Nietzsche on Time and History

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Edited by
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If there is no goal in the whole of history of man's lot, then we must put one in: assuming, on the one hand, that we have need of a goal, and on the other that we've come to see through the illusion of an immanent goal and purpose. And the reason we have need of goals is that we have need of a will—which is the spine of us. 'Will' as the compensation of lost 'belief', i.e., for the idea that there is a divine will, one which has plans for us.

Friedrich Nietzsche, Nachlaß Summer 1886–Spring 1887, KSA 12, 6[9]

We are still growing continually, our sense of time and place, etc., is still developing.

Friedrich Nietzsche, Nachlaß April–June 1885, KSA 11, 34[124]

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'Timeless' to be rejected. At a particular moment of a force, an absolute conditionality of the redistribution of all forces is given: it cannot stand still. 'Change' is part of the essence, and therefore so is temporality—which, however, just amounts to one more conceptual positing of the necessity of change.

Friedrich Nietzsche, Nachlaß May–July 1885, KSA 11, 35[55]

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The four excerpts of printed music of Wagner, Bizet, and Stravinsky in Jonathan R. Cohen's essay appear here with permission of Dover Publishing, Chester Music Limited (Music Sales) and Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG. Every effort has been made to trace and contact copyright holders. If there are any inadvertent omissions I apologize to those concerned and undertake to include suitable acknowledgements in future editions.

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Abbreviations and Translations

Friedrich Nietzsche's published and unpublished writings (Nachlaß) are quoted according to the following abbreviations:

A	*The Anti-Christ*, cited by section number.
AOM	'Assorted Opinions and Maxims' (vol. 2, pt 1, of *Human, All Too Human*), cited by section number.
BAW	*Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe. Werke*, ed. Hans Joachim Mette, 5 vols. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1933–1940), cited by volume and page number.
BAB	*Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe. Briefe*, ed. Hans Joachim Mette, 4 vols. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1933–1940), cited by volume and page number.
BGE	*Beyond Good and Evil*, cited by section number.
BT	*The Birth of Tragedy*, cited by section number and KSA page number.
CV	'Five Prologues to Five Unwritten Books', cited by number and KSA page number.
CW	*The Case of Wagner*, cited by section number.
D	*Daybreak*, cited by section number.
EH	*Ecce Homo*, cited by section heading and (when applicable) number.
EI	'On the Future of Our Educational Institutions', cited by section number.
GM	*On the Genealogy of Morality*, cited by essay and section number.
GS	*The Gay Science*, cited by section number.
HA	*Human, All Too Human*, cited by volume and section number.
CV	'Five Prefaces to Five Unwritten Books', cited by preface number and KSA page number.
KGB	*Briefwechsel. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975–), cited by volume and page number.
KGW	*Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, established by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, ed. Wolfgang Müller-Lauter and Karl Pestalozzi (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967–), cited by volume, part, and page number.

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KSA *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967–), cited by volume and page number. The Nachlaß is cited by date, KSA volume, notebook section, and fragment number.
KSB *Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe Briefe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986–), cited by volume and page number.
NCW *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, cited by section heading.
OTL 'On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense', cited by KSA page number.
PTAG 'Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks', cited by section number.
TI *Twilight of the Idols*, cited by section heading and number.
UM *Untimely Meditations*, cited by part and section number, and (when applicable) KSA page number.
Z *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, cited by part, section heading, and (when applicable) number.

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Note on Translations of Nietzsche's Works

The contributors to this volume have used different translations of Nietzsche's texts, often modified by the individual contributor. At the end of each essay the reader will find a list of the translations used. Where no such list has been provided the contributor has relied exclusively on his or her own translations. All translations from Nietzsche's Nachlaß are usually by the individual contributors, although other translations have been consulted whenever possible, notably *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967), and *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, ed. Rüdiger Bittner, trans. Kate Sturge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

'An Uncanny Re-Awakening': Nietzsche's Renascence of the Renaissance out of the Spirit of Jacob Burckhardt

Martin A. Ruehl

In the fall of 1895, the Catholic bi-weekly *Historisch-Politische Blätter* published a long article on 'Friedrich Nietzsche's Intellectual Development and Philosophy'. At a time when Nietzsche's writings were rapidly gaining in popularity and some of his concepts were becoming catchwords of various counter-cultural currents in fin-de-siècle Germany, the (anonymous) author of the article tried to enumerate the various trends in nineteenth-century thought that had shaped the ideas of the self-proclaimed 'untimely' philosopher. One of the intellectual influences he singled out was the Swiss cultural historian and one-time colleague of Nietzsche at the university of Basel, Jacob Burckhardt. In particular, he suggested that it was Burckhardt's colourful description of the ruthless, neo-pagan despots of early modern Italy in his 1860 book *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* that had inspired Nietzsche's vision of a future race of 'violent men' (*Gewaltmenschen*) beyond the good and evil of Christian morality ('Friedrich Nietzsche's Intellectual Development' 1895, p. 871). Shortly after the appearance of the article, the Catholic historian Ludwig Pastor, who had recently begun to correspond with Burckhardt, told the latter of his dismay over these 'unreasonable suppositions' and proposed a rectification in the *Blätter* (Pastor 1950, pp. 289–290).[1] In his response of 13 January 1896, Burckhardt politely declined Pastor's offer. In view of his advanced age and poor health, he wrote, he preferred to keep his peace 'with all the world' and would refrain from a correction. His communications with Nietzsche had been 'serious and peaceful', yet infrequent, and about the *Gewaltmenschen* they had never actually discoursed. At any rate, he, Burckhardt, had never been 'an admirer of the violent men and outlaws [*Gewaltmenschen und Out-laws*] in history' and rather considered them to

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1 On Burckhardt's late but warm acquaintance with Pastor see Kaegi 1982, vol. 7, pp. 165–182.

be 'flagella Dei' (scourges of God) whose psychological construction he 'gladly' left to others (Burckhardt 1986, vol. 10, p. 263).[2]

The letter to Pastor has become a *locus classicus* in the extensive literature on what might be called the Burckhardt–Nietzsche problem, that is, the long-standing scholarly debates about the nature of Nietzsche's relationship with Burckhardt during his Basel years (1869–1879); the question whether there existed a genuine 'congruence', as Nietzsche believed,[3] between their aesthetic and political convictions; and, finally, the extent to which the Swiss historian's reflections on the interplay of 'force and freedom' in civilizations past and present affected the philosophizing of his young German colleague.[4] In these debates, Burckhardt's denunciation of the *Gewaltmenschen* in his reply to Pastor almost invariably serves as a piece of textual evidence for commentators anxious to stress the general intellectual distance between his 'classical', liberal, and humanist worldview from Nietzsche's neo-Romantic, anti-bourgeois reflections on transgression and excess, as well as the more specific dissimilarity between their respective interpretations of the Renaissance.[5]

This essay, by contrast, takes its cue from the suspicion voiced in the *Historisch-Politische Blätter* that Burckhardt shaped Nietzsche's intellectual development to a considerable extent and that his conception of the Renaissance in particular had a profound impact on Nietzsche's philosophy. Its aim is to show that Nietzsche's understanding not just of the early modern period, but of history and time as such, drew on the idea of the Renaissance as formulated by Burckhardt.[6] Burckhardt's reading of the Renaissance, which will be examined below, conditioned Nietzsche's thinking on recurrence and change, the possibility of cultural renewal, and the sociopolitical parameters for a future overcoming of Christian 'slave morality'. Nietzsche's turn to the Renaissance, as a historical reference

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2 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the German are my own.

3 See his letter to Erwin Rohde of 29 May 1869 (KSB 3, p. 13).

4 The most notable contributions are Andler 1926, Barth 1943, von Martin 1947a, Salin 1948, Rossi 1987, and Heller 1988. For a survey of the literature see Ruhstaller 1988.

5 See, e.g., von Martin 1947a, p. 139, Gay 1967, p. 198, Janssen 1970, pp. 221–222, Kaegi 1982, vol. VII, pp. 69–70, and Gossman 1999, p. 904. Gossman 2000, pp. 432–434, while pointing up shared concerns about the 'social question' as it posed itself in Basel since the 1860s, similarly stresses the fundamental differences between Burckhardt's *altliberal* humanism and Nietzsche's radically anti-democratic rejection of the masses as well as his 'excessiveness' and immoralism.

6 Burckhardt's influence on the development of Nietzsche's historical thought has been largely ignored in the relevant literature: see, e.g., Schlechta 1958, Brose 1973, Pletsch 1977, Maurer 1993, Brose 1994, Gilbert 2000, Brobjer 2007.

point and cultural ideal,[7] in the 1870s allowed him to question a set of values and notions that had determined his early thought: the Protestant inheritance from Röcken and Naumburg; the philhellenist belief, instilled in him at Schulpforta, Bonn, and Leipzig, in the absolute and exclusive model character of Greek antiquity; Schopenhauer's radically anti-historical philosophy of the will; and, most importantly perhaps, the medievalizing, neo-Romantic nationalism of Richard Wagner. However, the Renaissance also became a crystallization point, especially in the 1880s, for Nietzsche's most radically anti-humanist, anti-liberal ideas about tyranny and individuality, war and culture, violence and health. Burckhardt had good reasons to dissociate himself from the *Gewaltmenschen* glorified in Nietzsche's later writings—but the latter nonetheless bore a striking family resemblance to the tyrants and *condottieri* described in his book on the Renaissance.

1. The Dark Cradle of Modernity: Tyrants and Transgressors in Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance*

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If Burckhardt's book provided a template for Nietzsche's reflections on the meaning of history and the possibilities for cultural revival, its depiction of the Italian Renaissance as a distinctive period of Western civilization, characterized by a secular individualism and neo-classical zest for beauty, was itself determined by previous attempts, both historiographical and fictional, to uncover the origins of modern subjectivity.[8] These attempts began with one of the foundational texts of the German *Sturm und Drang* movement, Wilhelm Heinse's popular multi-volume novel *Ardinghello* of

7 It is one of the contentions of this essay that the Renaissance represented not just an aesthetic concept for Nietzsche and that he conceived of early modern rulers like Frederick II and Cesare Borgia, whose image he culled largely from the first chapter of Burckhardt's book, as distinctively historical figures, *pace* Nehamas 1985, pp. 225–227, who interprets them as purely 'literary' characters. According to Nehamas, Cesare was little more than a fictional construct in Nietzsche's œuvre, without a genuine historical identity—and thus should not be misread as a model or type of the superman. As will be argued here, Cesare in particular and the Renaissance in general possessed a very definite historical significance for Nietzsche.

8 On the changing interpretations of the Renaissance in Germany before Burckhardt see Ferguson 1948, pp. 78–179, Stierle 1987 and Körner 1980. On the historiographical associations of the Renaissance with the birth of modern individualism see Baldwin 2001, esp. pp. 341–345.

1787.[9] Heinse's paean to the sensual, morally uninhibited life of artists and aristocrats in cinquecento Italy fundamentally shaped the idea of the Renaissance in the German literary imagination throughout the long nineteenth century.[10] In the decades following its publication, Romantic authors such as Ludwig Tieck glorified the unfettered egoism and 'aesthetic immoralism' (W. Brecht) of demonic Renaissance princes like the Duke of Bracciano.[11] In contradistinction to Heinse and the Romantics,[12] Goethe and Schiller projected an image of the Renaissance that stressed the 'responsibility of power' (G. Craig) and a classical, harmonious *Humanitätsideal* which Goethe saw realized in the works of Raphael, Mantegna, and even Cellini.[13]

While the ruthless, overreaching Renaissance despots of Romantic fiction often seemed modelled on Napoleon, the historiographical approaches to the Renaissance in the early nineteenth century were fundamentally indebted to the liberal, republican ideals of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Thus in the 1820s and 1830s Heinrich Leo and Carl Friedrich von Rumohr traced the notion of civic liberty back to the fourteenth-century Italian city-states which had proudly defended their independence against the encroaching Holy Roman Empire.[14] In the decades of

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9 See Heinse 1998. On Heinse's conception of the Renaissance see Rehm 1924, pp. 61–78, and Ferguson 1948, pp. 128–131.

10 See the brief 'reception history' of the book in Heinse 1998, pp. 560–600. A number of literary critics around 1900 read Heinse's hero Ardinghello as an eighteenth-century precursor of the Renaissance *Herrenmensch* idealized by Nietzsche; see Heinse 1998, pp. 596, 598, 607, 610, 612.

11 See Brecht 1911, Rehm 1924, pp. 159–181, and Weibel 1925, pp. 44–54, 121–127.

12 See Jacobs 1998, p. 900: 'With its extreme idealization of the sensuous-ecstatic life, Heinse's *Ardinghello* was diametrically opposed to the striving for harmony and artistic autonomy that informed Goethe's image of the Renaissance.' See also Baeumer's comments in Heinse 1998, pp. 643–648, and Borcherdt 1949, pp. 149–166, who distinguishes between Heinse's 'Dionysian' and Goethe's 'Apollonian' conception of the Renaissance (p. 159).

13 See Craig 1967, pp. 125–144. On Goethe's idea of the Renaissance see Jacobs 1996 and Jacobs 1997. Baron 1960, p. 211 comments: 'In studying [the cinquecento artist Benvenuto] Cellini, Goethe had formed the idea of an age which had brought forth men of rare passions ... but also [of] higher yearnings: an honest respect for religious and ethical values ... and for noble enterprises.' According to Baron, Goethe's *Cellini* was an important source for *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, and the force of its psychological interpretation of the artist's self-formation 'is felt throughout Burckhardt's analysis of the development of the individual'. See also Janssen 1970, pp. 217–219.

14 See Leo 1832, vol. 3, pp. 378–387, vol. 4, pp. 1–36; von Rumohr 1920, pp. 126–222; and Ferguson 1948, pp. 127, 145–146.

political reaction following the Congress of Vienna (1814–1815), the educated bourgeois elites of Germany (*Bildungsbürgertum*) readily interpreted Leo's *History of the Italian States* (1829–1832) as a genealogy of their own emancipatory hopes.[15] The art historian Rumohr, in his *Italian Researches* (1827–1831), depicted the struggle for independence of the thirteenth-century communes as the backdrop both to the genesis of modern constitutional political theory and the great artistic revival of the Italian Renaissance.[16] The acclaimed *History of the Italian Republics in the Middle Ages* (1809–1818) by the Swiss-born political economist and historian Simonde de Sismondi, similarly, related the *énergie de liberté* sparked by participatory politics to the great outburst of cultural activity especially in the trecento. With the ascendancy of the tyrants and despots in northern Italy at the end of the fourteenth century, this *énergie*, according to Sismondi, began to wane and with it the flowering of Italian civilization.[17] The cultural vitality of the Renaissance cities, for both Sismondi and Rumohr, was intimately connected with their republican liberty.

Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance* marked a profoundly ambivalent intervention in these representations of early modern Italy. On the one hand, it contributed to and reinforced the liberal idealizations of the Renaissance typical of the first half of the nineteenth century. Like so many bourgeois intellectuals of his age, Burckhardt viewed the Italian quattrocento, which he famously labelled the 'mother and home of modern man' ('Mutter und Heimat des modernen Menschen'),[18] as a dress rehearsal for the civil society of contemporary Europe: an energetically meritocratic world of atomized individuals competing with one another on an equal basis, without regard for traditional religious, social, and moral constraints. In that respect, Burckhardt's Renaissance Men bore a striking resemblance to the early capitalists described in Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, published twelve years earlier: both were secularizers, rationalizers,

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15 See Leo 1832, vol. 4, pp. 138–420.

16 See von Rumohr 1920, pp. 178–222.

17 See Simonde de Sismondi 1826, vol. 7, pp. 351–395, and vol. 8, pp. 2–6. On Sismondi's interpretation of Renaissance culture see Ferguson 1948, pp. 165–168, and Bullen 1994, pp. 38–59.

18 This is how Burckhardt described the Renaissance in his letter of May 1858 to King Maximilian II of Bavaria, see Kaegi 1982, vol. 3, p. 664. Burckhardt 1988, p. 3, calls the Renaissance the 'mother' of modern civilization. Gilbert 1990, p. 61, counts thirty passages in which Burckhardt 'identifies the Italy of the Renaissance with the modern age'. Baron 1960, p. 213, remarks that '[n]o other *leitmotif* occurs as often in the text [i.e., *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*] as the contention that the Italian of the Renaissance "was the firstborn among the sons of modern Europe"'.

and demystifiers, pioneering self-made men, as efficient as they were ruthless.[19]

On the other hand, *The Civilization of the Renaissance* was a forceful critique of the emancipatory, progressivist interpretations of the Renaissance formulated by Sismondi, Leo, and Rumohr.[20] For Burckhardt, the sociopolitical corollaries of modernization—initiated and epitomized, in his eyes, by the French Revolution—had had a fateful effect on contemporary civilization. Writing in the aftermath of 1848, he believed that the revolutionary unrest of the Fourth Estate posed as much of a threat to the cultural legacy of 'old Europe' (*Alteuropa*) as the bourgeoisie's complacent desire for 'security' (*Sekurität*).[21] He tried to imagine the Renaissance as the beginning of an alternative modernity, one quite distinct from his own mundane, unheroic 'modern age', which in his eyes was defined by the crass materialism, timid acquiescence, and soulless scientism of the middle class, on the one hand, and the proletariat's increasingly vociferous demands for political participation and social justice on the other. As a consequence, Burckhardt, in contrast to previous liberal historians of the early modern period, associated the new secular, individualist spirit of the Renaissance not so much with merchants, scholars, or artists, but with military leaders and despots like the Sforza and Visconti, whose complete immoralism both fascinated and disturbed him.

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By opening his book with a series of vivid vignettes recounting the cold-blooded machinations of despotic rulers (*Gewaltherrscher*) from Ezzelino da Romano to Cesare Borgia, Burckhardt made the tyrant the embodiment of what he regarded as the two essential features of Renaissance civilization: the 'objective judgement and treatment of ... all the things in the world' (*objektive Betrachtungsweise und Behandlung ... der sämtlichen Dinge dieser Welt*) and the 'development of an autonomous personality' (*Entwicklung der auf sich selbst gestellten Persönlichkeit*), freed from

19 Their new, problematic sense of self also resembles that of the early Puritans described in Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904/1905): see Hardtwig 1996, pp. 170–180.

20 See Kahan 2003. Kaegi 1962, pp. 133–134, argues that refuting Sismondi's 'republican' interpretation of the Renaissance was one of the 'principal aims' of Burckhardt's book: 'Burckhardt saw the flowering of the Renaissance not in the context of the Italian city-states struggling for liberty, but against the dark backdrop of the demonic concentration of power in the *signorie*, of liberty lost.'

21 For his critique of bourgeois *Sekurität* see Burckhardt 1982, pp. 282–283, 236–237. On Burckhardt's almost pathological fear of a proletarian revolution see Wenzel 1967, pp. 25–32. That Burckhardt wrote *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* in response to what he perceived as a time of sociopolitical unrest and cultural crisis is powerfully argued in Gossman 1994, pp. 409–427.

medieval corporatism and religious paternalism (Burckhardt 1988, pp. 5, 99). Although he also examined the emergence of this new 'realist' politics and individualist ethos in the context of republican city-states like Florence and Venice, Burckhardt evidently considered the tyrants to be the first and foremost incarnations of the new 'thisworldly' mind-set of Renaissance Italy. Thus he remarked of the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II (1194–1250), whom he called a 'model' (*Vorbild*) for the later despots, that he had accustomed himself early in his life to an 'utterly objective view of world', which made him 'the first modern man on the throne'. The foreign policy of Maria Galeazzo and Lodovico il Moro he described in similar terms, as a 'completely objective treatment of international affairs, free of prejudices and moral qualms' (Burckhardt 1988, pp. 4, 5, 67). What Burckhardt identified as the distinctive aspect of Renaissance politics was not so much the brutality as the strictly *realpolitisch* approach of the *condottieri* and princes, their uninhibited, yet carefully calculated, deployment of force. This was *ragione di stato*—Machiavelli, significantly, featured as Burckhardt's chief theoretical witness for the chapters on tyrannical rule—a perfectly pragmatic form of politics fundamentally at odds with the abstract, 'artificial' power structures of feudal northern Europe (Burckhardt 1988, p. 72).[22]

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The new brand of politics practised in the petty despotic states of Italy set the stage for what Burckhardt considered to be the second great contribution of Renaissance civilization to the genesis of modernity: the emergence of the autonomous individual. Exploding the medieval system of rank and inheritance, the tyrants, according to Burckhardt, found themselves in an unusually volatile predicament. Unable to rely on what Max Weber would later call 'traditional authority',[23] princely bastards like Ferrante of Aragon and military leaders of humble social origins like Francesco Sforza had to depend entirely on their own talents in their bid for political power. They created their state just as they created their own identity: as if *ex nihilo*, as a 'work of art' (*Kunstwerk*). The illegitimacy of their rule and the radical 'insecurity' (*Garantielosigkeit*) of their existence forced them to develop virtuoso personalities.[24] But in the shadow of their

22 See also Burckhardt 1988, pp. 12–13. But cf. Hale 1973, p. 63, who argues that Burckhardt greatly overestimated the degree of rationality and centralization in Renaissance politics.

23 See Weber 1978, pp. 226–241.

24 In his lectures 'On the Study of History', which Nietzsche attended in the winter semester of 1870/1871, Burckhardt described Napoleon in a strikingly similar fashion as 'unpredictability incarnate' (*die Garantielosigkeit in Person*): Burckhardt 1982, p. 397. For Nietzsche's idealization of Napoleon as a *Gewaltmensch*

rule, the 'individualization' of their courtiers and vassals also received a powerful 'stimulus' (Burckhardt 1988, pp. 4, 7–8, 101). The 'sovereign subject' of modernity thus emerged, paradoxically, against the backdrop of political unfreedom.

Whereas Sismondi and Rumohr had stressed the connection between 'liberty and letters' and praised the republican ethos of the city-states as the necessary political context for the 'revival of the arts', Burckhardt argued that the productivity and excellence of the Renaissance artists was not only compatible with, but actually enhanced by, the violent politics of the tyrants. Raphael's early paintings of St George (c. 1504) and St Michael (c. 1505), he remarked, could have been inspired by the bloody street fighting between the Baglione and their enemies in Perugia, where the young artist had worked as an apprentice in the 1490s (Burckhardt 1988, p. 24).[25] For Burckhardt, the tyrants were more than just great patrons of Renaissance art and science. There existed a genuine elective affinity, he believed, between the despots, with their virtuoso personalities and plastic political skills, and 'those who also thrived by dint of their own talent: the scholars, poets, musicians and artists'. Leonardo da Vinci's extended stay at the court of Lodovico il Moro was evidence that 'a higher element was alive' in the tyrant. That Leonardo subsequently served Cesare Borgia, similarly, suggested his appreciation of the latter's 'extraordinary nature' (Burckhardt 1988, p. 33).

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Insofar as they tore away the medieval 'veil' of Christian beliefs and feudal power structures and helped to launch the laical, scientific 'discovery of the world and of man' (Burckhardt 1988, pp. 99, 203),[26] Burckhardt's tyrants seem to anticipate the secular, emancipatory ideals of the nineteenth-century *Bürger*.[27] The values they represent—rationality, pragmatism, individual talent, competitive struggle—belong to the catechism of what Adorno termed the 'bourgeois religion of success' (Adorno 1970, p.

and *Herrenmensch* in the tradition of the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II see von Martin 1947a, pp. 148–160.

25 According to Burckhardt 1988, p. 24, the figure of the heavenly horseman in Raphael's *Expulsion of Heliodorus from the Temple* (1511–1512) was modelled on Astorre Baglione. For a differing interpretation of the painting cf. Traeger 1971, pp. 31–34.

26 See also Burckhardt 1988, pp. 16 and 72, where the meritocratic individualism of the Italian princes is favourably contrasted with the feudal 'class prejudice' (*Kastenhochmut*) of Northern Europe. Burckhardt borrowed the expression 'the discovery of the world and of man' (*die Entdeckung der Welt und des Menschen*) from Jules Michelet's *Histoire de France*, see Michelet 1883, vol. 3, p. 3.

27 See Gay 1967, p. 184, who describes Burckhardt's Renaissance men as 'human types that might be walking through nineteenth-century cities'.

53). In that respect, they were indeed the 'first-born among the sons of contemporary Europe'. Yet Burckhardt also constructed them as anti-types of the modern bourgeois.[28] His lively, detailed descriptions of their 'colossal crimes' and 'endless atrocities' established a stark contrast between the violent, immoral universe of the Italian Renaissance and the *Biedermeier* propriety of nineteenth-century Central Europe. With an almost Gothic literary sensibility, he evoked the realm of the tyrants' courts as one of constant deception, danger, and dread. Theirs was a 'monstrous' (*ungeheuer*) and 'uncanny' (*unheimlich*) world far removed from the comfortable, orderly life and utilitarian concerns of civil society (Burckhardt 1988, pp. 6, 99, 11, 10).[29]

Like the authors of the *Sturm and Drang* and the Romantic period, Burckhardt was fascinated by the transgressive elements of Renaissance civilization.[30] His tyrants embodied more than just a 'worldly' individualism: they were Faustian overreachers, 'godless' (*gottverlassen*), at times demonic characters, full of 'daring profanity' (*Frevelmut*) and diabolical genius. Of Cesare Borgia, whose inhumanity ultimately seems to have repelled him, he wrote that his cruelty took on a 'completely satanic character' (Burckhardt 1988, pp. 10, 26, 38). Yet Burckhardt largely refused to apportion moral blame even to the most blasphemous tyrannical deeds. The apostate son of Basel's chief Protestant minister, whose 'anti-Christian sentiment' was notorious in his hometown,[31] he more or less suspended judgement on the despots and related their crimes with the same cool objectivity for which he praised Machiavelli. These crimes, he argued, were

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28 Kaegi 1932, p. xxx, calls them 'bogeymen of the bourgeoisie' (*Bürgerschrecke*).

29 For more instances of the Gothic in his depiction of the Renaissance tyrannies see Burckhardt 1988, pp. 11, 20, 26, 28, 33. See also Kaegi 1982, vol. 3, pp. 710–711.

30 See Janssen 1970, pp. 11–15, 217–223. In this respect, *The Civilization of the Renaissance* echoes not just Heinse's *Ardinghello*, but also works of Romantic fiction like Hoffmann's *Elixiere des Teufels* (1815) and Tieck's *Vittoria Accorombona* (1830); see Rehm 1960, pp. 19, 54–64, and Rehm 1924, p. 69.

31 Gelzer 1907, p. 340, reports that the young Burckhardt was imbued with an 'almost fanatical anti-Christian animus'. It should be noted, however, that in the 1870s, Burckhardt's attitude to Christianity, and to Catholicism in particular, changed, partly, it seems, in response to the experience of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*; see his letter to Max Alioth of 12 May 1889 (Burckhardt 1986, vol. 9, p. 185). Stadelmann 1930, p. 504, argues that under the impact of the *Kulturkampf*, Burckhardt came to 'appreciate Catholicism as a harbour of liberty' for all things intellectual that were threatened by the 'brutality of state power'. On Burckhardt's changing attitude towards Christianity see Ernst 1948, Zeeden 1954, and Howard 2000, pp. 110–170; for a somewhat different view see von Martin 1947a, pp. 131–133 and von Martin 1947b, esp. pp. 18–22, 39–53, 155–216.

the expression of an essentially 'naive' amoralism that was, in the last instance, beyond 'ethical judgement' (Burckhardt 1988, pp. 15, 40). The development of the new political and individual entities of Renaissance Italy, for him, was ultimately an aesthetic phenomenon and had to be valuated accordingly.

Burckhardt's Renaissance Man, thus, was something quite different from the harmonious, classically *gebildet* individual idealized by Goethe and Schiller. In contrast to the Weimar classicists and a number of influential nineteenth-century historians like Georg Voigt,[32] he did not consider the 'revival of classical antiquity' to be the defining feature of the Italian Renaissance. According to Burckhardt, humanism played but a secondary, or indeed tertiary, role in the making of modern subjectivity.[33] The process of individualization, for him, was shaped not so much by neo-Platonism or the Ciceronian ideal of *humanitas*, but altogether more worldly factors, chief among them, as we have seen, the violent politics of the north Italian tyrannies. Burckhardt's identification of the Renaissance with the birth of a new 'autonomous' personality, consequently, was both a contribution to the 'bourgeois religion of success' and a forceful attack on the neo-humanist notions of selfhood so dear to the German-speaking *Bildungsbürger*. His idea of 'tyrannical self-fashioning', similarly, challenged the traditional liberal associations between individualism and political participation, autonomy and security, self-cultivation and the private sphere—just as his depiction of the despots as congenial patrons and catalysts of the Renaissance artists called into question the 'civic humanist' association of 'liberty and letters'.[34]

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32 See Voigt/Lehnerdt 1893. On Voigt's conception of the Renaissance see Ferguson 1948, pp. 159–163, and now Todte 2004.

33 It is telling that Burckhardt turns to the revival of arts and letters at the hand of the humanists only in the third part of his Renaissance book, that is, after the long opening section on 'The State as a Work of Art' and the treatment of 'The Development of the Individual' in section 2. He begins his survey of Italian humanism—see Burckhardt 1988, p. 171—with a categorical qualification of the significance hitherto attached, in histories of the Renaissance, to the revival of antiquity, insisting that all the major cultural and intellectual transformations in early modern Italy would have taken place 'without it'.

34 This interpretation of the Italian Renaissance, which goes back to Adam Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), is now generally associated with the work of Hans Baron, who developed his notion of 'civic humanism' or *Bürgerhumanismus* partly in response to Burckhardt's claim that Renaissance culture had first flourished at the tyrannical courts. For Baron, it was born out of the politically engaged, republican spirit of certain Florentine humanists in the period around 1400, when the city-state struggled against the Visconti of Milan: 'The

The Civilization of the Renaissance, while continuing earlier master-narratives of emancipation and secularization, hence marked an intervention not just in the interpretations of the Renaissance since Heinse and Goethe, but also in topical, post-revolutionary debates about the nexus between *Geist* (intellect) and *Macht* (political power), morality and greatness, culture and violence. In the age of 'blood and iron' and especially after the foundation of the Second German Empire in 1871, this intervention would take on a new significance for bourgeois intellectuals wondering about the fate of the German *Kulturnation* in Bismarck's recently established *Nationalstaat*.

2. 'The Golden Age of the Millennium': Nietzsche's Uses of the Renaissance contra Wagner and Luther

One of these intellectuals was Friedrich Nietzsche. While Nietzsche's bitter attacks on the culture of Bismarck's *Reich* have received much scholarly attention,[35] relatively little is known about the impact that Burckhardt's conception of the Renaissance had on his *Kulturkritik*.[36] And yet throughout the 1870s and 1880s, the 'idea of the Renaissance', which he selectively adopted, as we shall see, from Burckhardt's book, proved to be a powerful inspiration for Nietzsche's denunciation of the liberal, *kulturprotestantisch* ethos of the Second Empire which he regarded as one of the main reasons for the decadence of contemporary German culture.[37] But Burckhardt's Renaissance also prompted him to challenge the Germanic ideology underlying Wagner's music dramas, to overcome Schopenhauer's ahistorical pessimism and to rethink the sociopolitical framework within which the future transvaluation of values and the revival of European civilization could come about.

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places which held cultural predominance in the first decades of the *Quattrocento* were not as yet the seats of the tyrants, later to become famous, but rather the remaining city-state republics led by Florence': Baron 1966, p. xxv. On the genesis of Baron's concept of 'civic humanism' see Fubini 1992, Hankins 1995, Hankins 2000, and Ladwig 2004, pp. 278–360.

35 See, e.g., Schieder 1963, Kaufmann 1974, pp. 121–178, Bergmann 1987, pp. 81–107, and Gossman 2000, pp. 413–439.

36 Even an otherwise astute analysis of the various factors contributing to the formation of Nietzsche's anti-modern *Geschichtsbild* in Basel like Cancik 1995, pp. 23–34, largely ignores Burckhardt's role in this process. But see the perceptive comments in Ross 1980, pp. 312–319, Hofmann 1971, and Large 2000.

37 On Burckhardt as a critic of the Second Empire and its culture see Ressing 1951, Zeeden 1963, and Gossman 2000, pp. 439–442, 445–447.

That Nietzsche was familiar with Burckhardt's conception of the Renaissance is beyond doubt. His personal library contained two copies of *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, both second editions of 1869, the year he arrived in Basel to take up the chair in classical philology at the city's distinguished university.[38] One of these copies must have been a present from Burckhardt himself: its title page bears a short but amicable inscription 'to Prof. Dr. Nietzsche' by the author.[39] Both are heavily marked in Nietzsche's hand, especially the first three sections, entitled 'The State as a Work of Art', 'The Development of the Individual', and 'The Revival of Antiquity'. An entry in the diaries of Cosima Wagner reveals that Nietzsche sent the Wagners a copy of the book as early as December 1870.[40] In the summer semester of 1871, at any rate, he presented a series of lectures on 'The History of Classical Philology' (*Enzyclopaedie der klassischen Philologie*), the first of which, entitled 'The Discovery of Antiquity in Italy', drew heavily on Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance*. The lecture manuscript shows that Nietzsche adopted—often verbatim—some of Burckhardt's central arguments, for instance the notion that it was the 'Italian national genius' (*italienischer Volksgeist*) that had corroded the feudal ties of the Middle Ages or that there existed 'innermost affinities'

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38 See Brobjer 1997, pp. 691–692.

39 The copies are preserved in Nietzsche's private library, which is now part of the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek in Weimar. They are listed as items C482a and C482b, respectively. The former bears the following inscription on the title page: 'Herrn Prof. Dr. Nietzsche in Verehrung dargebracht vom Verf.[asser]'. For Nietzsche's markings see C482a, esp. pp. 106–110, 112, 421; and C482b, pp. 136–139, 141, 147, 149, 154–155, 163, 171, 174, 197–198, 212–215. Nietzsche's library contains a number of other works on the Italian Renaissance, most notably Émile Gebhart's *Études méridionales. La Renaissance italienne et la philosophie de l'histoire*, Paris 1887, and Albert Trolle's *Das italienische Volkstum und seine Abhängigkeit von den Naturbedingungen*, Leipzig 1885. That his conception of the Renaissance was nonetheless indebted primarily to *The Civilization of the Renaissance* is suggested not just by the much more expansive markings and marginalia in the latter, but also by the fact that Gebhart's book itself drew heavily on Burckhardt. Brobjer 1995, p. 81, n. 37 argues that Nietzsche's later transvaluation of virtue as Machiavellian *virtù* or 'virtue free of moralistic acid' (*moralinfreie Tugend*, A 2) was inspired by Gebhart, not Burckhardt. In a footnote to the first section of his book, however, Burckhardt describes Machiavelli's notion of *virtù* in a way that is perfectly congruous with Nietzsche's subsequent use of the concept, namely, as a 'synthesis of force and talent' that is 'compatible with *sceleratezza*': Burckhardt 1988, p. 409.

40 See Wagner 1977, vol. 1, p. 320 (4 December 1870): 'Prof. Nietzsche sends Burckhardt's book on the Renaissance.' See also Borchmeyer/Salaquarda 1994, vol. 1, p. 109.

(*die innersten Beziehungen*) between the despots and the scholars residing at their courts (KGW II.3, pp. 348, 350).[41]

Although Nietzsche was thus evidently well acquainted with Burckhardt's interpretation of the Renaissance in the summer of 1871, he concealed this knowledge very skilfully in his first major philosophical work. *The Birth of Tragedy*, in fact, presented an image of the Renaissance that was decidedly at odds with Burckhardt's. It was indebted almost entirely to Richard Wagner, who in the early 1870s exerted a strong influence on Nietzsche's ideas about ancient Greece and its cultural legacy. For Wagner, Renaissance Italy was a 'corrupt' world, imbued with a superficial aestheticism whose dissemination into the north proved 'detrimental' to the development of a genuine German *Kultur*.[42] The Renaissance humanists' attempt to revive classical antiquity had been an abject failure, according to Wagner, because they lacked a true understanding of the tragic nature of ancient Greek civilization and their thinking was perverted by the villainous rulers they served.[43] In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche denounced the Renaissance in very similar terms, dismissing quattrocento humanism as a shallow 'theoretical' imitation of antiquity and Renaissance civilization in general as a 'false idyll' constructed by 'Socratic' men (BT 19).[44] It may

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41 On Nietzsche's liberal borrowings from *The Civilization of the Renaissance* in his lecture manuscript see Campioni 1998, pp. 96–102, and Volpi 1999.

42 See Wagner 1977, vol. 1, p. 506 (2 April 1872): 'At table, he [i.e. Richard Wagner] rails against the Renaissance, saying that it did enormous damage to the Germanic development; this age showed as little appreciation of antiquity as of Christianity; men of prodigious talent placed themselves in the service of a power that corrupted everything; and as always, the naïve Germans let themselves be so impressed by a foreign civilization that their own feeling nearly perished'. See also Wagner 1977, vol. 2, p. 617 (3 November 1880), where Cosima mentions further 'invectives against the Renaissance', and vol. 2, pp. 836–837 (2 December 1881), where she reports Wagner's 'disgusted' reaction to the 'pernicious' eagerness of Renaissance artists to 'make everything look beautiful' and to 'avoid harshness' (*das Herbe*). On Wagner's repudiation of the Renaissance see Campioni 1998, pp. 88–91.

43 See Wagner 1977, vol. 2, p. 287 (10 January 1879): 'A modern man like Machiavelli ... cuts a poor figure in comparison [to the ancient Greeks]; what a corrupt world formed the background to his being!'

44 'Imitative' and 'decorative' are typical terms of abuse in Wagner's diatribes against Renaissance art and civilization; see, e.g., Wagner 1977, vol. 1, p. 1002, and vol. 2, pp. 621, 682, 867, 933. That Nietzsche was aware of Wagner's distaste for the Renaissance is evidenced by his notes for the fourth *Untimely Meditation* (Nachlaß Beginning of 1874–Spring 1874, KSA 7, 32 [58]), in which he meditates on the composer's 'ambition' to measure himself against great figures of the past like Goethe, Beethoven, Luther, and the Greek tragedians: 'only to the Renaissance could he not relate' (*nur zur Renaissance fand er kein Verhältnis*).

have been out of consideration for Wagner, who closely followed the composition of the book, that Nietzsche refrained from using the Latinate term 'Renaissance', referring instead to the imminent revival of Greek culture through Wagner's music as a *Wiedergeburt* or 'rebirth' (BT 16).[45] In accordance with Wagner's *nationalprotestantisch* and profoundly anti-Roman views, Nietzsche identified the great moment of spiritual emancipation in European history not with the Renaissance, but with the Reformation. It was out of Luther's choral, he remarked, that the music of Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner was born (BT 23).

These critical remarks contrast with Nietzsche's altogether more positive, 'Burckhardtean' assessment of the Renaissance in the lectures on classical philology. The fact that the latter were delivered just as he was completing the manuscript of *The Birth of Tragedy* suggests a certain tension in his view of early modern Italy. While officially paying tribute to Tribschen, Nietzsche had already obtained a different perspective on the quattrocento, thanks to his new Basel associate. Basel, which had been a 'focal point for contact between German intellectuals and Italian ideas' in the early sixteenth century (Tracy 1968, p. 282), when the city hosted numerous renowned Renaissance scholars drawn to the circle around Erasmus and the humanist publisher Johann Froben, was still a vibrant centre of cultural exchange between northern and southern Europe in the 1870s. For Nietzsche, it provided an alternative *geistige Lebensform* (mode of intellectual existence),[46] a corrective to the heady mix of Nordic myths, Romantic medievalism, and patriotic pathos in Wagner's operas, which had cast a powerful spell on the young German classicist since he first heard the prelude to the *Mastersingers* in the fall of 1868.[47] Other resident Italophiles like Johann Jakob Bachofen also played a part in this emancipatory process,[48] but the major impulse came from Burckhardt, a sharp-

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45 Nietzsche consistently speaks of a *Wiedergeburt der Tragödie*, *Wiedergeburt des griechischen Alterthums*, *Wiedergeburt der hellenischen Welt*, and so on; see Campioni 1998, p. 93. Gerhardt 1995, p. 153, remarks: 'Already in his first philosophical work [i.e., *The Birth of Tragedy*] Nietzsche expressed hope in a rebirth of tragedy out of the German spirit of music and thus—even though he refrained from using the term, out of respect for Wagner—a renaissance.' See also Hinz 1989.

46 The phrase is borrowed from Thomas Mann's 1926 lecture 'Lübeck als geistige Lebensform'; see Mann 1953.

47 On Nietzsche's early 'Wagnerianism' see Love 1963, Ross 1980, pp. 168–177, Janz 1978, vol. 1, pp. 246–252, and Borchmeyer/Salaquarda 1994, vol. 2, pp. 1278–1295. Kaegi 1982, vol. 7, p. 52, maintains that Burckhardt represented 'the most dangerous ferment' of Nietzsche's discontent with Wagner in the middle of the 1870s.

48 On Nietzsche's relation to Bachofen see Cesana 1994 and Cancik 1995, pp. 25–26.

tongued critic of German chauvinism (at least since the Wars of Unification) and Wagnerian music,[49] who quickly became a revered colleague, mentor, and *ersatz* master for Nietzsche.[50] Throughout the 1870s, while transforming himself into a proselyte of the *philosophes* and a cosmopolitan 'free spirit' (HA II 87),[51] Nietzsche used Burckhardt's Renaissance as a compass and signpost on his gradual retreat from Bayreuth. Wagner was aware of the role that Burckhardt had played in the apostasy of his former disciple.[52] 'People like Nietzsche', he remarked to Cosima in 1881, 'via the Renaissance man Burckhardt' (*durch den Renaissance-Mann Burckhardt*), had revealed their true colours when they identified themselves with 'odious' figures such as Erasmus and Petrarch (Wagner 1977, vol. 2, p. 837).[53]

49 Burckhardt reveals his dislike of Wagner in a letter to Max Alioth (24 July 1875), which alludes to the composer's 'lurid' (*grell*) and 'formless' (*herrenlose*) fantasy: Burckhardt 1986, vol. 6, pp. 42–43. Burckhardt 1986, vol. 5, pp. 43 and 183 and vol. 6, pp. 48–49, 81, 151–152, 192, denounces Wagner's music as a 'romantic swindle' and describes its oppressive, domineering effects on the listener, anticipating some of Nietzsche's later arguments contra Wagner, e.g., in HA II 3. Bergmann 1987, p. 95, misreads Burckhardt's letter to Friedrich von Preen of 31 December 1872 (see Burckhardt 1986, vol. 5, p. 183) as an expression of support for Wagner's Bayreuth project. For a more accurate assessment of his attitude towards Wagner and Wagnerianism see Kaegi 1982, vol. 7, pp. 40, 54, von Martin 1947a, pp. 44–45, 212–213, and Salin 1948, p. 54.

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50 Even Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, a one-time associate of Bayreuth and one of the most influential propagators of the 'German' Nietzsche in the first third of the twentieth century, acknowledged the moderating impact that Burckhardt's francophile, cosmopolitan outlook had on her brother in the early 1870s (Förster–Nietzsche 1928, p. 38): 'Jakob [sic] Burckhardt surely exerted a great influence on my brother who always considered him [i.e. Burckhardt] a representative of Latin culture. Especially during the time of the [Franco-Prussian] War, when intellectual arrogance prompted many Germans to put down their victories ... to their "Bildung", Burckhardt was an excellent counter-weight [and allowed my brother] to view the world-historical events with a certain detachment, beyond German sensibilities. My brother had always embraced such supra-national views, but found it hard to hold on to them in those days, when even Richard Wagner (who at the time was his greatest and closest friend) got so carried away by the incredible euphoria in the wake of the proud victory... that he [i.e. Wagner] spoke out with bitterness and condescension against Latin civilization'.

51 See Campioni 1976.

52 See Ross 1980, p. 316: 'they [i.e., Richard and Cosima Wagner] knew who their opponent and rival was in Basel'.

53 See also the Wagners' objection to the 'arrogant, coldly critical tone' of Burckhardt's art-historical judgements in the *Cicerone* (à propos the *duomo* in Florence), in which they discerned 'traces' of his 'influence on Nietzsche': Wagner 1977, vol. 2, p. 589 (30 August 1880). A little less than a year later, Wagner decried 'the admirers of the Renaissance' as 'Jew lovers' (*Juden-Freunde*)—a curious charge,

Nietzsche's little essay on 'The Greek State', composed in 1871 and originally intended for inclusion in *The Birth of Tragedy*,[54] already hinted at his imminent departure from the Wagnerian evaluation of the Renaissance as a falsely optimistic, 'idyllic' revival of Greek antiquity. In this early piece, Nietzsche put the 'men of the Renaissance in Italy' on a par with the ancient Hellenes as 'political men par excellence' (CV 3, KSA 1, p. 771), imbued with violent, agonal instincts which he presented—this, too, was an implicit challenge to Wagner's more Winckelmannian, 'civic humanist' conception of ancient Greece—as necessary preconditions for the establishment of a great culture.[55] A few years later, in the second *Untimely Meditation* (1874), he went a step further and held up the men of the Renaissance as the exact opposite of cerebral Socratism. Far from being theoretical men, they were a powerful elite of practical individuals who had lifted the culture of early modern Italy on their strong 'shoulders' (UM II 2). In a little aside, he acknowledged the scholar who had drawn his attention to this first successful rebirth of the ancient world. The Renaissance, he remarked, had awakened 'once again the ancient Italian genius', thus producing 'a "wondrous echo of the ancient string-instruments", as Jacob Burckhardt puts it' (UM II 3).[56]

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With the publication of *Human, All Too Human* (1878–1880), Nietzsche made his break with Wagner explicit. In this work, significantly, he offered his first sustained commentary on the historical and, to some extent, the personal import of the Renaissance. Redefining his own philosophy as a continuation and execution of the Enlightenment project, Nietzsche presented the Enlightenment as an extension of the Renaissance. The Renaissance, which he now hailed, quite unambiguously, as 'the golden age of the millennium', had comprised 'all the positive forces to which we

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and one quite misplaced at least with regard to Burckhardt who was a convinced (if conventional) anti-Semite: Wagner 1977, vol. 2, p. 763 (16 July 1881). Burckhardt's hostility towards Jews and Jewish emancipation, which was intimately connected with his anti-modern anxieties, is evident in Burckhardt 1986, vol. 3, p. 69, vol. 6, p. 214, vol. 7, pp. 190, 204, vol. 8, p. 228, vol. 9, p. 90, vol. 10, pp. 26, 251. On Burckhardt's anti-Semitism see Mattioli 1999.

54 See von Reibnitz 1992, pp. 43–46, and Ruehl 2003, pp. 67–69.

55 On the anti-Wagnerian force of this little essay see Kaegi 1982, vol. 7, p. 47, and Ruehl 2003. That Wagner also had a more 'civic humanist' perspective on the politics and culture of late medieval and early modern Italy is suggested by his great appreciation of Sismondi, see Wagner 1977, vol. 1, pp. 1005–1009, 1011–1012, 1019.

56 Nietzsche is quoting Burckhardt 1988, p. 183: 'a partial reawakening of the ancient Italian soul ... a wondrous echo of ancient string-instruments' (*ein wundersames Weiterklingen eines uralten Saitenspiels*). See Kaegi 1982, vol. 7, p. 51.

owe modern culture'. Nietzsche's description of these forces reads like a keyword synopsis of Burckhardt's book: 'the liberation of thought, disregard for authority, the triumph of education over the presumption of lineage, a passion for science ... the unchaining of the individual ... a disdain for appearances and mere effect' (HA I 237).[57] Just as he himself set out to revive the secular world-view of the *philosophes* and the ethical scepticism of the *moralistes*, most notably Montaigne and La Rochefoucauld,[58] the latter had 'carried on' the secularizing and rationalizing 'task' of the Renaissance. In doing so, they had revived not just the ideas, but the actual psychological disposition of classical antiquity to which Nietzsche now, significantly, apportioned Rome:

> Reading Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère ... one is closer to antiquity than with any other group of authors ... —together, they form an important link in the great continuing chain of the Renaissance ... With their resurrection of the great stoic world of ancient Rome, the French have continued the task of the Renaissance in a most honourable fashion ... —they began with the creative imitation of ancient forms and ended up having splendid success in recreating ancient characters. (HA II 214, 216)

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If these remarks suggest a new attitude towards rationalism and 'Latin' culture, they also reflect a changed conception of history. The interpretation of Greek tragedy in *The Birth of Tragedy* had been informed, to a large extent, by Schopenhauer's irrational metaphysics of the will and his synchronic-pessimistic vision of the world as aimless suffering and striving. Nietzsche's reference now to a developmental 'chain' of enlightenment, from the ancients, via the Renaissance humanists and the *philosophes*, to present-day sceptics like himself, indicates a more diachronic, optimistic perception of the past. For Schopenhauer, the notion of history as meaningful change or indeed progress had been one of the most pernicious effects of what he called the 'stultifying Hegelian *Afterphilosophie*'. As he commented in the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation*:

> The Hegelians, who regard the philosophy of history as the aim of all philosophy, ought to be taught some Plato, who untiringly repeats that the object of philosophy lies in the unchangeable and in what lasts, and not in the things which are now like this, and now like that. All those who make such claims about the world in motion, or as they call it, history, have not grasped the

57 See Andler 1926, pp. 151–152. On Nietzsche's early 'uses' of Burckhardt's idea of the Renaissance see Farulli 1990, pp. 54–58.

58 See Molner 1993, Vivarelli 1993, Vivarelli 1998, and Donnellan 1979. Kaegi 1982, vol. 3, p. 540, reminds us that Burckhardt greatly contributed to Nietzsche's discovery of La Rochefoucauld's *Maximes et pensées* in the 1870s. See also Ross 1980, pp. 316–317.

> fundamental truth of philosophy: that, philosophically speaking, what really is is the same at all times. (Schopenhauer 1988, vol. II, pp. 514–515)[59]

While in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche had still largely embraced this 'fundamental truth', in the second *Untimely Meditation* and, even more emphatically, in *Human, All Too Human*, he discarded most of Schopenhauer's ahistorical metaphysics. Though staunchly opposed to Hegel's progressivist philosophy of history (in this respect at least, he remained a faithful disciple of his former 'educator'), he began to think more historically. Ironically, it was Jacob Burckhardt, a self-professed Schopenhauerian,[60] who more than anyone else effected this historical turn.[61] *The Civilization of the Renaissance* seems to have played a dual role in this process. On the one hand, its glowing depiction of the autonomous personalities emerging from and shaping, in turn, the culture of the quattrocento furnished Nietzsche with a counter-weight to Schopenhauer's philosophical deconstruction of the *principium individuationis* and led him to rethink the significance of individual agency in history. It thus provided a historical precedent and an inspiration for one of the central ideas underlying his *Kulturkritik* in the 1870s: the belief that the great task of cultural renewal could be carried out by a small group of superior human beings. On the other hand, Burckhardt's account of the Renaissance gave Nietzsche a broader and more complex understanding of European cultural history and made him question earlier absolutes, most notably the belief in the inimitable greatness and timeless model character of ancient Greece. It contained ample evidence that Western civilization had not lain dormant since the fifth century BC, waiting to be awoken from its Socratic slumber by the kiss of Richard Wagner, the 'most German man' (Wagner 1975, p. 86).[62]

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59 On Schopenhauer's critique of Hegel's philosophy of history (and its influence on Nietzsche) see Gottfried 1975, esp. pp. 337–338.

60 His allegiance to Schopenhauer's philosophy is expressed in Burckhardt 1986, vol. 5, pp. 105, 112, 119, 129, 139; vol. 6, pp. 30, 55, 134, 276; and vol. 7, p. 83. See also von Martin 1947a, pp. 27–28, Kaegi 1982, vol. 5, pp. 280–283, 491–497, vol. 6, pp. 109–113, and Jung 1991. But cf. Joël 1918, pp. 62, 245–246, who argues that Burckhardt was not 'an orthodox Schopenhauerian'.

61 Nietzsche's exposure to *The Civilization of the Renaissance* was as important, in this context, as his attendance of Burckhardt's lectures 'On the Study of History' in the winter semester of 1870/1871. Burckhardt's influence on Nietzsche's conception of history in the second *Untimely Meditation* is discussed in Bauer 2001, pp. 213–222.

62 For Wagner, by contrast, the 'excavation' of classical antiquity by the Renaissance humanists was a mere 'misfortune'; unlike his own *Gesamtkunstwerk*, Renaissance art was 'not destined to be redemptive': Wagner 1977, vol. 2, p. 1041 (7 November 1882).

The 'Italian genius', as Burckhardt put it, had already achieved a first revival—and not just of the (cultural) glory that was Greece, but also of the noble, martial values that Nietzsche would later identify with the label 'Rome' (see, e.g., GM I 16). For those contemporary Europeans seeking a second revival, there were important lessons to be learnt from the Renaissance, with regard both to its enabling factors and the reasons for its ultimate failure. In his reflections on the latter, Nietzsche soon came to single out Martin Luther.

Nietzsche's critical reassessment of Luther and the Reformation since the mid-1870s went hand in hand with his ideological emancipation from Wagner, who had recently taken a Protestant turn.[63] Wagner's new-found religiosity—'Incredible! Wagner had become pious', as Nietzsche put it, many years later, in *Ecce Homo* (EH III HA 5)—found expression in his last opera, *Parsifal*, the libretto of which was completed in the spring of 1877.[64] *The Birth of Tragedy*, as we have seen, had posited a close connection between the composer and the reformer, hailing Wagner as a product of that 'glorious, internally healthy, primordial force' of the German 'essence' (*Wesen*), which had also manifested itself in the Reformation (BT 23). In his second lecture 'On the Future of Our Educational Institutions', delivered in Basel on 6 February 1872, he still expressed his commitment to this German essence which had inspired the 'German Reformation [and] German music' (EI 2, KSA 1, p. 691). The preparations for the fourth and the (unfinished) fifth *Untimely Meditation*, written in the first half of 1875, however, already betrayed a more ambivalent relation to Luther. On the one hand, Nietzsche, evidently with an eye on his Wagnerian friends, applauded the Reformation as a 'protest against the decorative culture of the Renaissance'; on the other hand, he conceded that it had 'separated us from antiquity' (Nachlaß Spring 1875–Summer 1875, KSA 8, 5[28]). In another fragment from 1875, he remarked that the Renaissance showed 'an awakening of truthfulness in the south, as did the Reformation in the north', but added that the anti-Christian approach to classical antiquity

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63 On Nietzsche's changing attitude towards Luther in those years see Hirsch 1998, Bluhm 1950, Bluhm 1953, Bluhm 1956, and Orsucci 1996, pp. 352–364. For a different reading see Bertram 1921, pp. 42–63.

64 See Gregor-Dellin 1980, pp. 739–740. On Wagner's increased interest in and admiration for Luther during the 1870s see Wagner 1977, vol. 1, pp. 741, 744, 748–753, 756, 775–777, 805, 1014, and vol. 2, pp. 206–210. See also Gregor-Dellin 1980, pp. 763–764, and Ross 1980, p. 519: 'In the meantime [i.e., the mid-1870s], she [i.e., Cosima Wagner] had become a good Protestant, the *Kulturkampf* was in full swing, and Wagner considered himself a descendant of Luther.'

taken by the Italian humanists had been 'purer' than that of the German reformers (Nachlaß Spring 1875–Summer 1875, KSA 8, 5[107]).

As he moved further away from Bayreuth in the second half of the 1870s, Nietzsche began to concentrate on the negative effects of the Reformation. In the first volume of *Human, All Too Human* (1878), a book that he retrospectively stylized as his response to *Parsifal* (see EH III HA 5),[65] he made Luther responsible for delaying the 'full awakening and supremacy of the sciences' and for preventing the 'complete synthesis [*In-Eins-Verwachsen*] of the ancient and the modern spirit' attempted in the Italian Renaissance. Insofar as it caused the Counter-Reformation, the Reformation, which he now decried as 'a vociferous protest of reactionary minds who had not yet had their fill of the medieval world-view', helped to re-establish a 'self-defensive Catholic Christianity' (HA I 237). It was Luther, Nietzsche contended in *The Gay Science* (1882), who had launched the fateful 'peasants' revolt of the north' against the 'noble' (*vornehm*) values and institutions of the south, a revolt that brought the 'common', 'plebeian' instincts back to the fore, 'emaciated' German culture and 'flattened' the European mind for centuries to come (GS 358).

Nietzsche's polemical juxtapositions of the Renaissance and the Reformation became more pronounced in his so-called 'transvaluative' writings. They reached a climax in *The Antichrist* (completed in September 1888), which included a lengthy counterfactual speculation about what might have ensued had Cesare Borgia ascended the papal throne in the early 1500s. Taking his cue from Burckhardt's redolent conjectures about the imminent decline of the papacy and the possible 'secularization' of the Papal States in Cesare's hands (see Burckhardt 1988, pp. 85, 87), Nietzsche mused that such an attack on the Church 'from within' would have brought about the realization of the Renaissance project, which he identified squarely with the 'transvaluation of Christian values'. What undermined this project, in the end, was not so much Cesare's premature death in 1507 as the intervention of a certain 'German monk':

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> To attack at the decisive place, at the seat of Christianity itself, and there to enthrone the noble values ... I see before me the possibility of a ... heavenly ... spectacle ... Cesare Borgia as pope! ... Am I understood? ... Well then, that would have been the only sort of victory that I desire today: with that, Christianity would have been abolished!—What happened? A German monk, Luther, came to Rome. This monk, with all the vengeful instincts of a

65 On the completion of Nietzsche's break with Wagner in 1878 and the significance of *Human, All Too Human* in this context see Borchmeyer/Salaquarda 1994, vol. 2, pp. 1316–1333.

> failed priest, rebelled against the Renaissance in Rome ... Luther saw the depravity of the papacy when in fact the exact opposite was becoming apparent: ... Christianity no longer occupied the papal chair! Instead there was life! The triumph of life! The great yea to all lofty, beautiful and reckless things! ... And Luther restored the church: he attacked it... The Renaissance—an event without meaning, a great 'in vain' [*ein großes Umsonst*]. (A 61)[66]

That Burckhardt had influenced the revision of Nietzsche's formerly uncritical Protestant view of history is suggested by a letter to Heinrich Köselitz from October 1879, in which Nietzsche confessed that 'for a long time', he had been 'incapable of saying anything respectful' about Luther.[67] He put this down to the recent perusal of 'a huge collection of material' to which Jacob Burckhardt had drawn his attention. 'Here, for once,' he commented, 'we don't get the falsified Protestant version of history we have been taught to believe in' (KSB 5, p. 451). The 'material' in question was the second volume of the *History of the German People since the End of the Middle Ages* (published a little earlier in 1879) by the Catholic historian Johannes Janssen, which offered a fiercely partisan account of the confessional struggles in sixteenth-century Central Europe.[68] While Janssen's *History* evidently contributed to his reassessment of Luther in the 1880s,[69] Nietzsche's particular conception of the Reformation as a fateful interruption of and lasting impediment to the secularization and rationalization of the Western world was shaped more directly by his reading of *The Civilization of the Renaissance*. In the section on 'Morality and Religion', Burckhardt had speculated that the Renaissance would have 'swiftly done away with' outdated Christian institutions like the Mendicant orders, 'if the German Reformation and the Counter-Reformation had not interfered'. To

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66 For a brilliant analysis of this passage see Sommer 2000, pp. 627–646. Nietzsche repeats his critique of the Reformation as a tragic interruption of the secularization process begun in the Renaissance in EH III CW 2.

67 On the Protestant values that determined Nietzsche's education in Röcken and Naumburg see Bohley 1987, Bohley 1989, and Pernet 1989.

68 On Burckhardt's deep respect for Janssen's scholarship see Kaegi 1982, vol. 5, pp. 56–58. Ludwig Pastor, who was Janssen's pupil and friend, reports that Burckhardt called Janssen's *History of the German People* 'essential' for the understanding of the 'end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century', because it 'finally told us the truth about the so-called Reformation'; 'up to now, we have only had uplifting stories [*Erbauungsgeschichten*] by Protestant pastors': Pastor 1950, p. 276.

69 See Hirsch 1998, pp. 175–179, and Orsucci 1996, pp. 353–364; but cf. Benz 1956, pp. 73–79, who rightly points out (p. 75) that, unlike Nietzsche, Janssen viewed Renaissance humanism as an ally of Protestantism.

the secular eyes of his Renaissance men, these orders appeared 'either comical or disgusting'. 'And who knows', he remarked ambiguously, 'what would have been in store for the papacy then, if the Reformation had not saved it' (Burckhardt 1988, pp. 337–338).[70]

3. The Makings of Renaissance Man: Individualism without Humanism

If Burckhardt prompted Nietzsche to reflect critically on the reasons for the failure of the Renaissance, he also made him consider the 'causes and conditions' for the 'superiority of Renaissance Man' (Nachlaß November 1887–March 1888, KSA 13, 11[133]) as well as the possibilities for a second cultural renewal. The first one, as he learnt from Burckhardt, was brought about by a new breed of men, who actively dismantled the values and institutions of the Middle Ages. Burckhardt's insistence that the makers and shapers of Renaissance culture were not humanist scholars like Coluccio Salutati or Lorenzo Valla left an impression on the young German philologist, who soon came to despise the pedagogical and methodological assumptions of his profession.[71] The humanists' revival of learning—this was made abundantly clear in the first three sections of Burckhardt's book—was little more than an epiphenomenon, an effect, rather than the cause or the essence, of the Renaissance (see Burckhardt 1988, pp. 127–128). Nietzsche adopted this reinterpretation of the Renaissance for his own speculations about the coming rebirth of antiquity, a task, he believed, that required a certain practical, activist disposition rather than classical training and scholarly erudition. The agonal, aristocratic spirit of ancient Greece and Rome would be restored not by men who had studied the ancient texts, but by men who embodied the values of the ancients. He already suggested as much in the second *Untimely Meditation* (1874) à propos the uses of monumental history:

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70 Other remarks about the Reformation—see, e.g., Burckhardt 1988, pp. 93–94—reiterate the same idea, viz. that Luther prevented the secularization of the Church 'from within' (*von innen heraus*). They seem to confirm David Norbrook's contention that Burckhardt shared Nietzsche's later 'unease with Protestantism' and his conviction that 'Renaissance Italy was fortunate to maintain an aristocratic freedom from this extreme form of slave religion' (Norbrook 1989, p. 109). Benz 1956, p. 77, claims that more than anyone else, Burckhardt conditioned Nietzsche's anti-Protestant turn in the 1870s. But cf. Janssen 1970, p. 61, who argues that Burckhardt's comments on the Reformation in *The Civilization of the Renaissance* 'are, on the whole, appreciatory'.

71 See, e.g., his scathing remark on the 'castrated', 'philistine' empiricism of German classical philology (Nachlaß Spring–Summer 1875, KSA 8, 5[109]).

> Let us assume that somebody believes it would take no more than a hundred productive men, effective people brought up in a new spirit, to put an end to the superficial culture [*Gebildetheit*] that has become fashionable in Germany right now, how must it strengthen him to see that the culture of the Renaissance raised itself on the shoulders of such a group of a hundred men. (UM II 2)

The Civilization of the Renaissance, as we shall see, provided a blueprint for Nietzsche's reflections on the psychological make-up of this new breed of 'productive' men and the sociopolitical conditions that enabled the growth of their personalities.[72]

Like Burckhardt, Nietzsche regarded the development of a secular individualism as a defining characteristic of the Renaissance, which he described as a 'return to a heathen and profoundly personal ethos' (*Anlauf in's Heidnisch-stark-Persönliche zurück*) (Nachlaß Summer–Autumn 1873, KSA 7, 29[132]). Like his senior colleague, who belonged to one of the oldest families of the Basel patriciate, he viewed this new personal ethos of the Renaissance as the privilege of a new elite. In one of his drafts for the unfinished fifth *Untimely Meditation*, to be entitled 'We Philologists' (*Wir Philologen*), he cited Burckhardt's remark about the 'sophisticated' nature (*das Unvolksthümliche*) of Renaissance civilization (Nachlaß Spring–Summer 1875, KSA 8, 5[108]).[73] He had already elaborated this thought in an earlier draft, arguing that the sovereignty of the individual in Renaissance Italy produced an aristocratic culture which no longer drew on the forces of the people: 'The new education [*Bildung*] of the Renaissance ... also sought a corresponding art form ... The soil of the new art is no longer the people ... The individual dominates, that is, he

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72 On Nietzsche's reliance on Burckhardt in his psychological reconstruction of Renaissance Man see Farulli 1990b, esp. pp. 42–49.

73 It should be emphasized, however, that while Nietzsche considered the elitism of Renaissance civilization a 'terrible fact' (*eine furchtbare Thatsache*) (Nachlaß Spring–Summer 1875, KSA 8, 5[108]), Burckhardt 1988, p. 128, coolly accepted the 'separation of the cultivated from the uncultivated' (*Scheidung von Gebildeten und Ungebildeten*) brought about by the new humanistic education as a 'necessary' and indeed immutable aspect of cultural evolution. The young Nietzsche, arguably under the influence of Wagner's democratic ideal of a new 'music for the masses', still assessed this development more sceptically. See also his remarks in the lectures on the 'History of Classical Philology' (1871), KGW II.3, p. 348: 'This [i.e., the pedagogical reforms of the Renaissance humanists] immediately transposed the central division of medieval culture, that between priest and layman, into the new education which became elitist [*unvolksthümlich*] and thus produced a rift from which all of us suffer today: from now on, there are cultivated and uncultivated men [*Gebildete und Ungebildete*] in Europe.'

contains within himself the forces that previously lay dormant in great masses. The individual as the extract of the people: withering away for the sake of one blossom' (Nachlaß 1871, KSA 7, 9[107]).

Implicit in these observations on the aristocratic individualism of the Renaissance was the condemnation of what Nietzsche regarded as a levelling of education and culture in contemporary European society. Both Nietzsche and Burckhardt constructed an image of early modern Italy that could be held up as a mirror to present-day Northern Europe whose schools and universities invoked the legacy of Renaissance learning and yet failed miserably to produce the kind of individuals that inhabited quattrocento Italy. Renaissance individualism, for both, was diametrically opposed to the bourgeois, liberal individualism that informed the pedagogical as well as the political ideals of Germany and Switzerland in the second half of the nineteenth century.[74] Both men believed that these ideals—the Rousseauean faith in the natural goodness of man, universal rights, equality of opportunity, the promotion of general welfare, and so on—would open the door to various forms of 'massification' and eventually usher in a 'great rabble- and slave-rebellion' (Nachlaß Summer–Autumn 1884, KSA 11, 26[324]) that was bound to destroy the last remnants of individual autonomy and genuine *Bildung*.[75] Both, accordingly, rejected universal suffrage, the shortening of working hours—in Basel from twelve to eleven hours per day—the abolition of child labour, and the broadening of humanistic education, in particular the establishment of 'educational associations' (*Bildungsvereine*) for workers.[76] As Nietzsche observed in the notes for his lectures 'On the Future of Our Educational Institutions', delivered in 1872 to a packed auditorium in Basel's *Aula*,'universal education' was a 'preliminary stage of communism … the precondition for communism' (Nach-

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74 On the modernization, in particular the expansion and 'democratization', of the German educational system in the second half of the nineteenth century see Jeismann/Lundgreen 1987, pp. 71–250, 317–362, and Berg 1991, pp. 147–371, 411–473. On educational reform in nineteenth-century Basel see Gossman 2000, pp. 69–77 .

75 See Burckhardt's letter to Heinrich von Geymüller of 27 December 1874 (Burckhardt 1986, vol. 5, pp. 261–262): 'Since the Paris Commune, anything is possible anywhere in Europe, mainly because there are well-meaning, splendid liberal people everywhere who do not rightly know where justice ends and injustice begins ... They are the ones opening the gates and paving the way for the dreadful masses everywhere.' On Nietzsche's fear of the masses see Marti 1993.

76 On Nietzsche's attitude to these contemporary sociopolitical issues see Naake 1985, esp. pp. 61, 86, 89, and Cancik 1995, pp. 23–24, 27–31; on Burckhardt's standpoint see Bächtold 1939, esp. pp. 286–299, and Bauer 2001, pp. 87–101.

laß Winter 1870/1871–Autumn 1872, KSA 7, 8[57]).[77] Like Burckhardt, Nietzsche hailed the Renaissance as the harbinger of a modern sense of self, while dismissing all modern attempts to universalize and democratize its humanist legacy of self-formation.

Nietzsche's conception of Renaissance individualism, however, was more radically anti-democratic, anti-liberal, and anti-humanist than Burckhardt's.[78] The latter, after all, though he acknowledged the new division into 'educated' and 'uneducated' people brought about by humanism, nonetheless stressed the competitive, meritocratic aspects of Renaissance civilization, the foundation of which, he believed, was a 'universal society' (*allgemeine Gesellschaft*) characterized by an 'equality of estates' (Burckhardt 1988, p. 106).[79] Nietzsche, by contrast, exclusively dwelt on the 'noble', aristocratic elements of the Renaissance. While Burckhardt conceded that, alongside the tyrannical courts, republican city-states like Florence also allowed for the growth of 'individuality' and cultural productivity (Burckhardt 1988, p. 10),[80] Nietzsche chose to ignore this republican alternative. The tyrants, he observed in *The Gay Science* (1882), were not just the 'first-born' of the new individuals (*Erstlinge der Individuen*), they were the only *raison d'être* for a people. True self-fashioning, for him, was only possible in the radically insecure, violent sphere of tyranny (GS 23). It

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77 On the anti-modern animus and elitist ethos of Nietzsche's lectures see Gossman 2000, pp. 423–424, 427–430. Cf. Burckhardt 1982, p. 182: 'The latest thing in our world: the demand for culture [*Cultur*] as a human right, which is a veiled desire for a life of luxury [*Wohlleben*].' On Burckhardt's anti-democratic conception of *Bildung* in particular see Schmidt 1976, pp. 18–22. Wagner, by contrast, enthusiastically welcomed the 1880 Schulreform in Basel city, which made secondary school education free of charge and thus (at least in principle) accessible to the lower orders; see Wagner 1977, vol. 2, p. 570.

78 The anti-democratic and anti-humanist *Weltanschauung* underlying Nietzsche's vision of a reborn humanity is almost completely overlooked in Boeschenstein 1982.

79 See also Burckhardt 1988, p. 262, which contains a brief eulogy on the new social mobility and general disregard for lineage in early modern Italy. All of this, Burckhardt observed, 'gave the impression' that the Renaissance ushered in an 'age of equality' (*Zeitalter der Gleichheit*). Janssen 1970, pp. 202–203, rightly points out that Burckhardt hailed Renaissance society as meritocratic and homogenous insofar as it exploded the feudal, hierarchical structures of the Middle Ages, while highlighting those new forms of (cultural) stratification and elitism that had unfortunately been eroded, he believed, in the 'mass societies' of modern Europe.

80 It is nonetheless significant that Burckhardt's discussion of the political context of Renaissance individualism is devoted first and foremost to the tyrannies: only twenty of the roughly one hundred pages that make up the first section of *The Civilization of the Renaissance* are dedicated to the republican city-states.

is significant that in his otherwise very warm response to the *Gay Science*, a complimentary copy of which had been sent to him by the author immediately after publication,[81] Burckhardt expressed mild concern over Nietzsche's 'possible propensity towards tyranny' (*Anlage zu eventueller Tyrannei*) which he thought was revealed in aphorism 325 of the book (Burckhardt 1986, vol. 8, p. 87). Entitled 'What Belongs to Greatness',[82] the aphorism in question reads: 'Who is going to achieve great things if he does not feel within himself the force and the will to cause great pain? The ability to suffer is the least ... But not to perish by dint of inner distress and uncertainty when one inflicts great suffering and hears the cry of this suffering—that is great, that belongs to greatness' (GS 325).

But tyrannical self-fashioning, according to Nietzsche, did not just produce great individuals with stony hearts and Machiavellian minds; it also aided the growth of culture. Under a tyranny, he argued, 'the individual is usually most mature and "culture", consequently, most developed and fertile'. The tyrant was a catalyst for the creation of 'bold', 'transgressive' individuals as well as artists (GS 23). Again and again, Nietzsche returned to this juncture between oppression and individualization, destruction and cultural production, the 'mysterious connection', as he called it in his essay on the 'Greek State', 'between political greed and artistic creation, battlefield and work of art' (CV 3, KSA 1, p. 772). Even if the 'aristocratic radicalism' that informed his later writings went far beyond Burckhardt's more conservative 'cultural pessimism',[83] there can be little

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81 Nietzsche sent copies of all his books to Burckhardt, whom he considered his most discerning reader, and continued to do so long after the latter had stopped even acknowledging receipt of the shipments from his young friend and admirer (that is, after the publication of *The Genealogy of Morality* in 1887); see KSB 8, pp. 80, 187, 205, 489, 547.

82 Note that Burckhardt's lecture series 'On the Study of History' contained a long segment on the nature of 'historical greatness', in which Burckhardt proffered a—qualified—'dispensation' of the 'great man' from the 'normal moral law' (*Dispensation von dem gewöhnlichen Sittengesetz*): Burckhardt 1982, pp. 401–402. His observation (p. 396) that the 'first task of the great man is to assert and to increase his power' and the categorical statement (p. 401) that 'power has never been established without crime; yet the most important material and spiritual possessions of a nation can develop only when they are protected by power' suggest that Nietzsche's 'tyrannical' definition of greatness in *The Gay Science* was not complete anathema to him. Kaegi 1982, vol. 8, p. 63, remarks that Burckhardt 'knew his Machiavelli well enough not to be too perturbed' by the aphorism in question.

83 The Danish critic Georg Brandes first coined the expression 'aristocratic radicalism' to describe the strange mixture of revolutionary and elitist elements in the thought of Nietzsche, who emphatically embraced it; see his letter to Brandes of 2 December 1887 (KSB 8, p. 206). See also Detwiler 1990. On Burckhardt's more

doubt that the author of *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, who had detected an aesthetic quality in the steely state-building of the tyrants and *condottieri*, drew his attention to this connection in the first place. Nietzsche's slightly obscure observation, in a note of August 1881, that the Pitti Palace in Florence represented a renunciation of everything that was 'pretty and pleasing' and expressed the sublime 'contempt for the world' typical of a *Gewaltmensch* (Nachlaß Spring 1881–Autumn 1881, KSA 9, 11[197]) was a quotation from Burckhardt, who had reverently described the creators of the palace as 'superhuman beings' (*übermenschliche Wesen*).[84]

4. Radicalizing the Renaissance: the Borgia versus the *Bürger*

Following Burckhardt, the later Nietzsche glorified Renaissance Man, even more than the ancient Greeks, as a synthesis of the will to power and the will to form, the incarnation of an entirely amoral plastic instinct for self-creation and self-assertion. If in 1878 he had still insisted that the new 'artistic natures' of the Renaissance possessed 'the highest moral purity' and that the quattrocento was a golden age 'despite its flaws and vices' (HA I 237), he successively inverted this judgement over the next ten years, extolling the very 'flaws and vices' of early modern Italy as signs of a new pagan master-morality. Beginning with *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), he embarked on a fundamental transvaluation of various Renaissance figures who had been traditionally decried as demonic, corrupt, or blasphemous. He held up these figures in a decidedly 'monumental' fashion: as ideals and incentives for the 'new ruling caste' of a post-Christian

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conservative brand of *Kulturkritik* see Mommsen 1986. For a comparative assessment of their positions see Löwith 1966, pp. 31–34, and Sautet 1981, pp. 138–142.

84 Nietzsche is paraphrasing Burckhardt's *Cicerone, or Guide to the Enjoyment of the Artworks of Italy* (1855), a book that greatly shaped his own experience and assessment of Renaissance art; see Burckhardt 2001a, p. 151. It is not clear whether Burckhardt meant to attach the label *Gewaltmensch* to the patron of the palace, Luca Pitti, or its architect, Luca Fancelli (or indeed Filippo Brunelleschi, whom Burckhardt, following Vasari, erroneously credited with the original plans for the building). Note that in *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, he reserved the epithet 'Gewaltmensch' for the *uomo universale* Leon Battista Alberti whose fame rested on his extraordinary talents in art and architecture (as well as poetry and philosophy), not on any ruthless political actions; see Burckhardt 1988, p. 104. That Nietzsche was familiar with Burckhardt's portrait of the artist as *Gewaltmensch* is suggested by the marginalia in his copy of *The Civilization of the Renaissance*; see C482a, p. 110.

Europe, exempla all the more inspiring because of their concrete historical identity (Nachlaß May–July 1885, KSA 11, 35[73]). Nietzsche invoked a number of early modern characters in this context, including the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II, Michelangelo, and Machiavelli,[85] but his favourite Renaissance 'monument' by far was Cesare Borgia.

Burckhardt's assessment of Cesare, as we have seen, was ambivalent. On the one hand, he depicted him, not without some appreciation, as the most ruthless of the new breed of quattrocento tyrants. His callousness, Burckhardt wrote, was as extreme as his 'talent' and his attempts to centralize the Papal States had 'great prospects'. Like Leonardo, Burckhardt evidently saw something 'extraordinary' in his character. On the other hand, he recoiled from the extremity of Cesare's crimes, observing, quite unambiguously, that the monstrosity of the means outstripped 'the actual as well as the imaginable ends' of his actions—and thus ceased to be comprehensible, even within a purely 'objective', Machiavellian frame of re-

85 Nietzsche mentions Frederick II on a number of occasions, generally as a great antagonist of the medieval papacy and an early European free spirit; see, e.g., EH III Z 4, where he calls Frederick 'an atheist and enemy of the church comme il faut ... one of my closest relatives'. That Nietzsche's understanding of Frederick II was conditioned by Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance* is argued in Hampe 1925, p. 51. See also Janssen 1970, pp. 104–109. Nietzsche's portrait of Michelangelo (see Nachlaß April–June 1885, KSA 11, 34[149]) as the revolutionary creator of new artistic norms and forms seems equally indebted to Burckhardt and the marginalia in his copy of the *Cicerone*, also preserved at the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek (see C483 pp. 667, 669), evidence his familiarity with Burckhardt's views on Michelangelo. However, by explicitly placing Michelangelo above the 'Christian' Raphael, who 'faithfully' adhered to the classic standards of the ancients, Nietzsche went against one of Burckhardt's most fundamental verdicts on early modern art. In his art-historical writings as well as his correspondence, Burckhardt emphatically and repeatedly exalted Raphael's 'classicism' over Michelangelo's 'Titanism'. What Nietzsche hailed as Michelangelo's 'yearning instincts' for a new art and new artistic 'values', Burckhardt denounced as 'demonic', 'arbitrary', and 'reckless'; see Burckhardt 2001a, pp. 267–269, 273, 276, and Burckhardt 1986, vol. 8, p. 192. But Burckhardt's judgement of Michelangelo was not entirely negative. His comments on Michelangelo's paintings, for instance, notably those in the Sistine Chapel, betray a certain reluctant admiration for the Promethean aspects of his art, which he repeatedly describes as 'superhuman' (Burckhardt 2001b, pp. 124–129). Wölfflin 1934, pp. xxiv–xxv, and von Martin 1947a, pp. 140–142, overstate his traditionalism and classicism in this respect. Gossman 1999, pp. 904–905, and Kaegi 1982, vol. 3, pp. 510–513, offer a more balanced account. In their assessment of Machiavelli, at any rate, both men were in broad agreement again: like Burckhardt, Nietzsche praised Machiavelli primarily on account of his political 'realism'; see, e.g., TI 'What I Owe to the Ancients' 2. On Nietzsche's 'Machiavellianism' see Dombowsky 2004, pp. 131–168, and Vacano 2007.

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ference (Burckhardt 1988, pp. 84–85).[86] Nietzsche, by contrast, unconditionally hailed Cesare as the incarnation of the wholly secular, 'noble way of evaluating all things' (*der vornehmen Werthungsweise aller Dinge*) which he regarded as typical of Renaissance civilization in general (GM I 16). When Nietzsche defended Cesare's aggressive and transgressive traits against modern detractors who had judged them depraved and degenerate, he also challenged Burckhardt's judgement:

> One altogether misunderstands the beast of prey and the man of prey (Cesare Borgia for example), one misunderstands 'nature', as long as one looks for something 'sick' at the bottom of these healthiest of all tropical monsters. (BGE 197)[87]

In *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, Burckhardt had related the malefactions of Cesare and his father Alexander VI in the style of Gothic horror stories, as manifestations of a darkly demonic force in the otherwise translucent world of Renaissance *ragione di stato*. Nietzsche listed Cesare amongst the 'great virtuosi of Life' (Nachlaß November 1887–March 1888, KSA 13, 11[153]) and the main representatives of the 'brilliant-uncanny re-awakening of the classical ideal' (*glanzvoll-unheimliches Wiederaufwachen des klassischen Ideals*) in early modern Italy (GM I 16). For Burckhardt, whose conception of antiquity differed in many important ways from that of Winckelmann, Goethe, and Schiller, this 'classical ideal' nonetheless implied *humanitas*, harmony and *Bildung* as defined by 'Weimar classicism'.[88] For Nietzsche, it meant the 'noble', pagan values of ancient Rome, a pre-Christian 'master morality' that imbued the ancient elites with warlike ardour and a 'pathos of distance' towards lesser beings (BGE 257). After having lain dormant in the Middle Ages, these values, he believed, had come to life again in Cesare Borgia. Within the historical framework underlying *The Genealogy of Morality*, Cesare thus occupied a central place as the originator and driving force of the first 'transvaluation of Christian values'—and although eventually stopped short by the Reformation, his transvaluation bore the promise of a second, more complete reversal. His strategic significance for the entire transvaluative project is highlighted at the very end of *The Antichrist* where Nietzsche identified him with the Renaissance war against Christianity, a war, he contended, that had to be continued at all costs:

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86 See also Burckhardt 1988, p. 331.

87 See also A 46, where Nietzsche approvingly cites Domenico Boccaccio's assessment of Cesare —'è tutto festo'—which he translates as 'immortally healthy, immortally cheerful [*heiter*] and well-turned out [*wohlgerathen*].'

88 See von Martin 1947a, pp. 40–43, 139–141.

> So far there has been only *this* one great war, so far there has been no more decisive question than that of the Renaissance—*my* question is its question. (A 61)

The extent to which Nietzsche equated Cesare's historical 'task' with his own is evidenced by a late letter to Georg Brandes, dated 20 November 1888, in which he compares the anti-Christian polemics of *Ecce Homo* with Cesare's 'overcoming' of Christianity by dint of his superior 'vital instincts' (KSB 8, pp. 482–483). These remarks suggest that in the late 1880s at least, Nietzsche viewed himself as a kind of *Cesare redivivus*, a continuator of his work and the harbinger of a new, more complete attack on Christendom.[89]

This new attack, of course, would roll back not just the religious institutions of Christianity, but Christian 'slave morality' in all its laical nineteenth-century permutations. Cesare's noble values were *Gegenwerthe* (counter-values) to the 'life-denying' ascetic doctrines of the Christian Church as much as to the universalist humanitarian ideals underlying contemporary ideologies like liberalism and socialism. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche had already suggested that these latter ideologies were born out of the 'plebeian', egalitarian doctrines formulated in the Reformation. He returned to this narrative of decline in *The Twilight of the Idols* (completed in September 1888), where he condemned the modern demands for 'humanity' (*Humanität*) as signs of cultural as well as physical decay, contrasting them sharply with the vital, agonistic instincts of Cesare's Italy:

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> We moderns, very delicate, very vulnerable ... really have the conceit that our tender humanity, our unanimous *consensus* to be merciful, helpful, and trusting, is a positive advance, that with this we have gone far beyond the men of the Renaissance ... What is certain is that we may not place ourselves in Renaissance conditions, not even by an act of the imagination: our nerves would not endure it, let alone our muscles. But such incapacity is not a sign of progress ... Let us not doubt that we moderns, with our thickly padded humanity [*mit unsrer dick wattirten Humanität*] ... would have provided Cesare Borgia's contemporaries with a comedy at the sight of which they would have laughed themselves to death. (TI 'Reconnaissance Raids' 37)

Whereas in earlier works like *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche had posited a trajectory from the Renaissance to the rationalist, scientific world-view of modern Europe, the later, transvaluative writings largely capped these positive links. In the 1880s, Nietzsche dwelt almost exclusively on those elements of Renaissance civilization that stood in diametri-

89 See Gerhardt 1989, p. 109, and Gerhardt 1988.

cal opposition to the modern bourgeois world and its 'de-vitalizing' ethics of weakness:

> Strong ages, *noble* cultures all consider pity, 'neighbourly love', and the lack of self and self-assurance as something contemptible. Ages are to be measured by their *positive strength*—and if we apply this yardstick, the lavish, fateful age of the Renaissance [*jene so verschwenderische und verhängnissreiche Zeit der Renaissance*] emerges as the last *great* age. We moderns, by contrast ... with our virtues of ... modesty, legality, and scientism [*Wissenschaftlichkeit*] ... emerge as a *weak* age. (TI 'Reconnaissance Raids' 37)

Like Burckhardt, Nietzsche criticized the bourgeois *satisfait*, with his ideal of legal *Sekurität* and his utilitarian concerns, by holding up the Renaissance as an era of ruthlessness, violence, and 'dangerous living'.[90] However, where Burckhardt suspended judgement, Nietzsche offered explicit praise.[91] His Renaissance Men, most notably Frederick II and Cesare, were unscrupulous, immoral beings, splendid 'criminals' (Nachlaß Fall 1887, KSA 12, 10[50]),[92] who thought and acted in blissful disdain for the moral precepts of the Christian slave religion. They possessed a new, superior type of moral fibre, 'virtue in the Renaissance style, *virtù*, that is: virtue free of moralistic acid' (*moralinfreie Tugend*), which allowed them to increase their 'power' (A 2).[93] For Burckhardt, as we have seen, Cesare's crimes transcended the calculus of cruelty that characterized the Machiavellian politics of early modern Italy. For Nietzsche, such an excess of cruelty was in complete accordance with the amoral *virtù* of those 'higher

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90 See Burckhardt's letter to Nietzsche of 26 September 1886 (Burckhardt 1986, vol. 9, pp. 50–51), which indicates his sympathetic interest in Nietzsche's reflections on the 'antithesis between the great security and comfort of well-being [*Assecuranz des Wohlbefindens*] and the desirable education through danger'. Even Kaegi, who generally emphasizes their ideological differences, concedes that Burckhardt shared Nietzsche's critical perspective on 'contemporary European man'; see Kaegi 1982, vol. 7, p. 67.

91 See Janssen 1970, pp. 32–33, 153–156, 215–216.

92 In his *History of the Popes* (1834–1836), Leopold von Ranke had called Cesare a 'virtuoso of crime' (*Virtuos des Verbrechens*): Ranke 1890, p. 34.

93 The lines from A 2: 'What is happiness?—The feeling that power increases, that a resistance is being overcome. Not contentment, but more power; not peacefulness, but war; not virtue [*Tugend*], but efficiency [*Tüchtigkeit*] (virtue in the Renaissance style, *virtù*, virtue free of moralistic acid' echo the following observation in the Nachlaß (Autumn 1887, KSA 12, 10[50]): 'in the age of the Renaissance, the criminal flourished and acquired his own type of virtue — virtue in the Renaissance style, of course, *virtù*, that is: virtue free of moralistic acid'. On Nietzsche's neologism *moralinfrei* and its anti-Semitic connotations see Sommer 2000, pp. 98–99. There is some evidence that Nietzsche adopted the notion of 'criminal virtue' from Burckhardt; see the marginalia in C482a, p. 12, n. 3.

men' destined to destroy the Christian idols and to proclaim, once again, the 'great yea to all lofty, beautiful and reckless things' (A 61). Burckhardt regarded Cesare as an extreme, Nietzsche as an exemplary embodiment of the features that, in the eyes of both, defined the civilization of the Renaissance in Italy: secular individualism, remorseless *Realpolitik*, and a 'pre-moral intensity' that sought its 'most permanent expression in art' (Norbrook 1989, p. 109). Within the dramatic-allegorical subtext of Burckhardt's Renaissance book, Cesare played the role of transgressor and over-reacher, but ultimately he remained a historical figure, a deeply contradictory product of the new, morally ambiguous world that was the cradle of modern man. Nietzsche, by contrast, used Cesare primarily as a symbol and type: the iconic negation of all the sickly instincts, the 'thickly cushioned humanity' and 'herd animal morality' of those 'last men' populating contemporary Europe. This does not mean, however, that his Cesare was an arbitrary, 'literary' construct, as some recent critics have claimed (see Nehamas 1985, pp. 225–227). When Nietzsche referred to Cesare as a model of the superman and, indeed, 'a kind of superman' (TI 'Reconnaissance Raids' 37),[94] he had in mind a very specific moment in the history of Western civilization, a turning point that, ultimately, failed to turn, but that nonetheless held rich promise for the future.[95] Given the centrality of Cesare in particular and of early modern Italy in general to Nietzsche's vision of a transformation of European culture, one might justifiably describe the essence of this vision as a renascence of the Renaissance.

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5. Legacies: A Language of Blood and Beauty

The notion of Cesare Borgia as a neo-pagan superman became one of the most prominent emblems of the first wave of German Nietzscheanism in the 1890s,[96] when hosts of eager new disciples celebrated the Renaissance as an age of unrestrained subjectivity and a Dionysian zest for life.[97] Look-

94 See also Nietzsche's letter to Malwida von Meysenbug of 20 October 1888 (KSB 8, p. 458), in which he explains that a 'figure like Cesare Borgia' comes a 'hundred times' closer to his idea of the 'superman' than 'the figure of Christ'.

95 Sommer 2000, pp. 630–631, points out that it is the very failure of the Renaissance that necessitates and legitimizes Nietzsche's own transvaluative efforts.

96 This important feature of the early 'Nietzsche legacy' in Wilhelmine Germany is curiously overlooked in Aschheim 1992.

97 See Rehm 1929, O'Pecko 1976, Ritter-Santini 1974, and especially Uekermann 1985, who demonstrates (pp. 55–67) the profound influence that Nietzsche's ideas had on fin-de-siècle *Renaissancismus*.

ing back at this time in 1918, Thomas Mann listed the 'modish mass effects' of Nietzsche's philosophy, beginning with *Renaissancismus*, 'the cult of the Superman', 'Cesare Borgia aestheticism' (*Cesare-Borgia-Ästhetizismus*) and 'the loudmouthed language of blood and beauty'.[98] Like Mann, Burckhardt recoiled from this language and it may have been the 'loudmouthed' glorifications of Renaissance evildoers by fin-de-siècle playwrights such as Rudolf Lothar and Oscar Panizza that prompted his explicit dissociation from Nietzsche's *Gewaltmenschen* in the letter to von Pastor.[99]

To be sure, Nietzsche—and the dramatists of the fin de siècle after him—radicalized the secular, transgressive elements of Renaissance culture to such an extent that their representations of early modern Italy seemed like a ghastly distortion of Burckhardt's. At the same time, there can be little doubt that their 'language of blood and beauty' drew its vocabulary from Burckhardt's evocative descriptions of all the Sforza, Malatesta, Visconti, and their Machiavellian machinations.[100] Whoever penned the 1895 article for the *Historisch-Politische Blätter* was not the only contemporary observer to discern a connection between the first section of *The Civilization of the Renaissance* and the aestheticization of violence in Nietzsche's later writings, which shaped the Renaissance cult of ruthlessness around 1900.[101]

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98 Mann 1918, pp. 553–560. On Mann's ambivalent relation to *Renaissancismus* see Ruehl 2004.

99 See Lothar 1893, Panizza 1894, and Berthold Weiß' drama *Caesar Borgia*, which premiered in Zurich in 1893. On the scandal provoked by Panizza's *Liebeskonzil* in 1894 see Jelavich 1985, pp. 54–74.

100 Uekermann 1985, pp. 42–55, shows that the major playwrights of *Renaissancismus* did not just borrow their *dramatis personae* and plot-lines from Burckhardt's book, but adopted its very terminology, for instance the concept of the state as a 'work of art'.

101 Writing in 1917, the literary historian Franz Baumgarten called Burckhardt the 'historian' and Nietzsche the 'prophet' of *Renaissancismus*; see Baumgarten 1917, p. 5. The cultural historian Aby Warburg, who was better acquainted than most with the literature on early modern Italy, similarly believed that it was Burckhardt who had triggered the fin-de-siècle craze for the ruthless Renaissance hero; see Roeck 1991, p. 66. Fubini 1992, p. 563, remarks that Hans Baron's emphasis on the civic, urban, and 'proto-liberal' elements of Renaissance political thought in the early 1920s was an attempt to 'suppress' a line of interpretation that, 'through Burckhardt and Nietzsche, hailed the individualism of the Renaissance as the forerunner of the antibourgeois radical currents, both on the Left and the Right, that ran through Germany at the time'. See also Reinhardt 2002.

Pace Pastor, von Martin, and a host of later commentators,[102] it is not unreasonable to establish such a connection. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, as we have seen, had a profound and lasting impact on Nietzsche's 'intellectual development and philosophy'. It fundamentally altered his view of European history and made him question the Protestant, philhellenist ideals that underwrote his early hopes for a German cultural renewal out of the spirit of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The central ideas that Nietzsche adopted from Burckhardt's book—about secularization and individualization, the redemptive power of science and moral scepticism, southern form and clarity, the 'Italian genius'—were important discursive weapons in his struggle for liberation from Bayreuth in the 1870s. But these weapons were double-edged.[103] Inspired by Burckhardt, Nietzsche reinvented the Renaissance as the cradle of tyrannical self-fashioning and dangerous living as well as the model for a future rebirth of European civilization under the sign of the Antichrist. As a *kulturkritisch* construct and historical reference point, Burckhardt's Renaissance contributed to his discovery of the *moralistes*, his reassessment of the Enlightenment and 'Latin' culture as well as his self-invention as a 'good European'. At the same time, it paved the way for his radically anti-humanist reflections on culture, politics, and the self in the 1880s. Burckhardt's book was thus not just a benign antidote to the Wagnerian enthusiasm of Nietzsche's youth. It also provided new stimulants that would fuel some of his most transgressive thoughts.

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102 See, e.g., Baron 1960, pp. 207–209, who highlights the 'difference in spirit' between Burckhardt's more Goethean, conservative conception of Renaissance individualism and Nietzsche's 'reinterpretation' which according to Baron helped to create a 'false image of the unscrupulous, ruthless, and lusty "superman" of the Renaissance'.

103 Ross 1980, pp. 313, 317, captures this ambivalence with characteristic acumen in his description of Burckhardt's struggle with Wagner over Nietzsche's allegiance as a metaphysical tug-of-war: 'Wagner was tugging at Nietzsche in order to drag him over to his side, just as in the Middle Ages demons were [believed to be] tugging at the disembodied souls of the recently deceased. Jacob Burckhardt was the guardian angel pulling [Nietzsche] in the other direction ... But one can also interpret the fight over Nietzsche's soul in a different way: with Wagner as the noble Germanic angel and Burckhardt as the sceptical Mephisto.'

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Part V

Tragic and Musical Time

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