. The natural inclination of the specialist is to oppose the goals of synthesis and thereby deny the possibility of an Ideal of Cultivation. In consequence we have reached the point where administrators themselves do not stand outside and above separate disciplines but actually regard themselves as a type of expert in their own right. Throughout the world theologies of management theory and social science are now at work transforming banalities into a species of "higher knowledge".

The other fact that may allow an Ideal of Cultivation to develop is in the alleged increase of leisure afforded by the productive efficiencies of modern civilisation. As we have seen, the undertaking by individuals to "perfect their nature" is generally not a materially productive or lucrative activity. Those engaged in such an enterprise must be of either independent means, or must have some considerable degree of leisure at their disposal. Of course, historically this is one of the primary reasons why the ideal has only ever been adopted by aristocracies or wealthy elites, these being the only groups so fortunately endowed.

It has been the much touted accomplishment of modern civilisation that it can provide greater numbers than ever before with time to pursue their own happiness in the one hundred and twenty eight hours of the week in which they do not labour for a living. Leaving aside whether this claim is true, partly due to worldwide propagation of free market infantilism, adoption of U.S. slave values, and the collapse of organised labour, we can say that the availability of leisure has been equalised among working and managerial classes. In fact, for the latter, long hours at work is deemed virtuous and leisure something only for holiday periods. The few who could enjoy total leisure appear to prefer attending to business. Hence, the never-ending success of technology in wresting from work its burdensome and onerous nature, has merely created more sedentary forms of duty and made all of us white-collar professionals of one sort or another.

The luxury of idleness remains a technical possibility however and if it ever becomes a political reality, it is possible that an Ideal of Cultivation may again become a dominant ethical system. After all, there are already so many popular forms of "self-development" in existence today, as many and more than crowded the Hellenistic world, where culture was also highly personalised. Characteristically, many of these appear to be related to the aspirations and activities of young professionals, the corporate managers.

Indeed it is the Hellenistic variant of the ideal that is easiest to sustain within our teeming cities. On the other hand, our dogged industriousness causes us more than ever to subdivide our existence into the time for work and time for entertainment. In each life the conduct of one is peripheral and unrelated to the other. First of all we must work to exist, while the interstices of the day that remain are to be filled with divertissements. Due to this subdivision, even the provision of entertainment has been industrialised, to the extent that the practice of what has hitherto been referred to as "high culture" is to be regarded as either entertainment for those who receive it or an industry for those who produce it. Even the most precious of modern aesthetes is not ashamed to refer to his hobbyhorse as an "arts industry".
The pessimistic view of nineteenth century scholars is that an Ideal of Cultivation will be impossible to sustain in the present civilisation, but that does not mean it is doomed.

From the perspective of the long duration, it is unlikely that any major new developments in ethics, not already anticipated in antiquity, will occur until a mode of living other than that based on the city emerges. Nietzsche himself was deeply aware that "the only kind of culture which has been established until now is the culture of the city," and that "we still live within this culture today." It would therefore entail the greatest hubris, as doom-telling always does, to imagine that the ideal of perfecting nature has disappeared or will disappear from the face of the earth forever.

To be sure, it will be forgotten in some generations, but it will be remembered again in others. It will be called by new names and lived by in new ways but the possibility of it emerging will never perish completely so long as there is such a thing as civilisation. Whether we hold this to be a good or bad thing is of course not a question for scholarship. The purpose of this essay merely has been to point to its existence and to define the shapes that this ethical system has assumed in various times and places.

By doing so, we will learn to recognise it more readily when or wherever it arises in the world. If nothing else, we cannot permit ourselves to be closed to the possible ways in which people individually can lead their lives, or advance ecumenical aims. The Ideal of Cultivation has played an essential role in the inspiration and development of the west. Wherever we may now be headed, and however little interest in it we currently may display, it is an ideal we should not forget.

835 SSW, PAT, p.141
Friedrich Nietzsche: Primary Reading

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**History of Ideas**


## Abbreviations of works by Nietzsche

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date of Publication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U# TGS</td>
<td>The Greek State</td>
<td>1871</td>
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<tr>
<td>F# OMW</td>
<td>On Music and Words</td>
<td>1871</td>
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<tr>
<td>F# TGW</td>
<td>The Greek Woman</td>
<td>1871</td>
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<tr>
<td>P BT</td>
<td>Birth of Tragedy</td>
<td>1872</td>
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<tr>
<td>F# SGC</td>
<td>The Relation of Schopenhauer's Philosophy to German Culture</td>
<td>1872</td>
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<tr>
<td>F* TP</td>
<td>The Philosopher</td>
<td>1872</td>
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<tr>
<td>F* TPT</td>
<td>The Pathos of Truth</td>
<td>1872</td>
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<tr>
<td>U FEI</td>
<td>The Future of Our Educational Institutions</td>
<td>1872</td>
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<tr>
<td>F* HC</td>
<td>Homer's Contest</td>
<td>1873</td>
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<tr>
<td>P BT</td>
<td>Birth of Tragedy</td>
<td>1872</td>
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<td>F* SSW</td>
<td>The Struggle Between Science and Wisdom</td>
<td>1875</td>
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<td>P TOS I,II</td>
<td>Untimely Meditations I and II</td>
<td>1879</td>
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<td>1880</td>
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<td>P HAH I</td>
<td>Human all too Human Part I</td>
<td>1878</td>
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<td>P HAH IIA</td>
<td>Assorted Opinions and Maxims (1st supplement to HAH I)</td>
<td>1879</td>
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<td>P HAH IIB</td>
<td>The Wanderer and his Shadow (2nd supplement to HAH I)</td>
<td>1880</td>
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<tr>
<td>P DD</td>
<td>The Dawn of Day</td>
<td>1881</td>
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<td>P GS</td>
<td>The Gay Science</td>
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<td>P Z</td>
<td>Thus Spake Zarathustra</td>
<td>1883-1885</td>
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<td>U WP</td>
<td>The Will to Power</td>
<td>1883-1888</td>
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<td>P BGE</td>
<td>Beyond Good and Evil</td>
<td>1886</td>
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<td>U PC</td>
<td>Peoples and Countries</td>
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<td>On the Genealogy of Morals</td>
<td>1887</td>
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<td>P COW</td>
<td>The Case of Wagner</td>
<td>1888</td>
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<td>Twilight of the Idols</td>
<td>1888</td>
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<td>The Antichrist</td>
<td>1888</td>
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<td>Ecce Homo</td>
<td>1888</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Nietzsche contra Wagner</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Dithyrambs of Dionysius</td>
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<td>U SL</td>
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<td>KG</td>
<td>Kritische Gesamtausgabe</td>
<td>1892</td>
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F = Fragment (unpublished)  
P = Published by Nietzsche  
U = Unpublished by Nietzsche


# = Early Fragments collected and published in Early Greek Philosophy and Other Essays, [EGP] trans. M. A. Mügge, Oscar Levy edition II. Where above fragments are cited page numbers refer to EGP above.

1 =Peoples and Countries occurs in Volume 13 of the Oscar Levy edition of Nietzsche’s collected works. This title has been given to 27 aphorisms which were intended by Nietzsche to form a supplement to BGE, but were subsequently omitted by him.

2 =SL will refer to two different collections of letters; one translated by A. N. Ludovici, edited by Oscar Levy, London, 1921, and the other by C. Middleton, Chicago, 1969. Letters are referenced by recipient and date rather than page number.

3 =Kritische Gesamtausgabe, edited by G. Colli and M. Montinari, Berlin and New York, 1975. All citations in the text which are in German refer to this collection. German references will be used if existing English translations cannot readily be located. Most citations from this collection are from either the Briefewechsel or the Nachgelassene Fragmente [NF]. Wherever English translations of Nietzsche’s works are cited, the section or aphorism numbers (indicated by the abbreviation ‘a’ before the number) will be used in preference to page numbers. In the case of GM and EH where chapters and subdivisions are used then the chapter and section will be cited e.g. (EH, III-2). Exceptions to this practice will be TOS I and II, TI, PAT and EGP, which will be referred to by page numbers.
**Chronology**

1840  Frederick William IV - King of Prussia  
1844  Oct 15 Nietzsche born near Leipzig (Röcken)  
1847  Bismarck enters political life  
1848  Revolution - Frankfort national Assembly  
Frederick William refuses crown of new empire  
Granting of new Prussian constitution  
Wagner's Lohengrin/ banishment from Germany  
1849  Nietzsche's Father dies  
1851  Bismarck appointed envoy in the Federal Diet  
1854  Wagner's Rheingold, Die Walküre  
1858  Attends Schulpforta (also attended by Klopstock, Fichte, Schlegel, Ranke, etc)  
1860  Burchardt's Civisation of the Rennaissance  
1862  Bismarck becomes Prussian Minister president  
1864  Denmark annexes Schleswig - War won by Prussia/  
Sep Leaves Schulpforta, goes to Bonn to study for two semesters with Art-historian A Springer/philology  
with Otto Jahn and Ritschl/joins Frankonia fraternity and withdraws from it in1865  
1865  Oct Goes to Leipzig to study philology with Ritschl  
First Reads Schopenhauer in Leipzig/Wagner goes to live at Tribschen  
1866  Prussia-Austria fight Bohemian War - Prussian victory  
Nov Working on Theognis, an interest awakened at Pforta  
1867-68  Serves with mounted field artillery in Naumberg /Contributes to the Litterarisches Centralblatt (age 22),  
participates in the founding of the Philological Society of Leipzig  
1868  in autumn Nietzsche returns to Leipzig and meets Wagner in nov/Wagner's Meistersinger performed that  
same year  
1869  Leaves Leipzig University/goes to Basel as professor, and becomes Swiss citizen to do so/ in May first  
visits Wagners at Tribschen  
1870-71  Franco-Prussian War - serves as a nurse in 1870, returns to Basel in Au after contracting dysentry  
1871  New German Empire proclaimed/doctrine of papal infallibility- beginning of the Kulturkampf/Paris  
commune  
1872  Birth of Tragedy published/  
Wagners settle at Bayreuth  
1873  Untimely Meditations - David Strauss  
Fragments: The Philosopher, The Pathos of Truth,  
1874  Untimely Meditations - David Strauss  
Fragments: Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks  
**The Philosopher** as Cultural Physician,  
Philosophy in Hard Times  
On Truth and Lies in an Extra Moral Sense  
1876  Untimely Meditations - Richard Wagner in Bayreuth  
Begins writing Human- all too Human  
Railways nationalised/Wagner's Ring cycle completed/in Oct he takes year holiday from teaching duties/  
spends time in company of Dr Ree and Malwilda von Meyenberg in Sorrento/last meeting with  
1877  David Strauss dies  
1878  Untimely Meditations - Schopenhauer as educator  
F. A. Lange dies  
1879  Two attempts on the life of the emperor/Bismark introduces anti-socialist measures  
1880  Retires from teaching post at Basel/spends summer in st Moritz and Winter in Naumberg  
**The Wanderer and his Shadow** (2nd supplement to HAH) visits venice/spends Su and Au in Marienbad  
andWinter 1880-81 in Genou  
1881  The Dawn/Reform Bill- social insurance/Meets Lou Salome/spring 1881 in Recourco (near Vicenza)  
1882  The Gay Science /Parsifal produced at Bayreuth  
1883  Thus Spake Zarathustra I and II  
Makes plans to deliver a series of lectures at the University of Leipzig -non-event/breaks with Lou  
Salome/Wagner dies in Venice  
1883-88  The Will to Power (Revaluation of all Values)  
1884  Thus Spake Zarathustra III  
1885  Thus Spake Zarathustra IV (published 1892) begins to write Beyond Good and Evil  
1886  Beyond Good and Evil published  
1887  On the Genealogy of Morals  
1888  The Wagner Case,  
Twilight of the Idols, The Antichrist, Ecce Homo,Nietzsche contra Wagner,Dithyrambs of Dionysius  
William I dies, Frederick III brief reign and dies, William II new emperor  
1889  Jan 1 early days of January collapses - Onset of Insanity  
1900  Aug 25 Nietzsche dies