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Beyond Society:

A study of Hegel's and Nietzsche's political thought

by

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Beyond Society: A study of Hegel's and Nietzsche's political thought

Introduction

Anyone who seeks to understand the nineteenth and more importantly the twentieth century's continental thought cannot avoid the works of two nineteenth century German thinkers: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) and Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900).¹ As Walter Kaufmann, a distinguished translator and commentator, points out in his book *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* nearly all twentieth century continental thinkers have been influenced by the ideas of Hegel and Nietzsche. The works of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Max Weber (1864-1920), Thomas Mann (1875-1955), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Albert Camus (1913-1960), Michel Foucault (1926-1984), and more recently Gilles Deleuze (1926-1996), Jean-François Lyotard (1924-1998) and Jacques Derrida (1930-) are well-known even beyond *academia* and might serve as proof of Kaufmann's argument. Kaufmann, who has closely examined the ideas of both thinkers, notes that not just the intellectual world but also political life in Europe has been influenced by the works of Hegel and Nietzsche and that is the reason why one ought to study and compare their ideas and works.² The political project of Karl Marx (1818-1883), a neo-Hegelian, led in 1917 to the socialist revolution in Russia and therefore determined the political course of Europe during the twentieth century. On the other hand the political ideas of Nietzsche were, unfortunately, often misused by Nazi ideologists.

¹ Both philosophers were sons of Protestant priests named after Prussian kings, had solid classical secondary education and went to university to study theology. Both break with theology and continue studies, Hegel in philosophy and Nietzsche in classical philology.

² On Kaufmann's interpretation of Nietzsche, see his *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (1950) and for his view on Hegel, see *Hegel: Re-interpretation, Texts and Commentary* (1965).

Although the significance of Hegel's and Nietzsche's philosophy and political thought is acknowledged by many contemporary thinkers, there is no full-scale and critical study of the ideas of those two thinkers available. As Stephen Houlgate points out in *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics*, the only comparative and extensive study of the Hegel-Nietzsche relationship available at the moment in English, "The discussion has been fragmented and scattered amongst articles and chapters of books [...]."³ In his study Houlgate examines the metaphysical and aesthetic aspects in the works of Hegel and Nietzsche. The aim of my research is to examine the historical and political ideas of those two thinkers. In line with Gilles Deleuze's study *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, I argue that Nietzsche's philosophy must be understood essentially as a reaction against Hegel and Hegelianism. I must also acknowledge that I gained many valuable insights from Karl Löwith's book *From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth Century thought*.

Obviously, in focusing on Hegel one should not forget Plato's, Socrates', Rousseau's, Kant's or Schopenhauer's influence on Nietzsche's thought. As Keith Ansell-Pearson has lucidly demonstrated in his study *Nietzsche contra Rousseau: A study of Nietzsche's moral and political thought*, not just Hegel but also Rousseau could be seen as Nietzsche's philosophical target. However, in this work I shall limit myself (because of restricted space and the availability of other relevant studies) mainly to Nietzsche's relationship to Hegel's political and ethical philosophy.

Many commentators (for example M. Heidegger, W. Kaufmann and A. Nehamas) consider Nietzsche to be an a-political or even anti-political thinker whereas Hegel, without doubt, is regarded as one of the founders of contemporary political thought. It seems that this distancing of Nietzsche from anything political is done in order to divorce his philosophical legacy from Nazi ideology. Yet, however

³ Houlgate, *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics*, hereafter HN, p.3

noble the cause has been it has overlooked the fact that throughout his life Nietzsche was, like Hegel, a critical thinker with an acute sense of the politics of his time.

Hegel's political project is expressed in his *Philosophy of Right* (*Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*), *Philosophy of History* (*Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*) and the third part of his *Encyclopaedia* called the *Philosophy of Mind* (*Philosophie des Geistes*). The problem with Nietzsche's project is, as Ansell-Pearson points out in his *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker* that "nowhere in his writing does Nietzsche ever present a systematic account of his political thinking."⁴ A similar opinion is expressed by Tracy Strong who in his essay "Nietzsche and Politics" writes as follows: "No point has been made more often than that Nietzsche has no coherent doctrine of modern politics. By this it is generally meant that he provides no political program, no comprehensive political analysis."⁵ Despite all these anti-political claims and in line with Strong, I shall argue that Nietzsche has a distinct political program, although it is dispersed between various works. Strong asserts that Nietzsche's political philosophy is fragmentary, "like the politics of his day".⁶ A similar point is also put forward by Ansell-Pearson who in his book *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker* argues that "nowhere in his writing does Nietzsche ever present a systematic account of his political thinking."⁷ This is not just because of the "fragmented politics of his day" but also because "his deepest intellectual instincts were 'anti-system'".⁸

It is well-known that Hegel's and Nietzsche's philosophical instincts differ radically. Hegel is first and foremost a systematic thinker who employs a rational method and promotes a rational understanding of history and society. By contrast, Nietzsche's method of writing is non-systematic and metaphorical and his

⁴ Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker*, hereafter IN, p.3

⁵ In *Nietzsche: A collection of critical essays*, ed. Solomon, p.277

⁶ Solomon, p.277

⁷ IN, p.3

understanding of human history and existence is biased towards irrationality and immorality. Or as Houlgate puts it, “Hegel is a systematic philosopher who places his faith in the rigorous and methodical unfolding of dialectical reason, whereas Nietzsche is an unsystematic, highly literary writer, the champion of brilliant isolated perceptions and colourful, arresting metaphors.”⁹ Despite the lack of rigorous philosophical system, I maintain, in line with Strong and Ansell-Pearson that it is possible to extract a comprehensive political project from Nietzsche’s works. Strong suggests that “the one attempt Nietzsche made at providing a unified perspective *explicitly* on politics is probably the long section “On Peoples and Fatherlands” in *Beyond Good and Evil*.”¹⁰ I suggest that Nietzsche’s political project is most explicitly expressed in his *Untimely Meditations (Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen)*, especially in *Schopenhauer as Educator (Schopenhauer als Erzieher)* and *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth (Richard Wagner in Bayreuth)*. These early meditations, I shall argue, constitute Nietzsche’s ‘*political manifesto*’ and introduce political ideas discussed in his later works, for example in *Beyond Good and Evil (Jenseits von Gut und Böse)* and *On the Genealogy of Morals (Zur Genealogie der Moral)*. As Poellner in his essay ‘Myth, Art and Illusion in Nietzsche’ points out “Nietzsche’s early writings occupy a curious place in the history of Nietzsche reception.”¹¹ However, one can agree with Poellner who also suggests that Nietzsche’s *Untimely Meditations* are not just important philosophical sketches but that in them Nietzsche is laying out a formidable metaphysical task for his later works. Poellner rejects Schlechta’s dismissive stand towards Nietzsche’s early writings and maintains that “His development after *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* can hence plausibly be interpreted, not simply as a change of perspective, a radically new departure from earlier

⁸ IN, p.3

⁹ HN, p.1

¹⁰ Solomon, p.277

commitments, but rather as an attempt to resolve fundamental conflicts within his early thinking which could neither be resolved nor peacefully accommodated without relinquishing some of the basic assumptions of that philosophy.”¹²

I agree with Ansell-Pearson who argues that Nietzsche is a political thinker whose philosophy was dominated by two main themes: “These are the problems of culture and of history.”¹³ Throughout his philosophical life Nietzsche was deeply concerned about the ‘nihilistic’ state of German and European culture during the nineteenth century. His political program which is expressed in all his works seeks to ‘cure’ modern society of its maladies (the herd morality, Christianity and philistine culture) in order to establish a new ‘noble’ culture out of which great human beings can emerge. I shall argue, therefore, that the gist of Nietzsche’s political project is the promotion of culture in order to produce geniuses. Furthermore, I believe that this idea is present in nearly all his works from his early essay on ‘The Greek State’ to his very last works: *Twilight of the Idols (Götzen-Dämmerung)*, *The Anti-Christ (Der Antichrist)* and *Ecce Homo*.

Strictly speaking Nietzsche’s political ‘ideal’ lies beyond politics, in the realm of culture. That is why he calls himself in *Ecce Homo* “the last anti-political German.”¹⁴ I suggest that Nietzsche is indeed an a-political philosopher but only in a narrow or traditional sense of the word ‘political’. I believe with his grand politics of culture Nietzsche widens the concept of ‘political’ and therefore must be seen as a political thinker. In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche criticises what he takes to be a modern concept of politics and envisions that it will lead to great wars in the future: “The concept of politics has then become completely absorbed into a war of spirits, all the power-structures of the old society have been blown into the air – they one and all

¹¹ See Poellner’s essay ‘Myth, Art and Illusion in Nietzsche’ in *Myth and the Making of Modernity*, pp.61-80

¹² See *Myth and the Making of Modernity*, p.62

¹³ IN, p.3

reposed on the lie: there will be wars such as there have never yet been on earth. Only after me will there be *grand politics* on earth.”¹⁵

I shall also argue that Nietzsche’s own philosophy is not as ‘anti-Hegelian’ as some commentators, for example Gilles Deleuze, have insisted. I would rather agree with Hollingdale’s position who in his Introduction to *Twilight of the Idols* and *The Anti-Christ* notes that “Nietzsche often echoes Hegel, but almost certainly without realising it.”¹⁶ In his notes to the translation Hollingdale adds: “Nietzsche’s relation to Hegel is complex and cannot be satisfactorily described in a note.”¹⁷ Hollingdale brings out two main points, which, in his view, characterise Nietzsche’s relationship to Hegel: first, “Nietzsche’s basic attitude towards Hegel was that his philosophy was the conceptual basis of modern ‘evolutionism’ and thus encouraged a habit of mind which ought to be deprecated”; and secondly and more importantly, “Nietzsche clearly did not study Hegel very profoundly and was in many ways closer to him than he suspected.”¹⁸ Nietzsche’s own admission in his *Joyful Wisdom (Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft)* (also pointed out by Hollingdale) might serve as the best argument and reason to study Nietzsche’s relation to Hegel’s philosophy: ‘We Germans should still have been Hegelians, even though there had never been a Hegel, inasmuch as we (in contradiction to all Latin peoples) instinctively attribute to becoming, to evolution, a profounder significance and higher value than that which ‘is’ – we hardly believe at all in the validity of the concept ‘being’.’¹⁹

Houlgate points out three main perspectives in the current Hegel-Nietzsche debate: “(a) those commentators who clearly take Nietzsche’s side against Hegel, (b) those who are primarily interested in pointing out certain similarities between the two

¹⁴ *Ecce Homo*, hereafter EH, p.41

¹⁵ EH, p.127

¹⁶ *Twilight of the Idols*, hereafter TI, p.19

¹⁷ TI, p.204

¹⁸ TI, p.204

¹⁹ *Joyful Wisdom*, hereafter JW, pp.306-307

philosophers, but who may also lean more towards one than the other, and (c) those who use Hegelian arguments to criticise Nietzsche.”²⁰ The first standpoint, as Houlgate points out, is expressed for example by Hollingdale and Deleuze. Hollingdale considers Hegel to be the last major representative of the Western philosophical tradition and Nietzsche its “most incisive critic”. Yet, as Houlgate demonstrates, Hollingdale’s interpretation of Hegel is not entirely Hegelian but rather Kantian. Therefore, Nietzsche is not the “most incisive critic” of Hegel but rather of Kant. Deleuze, contends that “there can be no question of compromise between Nietzsche and Hegel; Nietzsche’s philosophy is ‘an absolute anti-dialectics’.”²¹ It seems difficult to accept Deleuze’s argument without reservations for Nietzsche himself admits that he was a ‘dialectical thinker’. For example, in his autobiographical work *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche looks back on his philosophical career and admits that at times he possessed “a dialectical clarity”.²² Dialectics is for Nietzsche is a symptom of *decadence* and Socrates is its most celebrated representative. Yet, Nietzsche openly admits that he himself is both decadent and the antithesis of it. Furthermore, in this autobiographical work he states that his first book *The Birth of Tragedy (Die Geburt der Tragödie)* “smells offensively Hegelian.”²³ Nietzsche writes that *The Birth of Tragedy* is essentially a ‘Hegelian’ work ‘scented’ with Schopenhauer’s pessimism: “an ‘idea’ – the antithesis Dionysian and Apollonian – translated into the metaphysical; history itself as the evolution of this ‘idea’; in tragedy this antithesis elevated to unity.”²⁴ Houlgate notes that Deleuze’s reading (or non-reading) of Hegel’s *Science of Logic (Wissenschaft der Logik)* is distorted and consequently Nietzsche’s philosophy is not as anti-Hegelian or anti-dialectical as

²⁰ HN, p.4

²¹ HN, p.5

²² EH, p.39

²³ EH, p.79

²⁴ EH, p.79

Deleuze claims. It is now clear that the question of the Hegel-Nietzsche relationship, in fact, becomes a problem of the adequate interpretation of Hegel's philosophy.

Several commentators express the second perspective, for example Walter Schulz, Karl Brose, Robert Zimmermann, Walter Kaufmann, and Daniel Breazeale. Apart from the fact that they all agree that there are similarities between Hegel's and Nietzsche's philosophy they disagree where these similarities exactly lie. Brose, for example, suggests that both Hegel and Nietzsche put emphasis on great individuals who live beyond morality and society. Houlgate sums up Brose's view as follows: "Nietzsche's great individuals are representatives of the universal will to power just as Hegel's individuals are vehicles of *Geist*."²⁵ As it will be discussed later in this paper Brose's argument seems to reflect a general similarity between Hegel's and Nietzsche's political projects although his interpretation of will to power as some universal supra-personal force in history 'smells offensively Hegelian'.

Radically opposed to Deleuze's position are Zimmerman's and Kaufmann's views. They claim, as Houlgate points out that there is a "conscious and highly important dialectical strand to Nietzsche's philosophy"²⁶ despite the fact that Nietzsche himself claims to fight with Hegelian dialectics. For example, one can argue that the relationship between such Nietzschean concepts as moral/immoral, sick/healthy, herd/master or man/overman 'smells' quite Hegelian too.

Breazeale, and Beerling bring out the fundamental similarity between the philosophies of Hegel and Nietzsche. Houlgate notes that for Beerling "the thought of Hegel is hardly any less opposed to the beyond than that of Nietzsche."²⁷ Or in other word "they are both allies in the struggle against metaphysical, moral and epistemological dualism."²⁸ In Houlgate's view this parallel "is the main topic with

²⁵ HN, p.11

²⁶ HN, p.11

²⁷ quoted by Houlgate, HN, p.16

²⁸ quoted by Houlgate, HN, p.16

which the comparative study of Hegel and Nietzsche should be concerned.”²⁹ However, in the present paper I examine the relation between the individual and society in the works of Hegel and Nietzsche. Both thinkers, I shall argue, see individual as ‘beyond society’. However, because both reject the Kantian ‘thing-in-itself’ they see the individual as not *absolutely* but only ‘dialectically’ or *relatively* beyond society.

The third perspective on the Hegel-Nietzsche relationship is summed up by Seeberger and supported by Houlgate. It is, first of all, a critique of Nietzsche’s interpretation of Hegel and at the same time a ‘re-interpretation’ of Hegel’s philosophical project. “In Seeberger’s view,” Houlgate notes, “Hegel would be prepared to agree with Nietzsche that life and formal understanding are ‘opposed’ to one another, but unlike Nietzsche Hegel believes that consciousness can become *vernünftig* and thus can think life.”³⁰ In other words Hegel’s notion of consciousness is not just limited to the understanding or reason (the mistake made by Nietzsche and many other commentators). Seeberger suggests broadening Hegel’s concept of consciousness and including the rational and irrational or unconscious elements into its sphere. Nevertheless, Nietzsche, as Houlgate points out, does not overcome this opposition of life and thought: “The mismatch between life and consciousness forms the axiomatic foundation of Nietzsche’s thinking.”³¹

Whatever perspective one chooses to support in the Hegel-Nietzsche debate one ought to examine the works of both thinkers critically and thoroughly. Nietzsche himself calls us not to avoid Hegel’s works but to study them carefully in order to become familiar with Hegelian philosophy. Furthermore, in his *Daybreak* (*Morgenröte*) he calls us to read not just Hegel’s works but also his private letters in

²⁹ HN, p.16

³⁰ HN, p.21

³¹ HN, p.21

order to gain an insight into the mind and philosophical system (idealism) of one of the greatest German thinkers: “Let us today take a look at Schiller, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Schleiermacher, Hegel, Schelling, read their correspondence and familiarise ourselves with their large circle of adherents.”³² It seems that based on reading Hegel’s works and correspondence, Nietzsche makes the following claim that amongst all celebrated Germans “none perhaps possessed more *esprit* than Hegel.”³³ Yet, Nietzsche immediately specifies, Hegel, unlike the French who also have this anti-moral *esprit*, made this *esprit* boring.³⁴ However, in line with Houlgate I disagree with Deleuze who claims that Nietzsche was well-familiar with Hegel’s philosophical corpus.³⁵ Nevertheless, from his comments and quotations it seems clear that Nietzsche had at least some knowledge of Hegel’s *Philosophy of History*, *Philosophy of Right*, and *Phenomenology of Spirit (Phänomenologie des Geistes)*.

Houlgate points out that Nietzsche “did not study Hegel’s texts in any depth and relied mainly on secondary sources for his interpretation and his evaluation of Hegel’s thought.”³⁶ It is known that Nietzsche was familiar with the works of some Hegelians such as David Strauß and Bruno Bauer (who was after all a Nietzschean).³⁷ It is also clear that the lectures by the eminent Swiss ‘anti-Hegelian’ historian Jakob Burckhardt had great influence on Nietzsche’s works. The works of Schopenhauer

³² *Daybreak*, hereafter D, p.111

³³ D, p.114

³⁴ Nietzsche remains friends with Jacob Burckhardt and regarded him highly throughout his life. In his letter to Carl von Gersdorff of 7 November 1870 Nietzsche writes about Burckhardt’s public lecture on historical greatness: “I’m attending a one-hour-a-week lecture course of his study of history, and I think I am the only one in the class of sixty who follows his deep trains of thought, with their strange breaks and twists whenever they touch something delicate. For the first time I am really enjoying a lecture course; but then it’s the sort that I myself could give if I were older. In his lecture today he took up Hegel’s philosophy of history, in a way altogether worthy of the Centennial. [...] Between ourselves: I regard present-day Prussia as a power highly dangerous for civilization.” *Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from His Letters* (1971), p. 13. This letter shows that Nietzsche was familiar with the general trend of Hegel’s philosophy of history and that he was already thinking about the political situation in Prussia.

³⁵ On Deleuze’s interpretation of Nietzsche see his *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1983) and his essay ‘Nomad Thought’ in D.B. Allison’s (ed.) *The New Nietzsche* (1985), pp. 142-149

³⁶ Houlgate, p.24

³⁷ See Nietzsche’s letter to Carl Spittler of 25 July, 1888: “Der alte Hegelianer Bruno Bauer war seitdem Nietzscheaner.” *Briefe von Nietzsche*, p.370

and Lange must be also considered as sources on which Nietzsche based his interpretation of Hegel's philosophy. Based on these sources Nietzsche criticised many Hegelian ideas and themes: rationalism, historical optimism, totalitarianism, and the deification of modern Germany.

In the first chapter I examine Hegel's and Nietzsche's political thought within their respective historical and political context. I shall offer a brief historical overview of German and European affairs during the 19th century. I shall argue that Prussia's diplomatic and military victory over "cultural" Austria in 1866 and France in 1871 and the unification of Germany into the *Reich* under Prussia's leadership (under Emperor William I and the 'Iron' Chancellor Bismarck) compelled Nietzsche to reinterpret the then "fashionable" Hegelian understanding of world history and to put forward his own political philosophy – the promotion of culture and production of genius.

In the second chapter I explore Hegel's and Nietzsche's notion of world history. I shall argue that their political projects are founded on their respective interpretations of world history. Nietzsche rejects Hegel's concept of world history as a rational, progressive, teleological and just process. Prussia's victory over Austria and France forced him to draw a sharp distinction between historical and military power on the one hand and cultural power on the other. Prussia's victory proved to Nietzsche that in world history a culturally superior state might be defeated by a culturally inferior but militarily and politically superior state.

In the next chapter I focus on the relationship between the individual and the state in Hegel's and Nietzsche's philosophy. Hegel seeks to overcome the opposition between the individual and the state by introducing the notion of the ethical (*sittlich*) into his political project. Yet, throughout his works he sets the emphasis on the state by claiming that individual freedom is possible only within the state. As he writes in

The Philosophy of Right the individual self-consciousness “finds in the state, as its essence and the end and product of its activity, its substantive freedom.”³⁸

Nietzsche radically rejects this Hegelian position and contests the dogma “that asserts that the state is the highest aim of humanity and that a man can have no higher duty than service to the state.”³⁹ “Nietzsche challenges the political philosophy of German Idealism, derived from Rousseau,” Ansell-Pearson argues, “which holds that the moral-collective body embodied in the State represents the highest goal of mankind, and that man has no higher duty than that of serving the State.”⁴⁰ “For Nietzsche,” Ansell-Pearson writes, “the justification of the political must lie beyond the State in the realm of culture and genius, which means that society must be structured and designed in a way which leads to the production of a higher type of human being.”⁴¹ In *Schopenhauer as Educator* Nietzsche is concerned only with “the type of men whose teleology points *beyond the well-being of a state* [my Italics. K.K.], that is, with philosophers, and with these only in respect to a world that, for its part, is quite independent of the well-being of the state: the world of culture.”⁴²

It seems that Nietzsche considered Hegel (and Kant and Schopenhauer) to be ultimately within the framework of modern morality. It is Nietzsche’s fundamental insight that Kant’s, Hegel’s, and Schopenhauer’s ‘sceptical-epochistic’, ‘historicizing’, as well as ‘pessimistic’ attitude have a moral origin. Nietzsche claims in his *Nachlass* that none of them offered a radical critique of morality. Nietzsche himself urges us in his *Nachlass*: “Let us not be deceived either in the Kantian or in the Hegelian manner: - we no longer *believe* in morality, as they did, and consequently we have no need to found a philosophy with the aim of justifying morality. Neither the critical nor the historicist philosophy has any charm for us in *this*

³⁸ *Philosophy of Right*, hereafter PR, §257

³⁹ *Schopenhauer as Educator*, hereafter SE, p.197

⁴⁰ Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche Contra Rousseau*, hereafter NR, p.28

⁴¹ NR, p.103

respect.”⁴³ Hegel, one might recall, contrary to this claim in the *Philosophy of Right* seeks to overcome the ‘old’ understanding of morality (*Moralität*) by introducing the notion of the ethical (*Sittlichkeit*). Hegel’s notion of the State is based on this new understanding of morality. Nietzsche, however, argues that Hegel did not overcome morality as such, or more correctly he did not overcome the foundational principles of morality. The task for Nietzsche is not to introduce a new understanding of morality or to establish a new set of values but to overcome not just morality (*Moralität*) but also the ethical (*Sittlichkeit*) itself. By being beyond ‘good and evil’ one is also beyond Hegelian morality (*übersittlich*) and thus the State.

Hegel was not able to promote a radically new political program, according to Nietzsche, because in his time philosophy was still in the service of the state. “Today we have the power;” Nietzsche contends, “in those days, in Hegel’s time, one wanted to have power - that makes big difference. The state no longer needs to be sanctioned by philosophy; as a result, philosophy has become dispensable for the state.”⁴⁴ In the first half of the nineteenth century the state needed legitimisation from philosophy and Hegel provided one: “the State is the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth.”⁴⁵ Nietzsche’s time is already different: not the state but the philosopher, artist and, saint is “the judge of existence.”⁴⁶ He maintains in *Schopenhauer as Educator* that “the emergence of a philosopher on earth is infinitely more important than the continued existence of a state or a university.”⁴⁷

Ansell-Pearson sums up Nietzsche’s political project as a choice “between the overman and the herd in which the strong, independent human being - the overman - assumes the guise of Aristotle’s god (or beast), capable of living without, and *beyond*

⁴² SE, p.197

⁴³ *Will to Power*, hereafter WP, p.223

⁴⁴ SE, p.252

⁴⁵ *Philosophy of History*, hereafter PH, p.39

⁴⁶ SE, p.240

⁴⁷ SE, p.254

the polis [my italics].”⁴⁸ By introducing the notion of ‘beyond society’ I attempt to overcome some mismatches between the political ideas of Hegel and Nietzsche. This notion, I would suggest, grasps the inner ‘dialectic’ of the political thought of both Hegel and Nietzsche. According to both thinkers great human beings live beyond society, and this phrase expresses the ‘individualistic’ character of Hegel’s ‘world historic individuals’ and Nietzsche’s ‘geniuses’. Yet, at the same time both thinkers admit that great human beings are produced by the culture they live in. As Nietzsche himself admits, he seeks to establish a kind of culture out of which great human beings can emerge.

In the fourth chapter I shall discuss Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s political projects - promoting culture. Hegel’s political project is discussed in detail in his *Philosophy of Right* and *Philosophy of Mind*, the third part of *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1830).⁴⁹ According to Hegel history is the manifestation of spirit. There are three stages of development of that Spirit: Subjective, Objective and Absolute Spirit. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel examines the dialectical movement of Objective Spirit: from individual and family through civil society to the State. Many commentators consider this to be his most important political work written to promote the interests of the State. However, one must note that according to Hegel Objective Spirit (thus civil society and the State) is only an intermediary stage towards the higher goal - Absolute Spirit. The full realisation of freedom is not achieved on the level of Subjective Spirit nor on the level of Objective Spirit (both are in the sphere of finitude)⁵⁰ but only on the level of Absolute Spirit (infinity). Therefore, the ultimate goal of Hegel’s philosophical and political project points beyond society (Objective Spirit) towards culture (Absolute Spirit). “The Absolute Spirit,” Hegel writes, “this is

⁴⁸ NR, p.25

⁴⁹ Translated by W. Wallace and A. V. Miller as *Philosophy of Mind* (1971), hereafter PM.

the supreme definition of the Absolute. To find this definition and to grasp its meaning and burden was, we may say, the ultimate purpose of all education and all philosophy: it was the point to which turned the impulse of all religion and philosophy: and it is this impulse that must explain the history of the world.”⁵¹

In this fourth chapter I shall argue that Nietzsche’s political project, despite obvious differences (Hegel employs rational method and believes that the movement of Spirit is a rational process; contrary to Nietzsche whose method is poetical and who understands the world history in terms of will to power), is not very far from Hegel’s. In *Schopenhauer as Educator* Nietzsche in fact comes very close to Hegel’s propositions elaborated in *Philosophy of Mind*. According to Nietzsche the highest goal for mankind lies not in the state (in the sphere of Objective Spirit if one uses Hegel’s terminology) but beyond the state, in culture.

Nietzsche thought that Hegel’s philosophical project was more widespread than Schopenhauer’s although even his project ultimately failed. In 1871 while he was writing his *Unfashionable Observations* and while military Prussia was victorious over cultural France he did not see the emergence of Hegel’s ethical state. In the end of *Schopenhauer as Educator* he discusses the post-Hegelian relation between the state and philosophy: “I am well aware of the objection the state was able to raise against this entire argument as long as the beautiful green crop of Hegelianism was growing in all fields: but now that this harvest has been destroyed in a hailstorm (mainly by Schopenhauerian philosophy and current political events in Prussia, K.K.) and all the silos stand empty, now that none of the hopes attached to it have been fulfilled - it is no longer objection to, but rejection of philosophy that is in order.”⁵² Nietzsche reveals that the Germans believed in Hegel’s political project – the ethical

⁵⁰ For Hegel the finite, Subjective and Objective Spirit, cannot be the ultimate goal since they *are not*; “the finite *is not*, i.e. is not the truth, but merely a transition and emergence to something higher.” PM, p.23

⁵¹ PM, p.18

state. But modern states did not overcome morality (*Moralität*) and never became genuinely ethical (*sittlich*) in the way Hegel describes it in the end of the *Philosophy of Right*. Therefore, Nietzsche (with Schopenhauer in his side) proposes a radically new political project – the promotion of culture in order to produce geniuses. Nietzsche contends that this ought not just to be the highest task for one particular society or state (Germany) but that this must be the ultimate ‘political’ aim for all humankind: “Humanity should work ceaselessly toward producing great individuals - this and only this should be its task.”⁵³

One should note that later Nietzsche departs from Schopenhauer and while criticising Schopenhauer for his “unintelligent rage against Hegel” in *Beyond Good and Evil* in fact recognises Hegel’s “critical pessimism” and significance to nineteenth century German and European thought. For example in his *Nachlass* Nietzsche associates Hegel with the culmination of critical and romantic philosophy: “Both tendencies culminate in Hegel: at bottom, he generalised German criticism and German romanticism – a kind of dialectical fatalism, but in honour of the spirit, in fact with the submission of the philosopher of reality. The critic prepares the way: no more!”⁵⁴ By doing this, Hegel – it seems from Nietzsche’s comments – prepared the way for Schopenhauer’s philosophy of values and pessimism (though Hegel and Schopenhauer were close contemporaries). Furthermore, in *Beyond Good and Evil* he calls Hegel and Schopenhauer ‘brothers’ who were equal to each other and who both expressed the two sides of the German spirit: “Hegel and Schopenhauer were (with Goethe) of one accord: those two hostile brother geniuses who strove apart towards the antithetical poles of the German spirit and in doing so wronged one another as only brothers wrong one another.”⁵⁵

⁵² SE, p.252

⁵³ SE, p.215

⁵⁴ WP, p.227

⁵⁵ *Beyond Good and Evil*, hereafter BGE, p.183

Nietzsche is deeply concerned about the state of German culture, which, in his view, is dominated by herd morality and theoretical optimism. I shall argue that Nietzsche's political goal is in a sense supra-personal or supra-individual – *the realm of culture*. In his very first published work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche attempts to overcome individualism by introducing the notion of the Dionysian, which he defines as the overcoming of the '*principium individuationis*': "Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son, man. ... Singing and dancing man expresses himself as a member of a higher community."⁵⁶ Thus the Dionysian intoxication lets an individual, an tragic artist, go beyond himself (*Selbstentäußerung*) and become a member of a 'higher community'. Thus it is highly controversial to see in Nietzsche pure individualism, as Deleuze or Kaufmann, for example, do. On similar grounds, one should read Leslie Paul Thiele's work *Friedrich Nietzsche and The Politics of Soul: A Study of Heroic Individualism* in which he calls Nietzsche's political project 'radical individualism' with certain reservations. Houlgate notes that one can sum up Deleuze's and Kaufmann's interpretations of Nietzsche's political thought as following: "The individualistic will to power remains the fundamental character of man; genuine common interest is, therefore, illusory and is merely a fiction produced by a weak, 'democratic', form of will to power." In contrast to this point of view, I shall argue that despite his individualistic tendency there is a place for genuine common interest in Nietzsche's political philosophy. It is his persistent concern for the state of culture and the promotion of genuine culture in Germany and Europe.

As I shall discuss in the last chapter genuine culture, however, is not the final goal of Nietzsche's political project but only a means to his ultimate goal – *the*

⁵⁶ *The Birth of Tragedy*, hereafter BT, section 1

production of genius. In *Schopenhauer as Educator* Nietzsche is concerned with “the type of men whose teleology points beyond the well-being of a state, that is, with philosophers, and with these only in respect to a world that, for its part, is quite independent of the well-being of the state: the world of culture.”⁵⁷ Cultivated people (later Nietzsche calls this herd morality) are against this goal; they “hinder an emerging culture and the production of genius - which is the aim of all culture.”⁵⁸

Nietzsche’s ‘higher politics’ or ‘grand politics’ is in a sense a-political – a promotion of culture, as Ansell-Pearson in *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker* points out. In *Schopenhauer as Educator* Nietzsche contends that there is only one fundamental idea, the fundamental idea of *culture* which is “capable of charging each of us with one single task: *to foster the production of philosophers, artist, and saints within us and around us, and thereby to work toward the perfection of nature.*”⁵⁹ Philosophers, artist, and saints are “true human beings.”⁶⁰ It should be noted that in his later works Nietzsche dismisses the idea that a saint and philosopher are “true human beings” and regards only a tragic artist as a genius.⁶¹

As Ansell-Pearson points out in Nietzsche’s philosophy “there is a permanent conflict between culture and politics.”⁶² Nietzsche, in fact, does not believe that any political program would solve the problem of human existence: “Any philosophy that

⁵⁷ SE, p.197

⁵⁸ SE, p.190

⁵⁹ SE, p.213

⁶⁰ SE, p.211

⁶¹ In *Unfashionable Observations* Nietzsche thought that Schopenhauer is the true philosopher and Wagner is the true artist; he wrote: “Wagner, the renewer of the simple drama, the discoverer of the place of the arts in a true human society, the poetic elucidator of past views of life, the philosopher, the historian, the aesthete and critic.” (*Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, hereafter WB, p.269.) Later he dismisses the idea that Schopenhauer and Wagner might serve as examples of genuine educators. In 1888 in his letter to Georg Brandes of 19 February, Nietzsche claims that it was he who brought Wagner over from the Hegelian ‘camp’ to Schopenhauer: “Those two pieces about Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner, it seems to me now, are really a series of self-disclosures, and above all solemn commitments, rather than genuine psychological studies of these masters (as much my kin as they are my antagonists). I was the first to distil a sort of unity out of the two. Today this is a superstition very much in the forefront of German culture: all Wagnerians are disciples of Schopenhauer. It was different when I was young. At the time it was the last wave of Hegelians who supported Wagner. ‘Wagner and Hegel’ was the rallying-cry in the fifties.” *Nietzsche: A Self-portrait from His Letters* (1971), p. 108

believes that the problem of existence can be altered or solved by a political event is a sham and pseudophilosophy.”⁶³ That is why his political project points beyond the political towards culture. Nevertheless, Nietzsche calls his new type of man to fight for genuine culture and its ultimate aim – the production of genius: “Culture demands of him not only those inner experiences, not only the assessment of the external world that surrounds him, but ultimately and primarily action; that is, it demands that he fights for culture and opposes those influences, habits, laws, and institutions in which he does not recognise his goal: the production of genius.”⁶⁴

Like Marx Nietzsche wants philosophy to be dangerous and to disturb society and the state. His political project rests on the tension between the political and philosophical way of life and existence. The philosophical and contemplating life is in Nietzsche’s view the sign of intellectual superiority “for anyone who has the *furor philosophicus* will have no time whatsoever for the *furor politicus* and will wisely refrain from reading the newspapers every day, and above all from serving in a party.” Yet, he continues, “he will not hesitate for a single moment to take up his position if his fatherland is threatened by a real danger.”⁶⁵ This tension between the political and philosophical *furor* was present already in ancient Greece and expressed by Greek philosophers. In Greece there were conditions under which genius could emerge: “Free manliness of character; early knowledge of human nature; no scholarly education; freedom from the narrowness and patriotism; exemption from the need to be a breadwinner; no ties with the state – in short, freedom and nothing but freedom, that same wonderful and dangerous element in which the Greek philosophers

⁶² IN, p.3

⁶³ SE, p.197

⁶⁴ SE, p.217

⁶⁵ SE, p.239

flourished.”⁶⁶ This element is what the Germans lack and these are the conditions Nietzsche’s political program seeks to re-establish in Germany and Europe.

Nietzsche’s political project is not about economic growth, inflation or social welfare but about culture and human greatness. “For him,” as Ansell-Pearson writes, “an adequate conception of politics is one which sees it as a means to an end; the production of culture and human greatness.”⁶⁷ Furthermore, Nietzsche contends that this is not just the task for one particular political party or country but ought to be the highest ‘political’ aim for all humankind: “Humanity should work ceaselessly toward producing great individuals - this and only this should be its task.”⁶⁸

Nietzsche’s view of Hegel is and remains ambiguous. In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche hopes that his philosophy is warlike: “I am seeking out a powerful opponent or problem.”⁶⁹ I suggest that idealism was Nietzsche’s great problem and Hegel was his most powerful opponent. The political philosophy of both thinkers is highly controversial. My aim is not to take sides or criticise either of them but by comparing and confronting their ideas to grasp the very core of their political thought. With this study I shall try to point out some common and different themes and notions in Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s philosophy which will hopefully let us better understand the modern and post-modern condition of Western thought and society and the contemporary European situation more generally.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ SE, p.241

⁶⁷ IN, p.7

⁶⁸ SE, p.215

⁶⁹ EH, p.43

⁷⁰ On the discussion of Hegel and Nietzsche and modernism and post-modernism see chapter eight in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche* ‘Nietzsche’s alleged farewell: The premodern, modern, postmodern Nietzsche’ (pp. 252-278) by one of the leading contemporary Hegel scholars, Robert B. Pippin.

I. Historical and political contexts of Hegel's and Nietzsche's writings

On the 18th January 1871, the Second German Empire (*Reich*) was proclaimed in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. The Germans were jubilant over the victory over France and the Prussians were triumphant over the coronation of the King of Prussia as *Kaiser* Wilhelm I of the new *Reich*. At that time Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, an Extraordinary Professor of Classical Philology at the University of Basel, was back in Switzerland from the Franco-Prussian war, still suffering from the illnesses contracted during the war and applying unsuccessfully for the chair of philosophy at University of Basel, as well as finishing his first major philosophical work *The Birth of Tragedy*. The first event, as many historians later reflected, became the decisive watershed in European and world history and shaped world affairs for several decades to come (one can argue up until the mid-twentieth century). The second event probably went unnoticed by the German public but was a significant turning-point in the life of Nietzsche who was to become one of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth century.

Historians agree that Prussia's victory over France and the establishment of the *Reich* in 1871 was a result of many political, technological and social transformations which took place in Europe and Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century. One ought to seek the reasons for Prussia's victory in 1871 earlier, maybe in 1815 when Napoleon's army was defeated by allied English and Prussian forces at Waterloo or in 1834 when the German Customs Union (*Zollverein*) between independent German states under Prussian dominance was first established.

The two nineteenth-century German philosophers, Hegel and Nietzsche, lived at times of immense political upheavals and significant social transitions which took

place in Germany and Europe just before and during the nineteenth century. Those events, I shall argue, had a momentous impact on their lives and philosophy. By historic coincidence they both witnessed Prussia's triumphant victory over France (Hegel in 1815 and Nietzsche in 1871) but their reflections on those events and consequently their understanding of World history and politics differs radically. It seems that for Hegel Prussia's decisive victory in 1815 at Waterloo (and 1813, Battle of Leipzig) was not just the manifestation of its military superiority but first of all was the manifestation of its spiritual and historical superiority. For Nietzsche, in contrast to Hegel, Prussia's victory in 1871 was just a proof of its cultural inferiority to France. In general, as discussed in the last chapter, Nietzsche associates great political and military victories in history with civilisation not culture.

Hegel was born on 27th August 1770 in Stuttgart into a family of a Protestant civil servant. As a student of theology and philosophy at the Tübingen Theological Seminar young Hegel was rejoicing with his friend Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) over the storming of the Bastille on the 14th July, 1789. In 1806, while teaching at the University of Jena and finishing his manuscript of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel rejoices when Napoleonic France smashed the Prussian army at the battles of Jena and Auerstädt. After the Terror, Hegel as well as many other liberally minded German intellectuals who had hailed the slogans of the Revolution 'liberty, equality, fraternity' became disillusioned with the French Revolution and its consequences. However, the French Revolution fundamentally transformed the social and political landscape in Europe and Germany. As a consequence of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars (1800-1815) France lost its traditional hegemony in Europe and the *ancien regime* was dissolved. The Holy Alliance (20 November, 1815) between Prussia, Austria, Britain, and Russia tried to ensure that France remained excluded from the scene of power and to secure the future for the monarchist order in Europe.

At the time the French Revolution elevated strong liberal and nationalistic sentiments all over Europe.

Hegel, teaching in Nuremberg at that time, witnessed the first steps toward a more united Germany. At the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815) thirty nine German states established a loose political unity - the German Confederation which was “a community of independent states” in its domestic affairs, but a “politically unified, federated power in its external relations”(Article 2 of the ‘Final Act’ (*Wiener Schlussakte*) of 1820, GH, p.41). Although the German Confederation was a ‘community of independent states’ it was dominated until after 1848 by Austria, and Prussia played only a secondary role in its statutory body, the Federal Diet (*Bundesversammlung*), which met in Frankfurt.

After the Vienna settlement various and often radically opposite political trends and programmes emerged in Germany. In Hegel’s time different constitutions were established within the new German Confederation (for example, the free city of Lübeck, or Prussia, Bavaria, and Austria). In general there was a trend toward constitutional monarchy since it was the first time parliaments took part in the legislative process in Germany. However, political parties and groups often pursued quite different political agendas. The federalists and nationalists, for example, wanted tighter political, economic, and military unity of the German states under the Habsburg monarchy. The liberals hoped for radical constitutional reforms and modernisation of Germany in the French style. In addition each independent German state pursued its own individual agenda. However, one can say that at that time in general a modernisation, rationalisation and bureaucratisation of the German states took place.

Hegel critically reflects on those historic processes and changes which took place in Europe and Germany at the turn and in the beginning of the nineteenth

century. The *Innere Verhältnisse Württemberg's* written in 1798 was his first original political work followed by *Die Verfassung Deutschlands* which was finished in 1802 but remained unpublished till after Hegel's death. In 1817 Hegel published an essay entitled *Württembergische Landstände* on the constitutional conflict in the Kingdom of Wurtemberg and in 1831 an article on *Englische Reformbill*. One can argue that Hegel founded his own political project, his *Philosophy of Right* (published in 1821) and the *Philosophy of History* (first lectured in 1822 but published posthumously by his son Karl and Eduard Gans in 1840) on those highly reflective and critical political pamphlets and articles. Hegel witnessed the rise of the romantic nationalist movement in Germany (*Burschenschaftler*) but also the further secularisation of the state and decline in morals in Europe. He lived during a highly politicised era in Europe and offered, in his works, a speculative glance on the crucial political and historical events of the day. He based his political model, the ethical (*sittlich*) state, on a rationalised and bureaucratised constitutional monarchy and his writings directly influenced the thinking of generations of Germans up until the second half of the nineteenth century.

Hegel scholars, for example Knox or Pelczynski, agree that Hegel's political philosophy ought to be understood in the context of the historical events and processes which took place during his lifetime. Nietzsche scholars, for example Nehamas or Conway, on the other hand, seem to overlook the significance of the historical and political events for Nietzsche's thought and especially for his political philosophy. Many commentators seem to overlook the fact that Nietzsche lived in an even more crucial period in German and European history than Hegel. In this chapter I shall attempt to present a brief historical and political overview of two decades, the 1850-70s, in German and European history in order to reveal their impact on Nietzsche's political project and to understand his political philosophy.

The historical and political events in Germany and Europe during Nietzsche's life time dramatically affected European and indeed World history. Nietzsche was born on 15th October 1844 in Röcken (Prussian Saxony) into the family of Protestant pastor. In Nietzsche's youth, in the 1850s and 1860s, a vast and rapid economic expansion took place in Prussia, "faster than virtually anywhere else in Europe," as an eminent historian P. Kennedy points out in his *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*.⁷¹ One could witness a substantial increase in iron, steel and textile production, growth in coal-mining and machine construction and vast expansion in railway networks during that time in Prussia. Those mainly economic and industrial changes, established Prussia's leading position in the German Customs Union (*Zollverein*) which was created in 1834. As the result of the Industrial Revolution Prussia became economically and industrially the most powerful German state. After the Franco-Prussian war and throughout Nietzsche's lifetime European affairs were dominated by Prussia-Germany and at least for two decades, the 1870s-1880s, Berlin became the political capital of Europe.

Nietzsche lived at the time of Prussian triumphant victories over Austria (1866) and France (1870-71) and witnessed the unification of Germany and establishment of the new *Reich* under Prussian leadership in 1871. Kennedy points out that "Both at the time and even more in retrospect, the year 1870 was viewed as a decisive watershed in European history."⁷² As another historian Fulbrook argues in her Introduction to *German History since 1800* one ought to seek the origins of the two World Wars precisely in this period of German history. The result of the *Reich's* policies was that it unleashed, as Fulbrook maintains "the race for military preparedness and superiority" in Europe. Thus the Industrial Revolution in Germany did not transform itself, as Nietzsche might have hoped, into the 'Cultural Revolution'

⁷¹ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, hereafter RF, p.206

but only into military expansion. The French defeat in 1870-71 signifies not so much a Prussian victory as a commencement of the race for military superiority in Europe which in turn led to the two world wars.

Although Nietzsche lived and worked in Basel (Switzerland) for the main part of his life and never became a citizen of the *Reich* he never ceased to be interested in and critically reflective on German affairs. As Hollingdale points out in his book *Nietzsche*, although Nietzsche left Germany in 1869 and lived in Switzerland “for the remainder of his active life he wrote about Germany as if he was still a German himself.”⁷³ Nietzsche’s life coincided with the lives of two controversial figures in German history - Wilhelm I, the King of Prussia (1861/88) and Emperor of Germany (1871/88) and Otto von Bismarck, Prime Minister of Prussia and Chancellor of the *Reich*.

Historians (for example, Böhme, and Mommsen) agree that the decade prior to the Franco-Prussian war, the 1860s, was the most important but also politically the most controversial decade in German history. It was the decade of constitutional conflict between Wilhelm I and the Prussian Parliament which Bismarck tried to resolve. It was also the decade of the emergence of the diversity of political groups and parties in Prussia and Germany. Thus Nietzsche’s student years, the 1860s, were highly politicised.

The significance of this decade is recognised by many eminent historians as is the role of Prussian Minister-President Otto von Bismarck. As Williamson in his *Bismarck and Germany 1862-1890* maintains: “The interpretation of Bismarck’s legacy remains one of the most crucial questions in German historiography.”⁷⁴ Although historians differ radically in their view of Bismarck and his policies he was

⁷² RF, p.242

⁷³ Hollingdale, *Nietzsche*, hereafter N, p.15

⁷⁴ Williamson, *Bismarck and Germany 1862-1890*, hereafter Williamson, p.89

one of the key political figures on the German and European power stage for over three decades from the beginning of the 1850s until his resignation in 1890. As Lerman in *German History since 1800* puts it, the ‘Iron Chancellor’ is “the most controversial figure in modern German political history.”⁷⁵ Thus the most creative years of Nietzsche’s life coincided with the highly controversial political life of Bismarck. Bismarck, as a Prussian nationalist/patriot and an architect of German unification, was blamed for his liberalism by the conservatives and for his conservatism by the liberals. Although Bismarck seems to be anti-Liberal in his dealing with the Prussian Parliament his legal, economic and welfare reforms pushed Prussia ahead of the rest of Europe towards more liberal capitalism. One can argue that he resolved the constitutional conflict between Wilhelm I and the Prussian Parliament by diplomatically engineering the wars with Austria and France. Yet, at the same time he and Moltke, a Chief of the General Staff, delivered some of the most glorious victories for the Prussian army and secured twenty years of relative peace and economic prosperity in Germany.

Since his appointment in 1848 as a Prussian representative at the Federal Diet in Frankfurt until the very end of his political career Bismarck remained a Prussian nationalist (or patriot, if you like). In Nietzsche’s youth Austria and her new Prime Minister, Schwarzenberg, tried to re-establish Austria’s historical hegemonic position among the German states. Bismarck, who was appointed Minister-President of Prussia in September 1862 used all of his diplomatic, political, economic, and military powers to defy Austria’s claim and secure Prussia’s leadership role in German affairs. He was successful by keeping Austria out of the *Zollverein* and later transformed this economic victory into the military victory of Prussia over Austria and France.

⁷⁵ *German History since 1800*, ed. M. Fulbrook, hereafter GH, p.154

It seems that the ultimate political goal for Bismarck was to create an economically, technologically and militarily strong welfare state, the *Reich*, in the form of constitutional monarchy. Many historians agree that Bismarckian Germany was a paradoxical state: politically it was repressive, undemocratic, and backward, yet it had a highly advanced capitalist economy, extensive infrastructures and fast growing industry. Bismarck's immediate political aim was to reform military, administrative and educational structures of the new *Reich*. And he was successful in implementing his policies in the *Reich*. As Williamson notes, Bismarck "did create a German state with very modern infrastructure. Its bureaucracy, industry, educational and state welfare systems were the envy of Edwardian Britain."⁷⁶ Williamson sums up Bismarck's political career and his achievements as follows: "He steered Prussia through the Schleswig-Holstein crisis, won the wars of 1866 and 1870-71 and negotiated the constitutional settlements of 1867-71."⁷⁷ Thus one can argue the unification of Germany and the creation of the *Reich* which had such an impact on European and world affairs during the twentieth century was greatly the result of Bismarck's political and diplomatic genius. Williamson refers to Bismarck's genius but at the same time his highly controversial nature: "Bismarck played so important a role in moulding the German state, the creation of which was to have such fateful consequences for Europe that it is unlikely that a definitive and universally accepted assessment of this great statesman will ever be agreed upon by historians."⁷⁸ On the one hand, Bismarck made Prussia and Germany the European and the world power; on the other hand, he prevented the second *Reich* from developing into a genuine parliamentary democracy. Not the *Reichstag* but the *Kaiser* and Chancellor were in

⁷⁶ Williamson, p.91

⁷⁷ Williamson, p.87

⁷⁸ Williamson, p.91

control of nearly all the major internal and external affairs of the *Reich*. However, during Nietzsche's life-time political parties did gain some political power and put forward quite diverse political programs and policies.

Nietzsche's life coincided with the beginning of organised party-political struggle in Germany. There were many political parties and groups around at that very time which had often radically opposite ideological agendas and political goals. There were roughly five distinct political groups which later evolved into political parties. W. Siemann brings out those five political trends as follows: "the conservatives, the constitutional liberals, the democrats, the political Catholics (*Pius-Vereine*) and the *Arbeitervereine* (workers' societies), organised nationally in the *Arbeiterverbrüderung* (workers' brotherhood)."⁷⁹ After unification there were six leading political parties in Germany: the Conservatives, *Reichspartei* (or Free Conservatives), National Liberals, Progressives (radical Liberals), Centrum (uniting Catholics, the Poles and people of Alsace-Lorraine) and Socialists. Thus the political landscape in 1860s and 1870s in Germany was very diverse but it seems that Nietzsche was disillusioned by all political programmes and dismissed their populist policies and as a response to them set forward his own political project - the promotion of culture.

The conservative political agenda was sustained by the Prussian feudal nobility mainly from the agrarian East. They had immense influence over Prussian and thus the *Reich's* bureaucracy since they were represented in Prussian government, Ministerial offices and General Staff. They were against modernisation, democratisation and liberalisation of Germany and thus against the ideals of the French Revolution. They were Protestants with strong aristocratic, nationalist, and protectionist ideals.

⁷⁹ GH, p.113

Bismarck, who tried to modernise, rationalise, and secularise the *Reich* had popular support for his reforms from the biggest party - the National Liberal Party. (He was elected to the *Reichstag* after his resignation as a National Liberal candidate although he never took up his seat.) As Ansell-Pearson points out in his essay “*Geist and Reich: Time, history, and Germany in Nietzsche and Heidegger*” Nietzsche also supported the National Liberal Party in the Saxony election of 1866.⁸⁰ The National Liberals defended the ideals of the French Revolution but at the same time they were also Prussian nationalist. They were for the parliamentary army (the Progressives did not compromise their liberal ideals with Wilhelm’s unconstitutional army reforms) and economically they were against protectionist taxes. The National Liberal Party’s political aim was to modernise German industry, to liberalise its economy and democratise its politics in order to build up a ‘bourgeois society’. Later in this chapter I hope to show why Nietzsche departed from the agenda of the National Liberal Party and how he developed his own political project, the promotion of culture, which is quite different from it.

In general those two above mentioned political groups, conservatives and liberals, represented *Reichsfreunde* (including conservatives, right-wing liberals, Prussian and German nationalists). In opposition to them there were *Reichsfeinde* - Socialists and Catholics, left-wing Liberals and Jews. Many commentators seem to suggest that Nietzsche was a *Reichsfeind* (by quoting numerous passages from his works) but this overlooks the fact that he supported the National Liberal Party, writes against Socialists and Catholics and throughout his life remained a German (but not necessarily the *Reich*’s) patriot.

During Nietzsche’s life time socialist parties had for the first time a chance to promote their political agenda. Although they were persecuted by the *Reich* their

⁸⁰ *The Fate of the New Nietzsche*, ed. Ansell-Pearson and Caygill, hereafter FNN, p.82

political program gained popularity among the working class and left wing liberal intellectuals. Bismarck's Anti-Socialist Law, which said "Societies which aim at the overthrow of the existing political or social order through social democratic, socialistic, or communistic endeavours are to be prohibited"⁸¹, was aimed at diminishing their influence but the *Freisinn* and SPD stayed and took active part in Germany's political life despite the persecutions throughout the 1870s and 1880s.

Bismarck expressed strong anti-Catholic sentiments for he thought that Catholics and their party *Zentrum* were not 'patriotic' enough. As Williamson points out, liberals, many of whom shared Nietzsche background, were strongly anti-Catholic: "The tradition of German Liberalism was anti-Catholic. Many of the leading Liberals were the sons of Protestant pastors and 'the historiography they learned at their mothers' knees depicted Luther as a national and liberal as well as a religious hero'."⁸² The *Syllabus Errorum* in 1864 and acceptance by the Vatican Council of the dogma of Papal Infallibility in 1870 fuelled the anti-Catholic feeling in Protestant Prussia. Subsequently in the 1870s throughout the *Reich* Catholics were persecuted. The *Zentrum* promoted the rights of Catholics and demanded more autonomy for South German states like Bavaria and was joined by Poles and the people of annexed Alsace-Lorraine who also desired more autonomy. While in power Bismarck actively conducted a *Kulturkampf* against Catholics and *Reichsfeinde* although he declared that his ultimate political aim was a genuine unification of Germany beyond conservative or liberal party lines : "My aim from the first moment of my public activity has been the creation and consolidation of Germany [...]."⁸³

Nietzsche lived through two major military conflicts between Prussia and Austria (1866) and Prussia and France (1870-71) from which Prussia came out

⁸¹ Williamson, p.115

⁸² Williamson, p.54

⁸³ Williamson, p.114

victorious. I shall argue in this chapter that the results of those wars promoted Nietzsche to radically rethink world history and set forward a sketch of his own political project in his *Untimely Meditations*. As Ansell-Pearson points out “the meditations only make sense in the context of his engagement with the victorious establishment of the new *Reich*.”⁸⁴

The German Confederation established after the defeat of France in 1815 by the Congress of Vienna settled the European balance of power until mid-1860s. Although Prussia and Austria had officially an equal status in the Confederation, Austria and the Habsburg dynasty had the dominant role in it and leading position in Europe. For centuries Austria had been superior to Prussia not just politically or militarily but also culturally. Vienna was not just a political centre of Empire but it was also a cultural capital for German, Slavic and Magyar people. Up until the mid-nineteenth century the unification of numerous German states was thought to be possible only around Austria and under the Habsburg monarchy. As Kennedy points out, up until the 1850s Austria had a leading position in German affairs especially after the Oelmuetz agreement according to which “Prussia agreed to demobilise its army and to abandon its own schemes for unification.”⁸⁵ Therefore as Breuille maintains in *German History since 1800* until right before the Austria-Prussian war “most contemporaries assumed an Austrian victory.”⁸⁶

Bismarck, a Prussian nationalist and monarchist, did not like Austrian dominance in German affairs and sought to unite Germany under the Hohenzollern dynasty. Only in the 1860s, after the establishment of the Customs Union (*Zollverein*) in 1834 and liberal revolutions in 1848-49, did Prussia gain political and economic strength to challenge Austria’s ruling position in Germany. For Bismarck the

⁸⁴ FNN, p.82

⁸⁵ RF, p.207

⁸⁶ GH, p.133

beginning of the sixties were the most complicated years in Prussian internal and external affairs. He had to counter the Austrian claim to Schleswig-Holstein (conquered from Danes in 1863) and overcome liberal opposition at home.

The war was declared on 14 June 1866 and the Austrian army was defeated just two weeks later at the battle of Königgrätz-Sadowa on 3rd July 1866.⁸⁷ After this humiliating defeat Austria sought peace with Prussia through French mediation and finally lost her historic position in German and European affairs. Bismarck dissolved the Austrian dominated German Confederation and established the North German Confederation. Historians agree, as Williamson sums it up that “The Austrian defeat and the subsequent creation of the North German Confederation mark a major turning-point in modern German history. Not only were the constitutional and economic foundation of the future German *Reich* laid in the years 1866-67 but also in the process the party political mould of the early sixties in Prussia was permanently shattered.”⁸⁸ After the Prussian victory over Austria Bismarck had a chance to bring the country out of the four year constitutional crises created by Wilhelm I who was using state money for his radical shake-up of the Prussian army and financing military campaigns against Denmark and Austria without Parliament’s approval. Bismarck utilised the patriotic and jubilant sentiments of the public and thus the indemnity bill “by which the government would seek the *Landtag*’s retrospective approval for the expenditure of the last four years” was finally passed on 3 September 1866.⁸⁹ Because of the indemnity bill the conservatives and liberals split into two parties: the moderate nationalistic liberals established the National Liberal Party and moderate conservatives formed the Free Conservative Party. In the 1867 elections the National Liberal party, the party Nietzsche supported, won 79 seats out of the 297. The

⁸⁷ The immediate reason for the Austria-Prussian war was the future status of the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein conquered from the Danes in 1863. Yet, as Williamson argues, for Bismarck this was also a war about the future control of Germany.

⁸⁸ Williamson, p.26

National Liberal Party became one of the most popular and powerful political parties in Germany since they supported the unification of Germany under Prussian leadership but also establishing a more liberal constitution for the whole of Germany.

The defeat in the Austria-Prussian war in September 1866 was a decisive moment for Austria which never really recovered and reclaimed her dominant position in German and European affairs. Historians are still seeking the reasons for the Prussian triumph in Königgrätz-Sadowa on 3 July 1866. In general it is agreed that Prussia was victorious because of Wilhelm's unconstitutional military reforms in the earlier sixties and Moltke's novel strategy to speed up troop movements and to bring them together only on the eve of the battle. Austria lost this war because of her government's problems with tax collecting and lack of funding after the war with France. In Austria industrialisation was slow and by the mid-sixties she was well behind Prussia in iron and steel production and steam-power capacities. In the battle Prussia's new breech-loading rifle proved to be superior to the guns of Austrian infantry. Thus the victory of Prussia over Austria in 1866 was a victory of military not cultural superiority. By September 1866 the struggle for mastery in Germany was over and Prussia has secured her leading position in the North German Confederation. Yet, this victory was not final for it set a ground for the new struggle, the struggle for mastery in Europe between Prussia and France.

The immediate reason for the war between France and Prussia in 1870 was the question of the candidacy of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen for the Spanish throne. France opposed his candidacy and Prussia supported it. On 2 July 1870 Prince Leopold was offered the Spanish throne and he with Bismarck's encouragement accepted it. This angered the French who demanded that Leopold

⁸⁹ Williamson, p.26

should withdraw his candidacy, otherwise they threatened with war.⁹⁰ Prince Leopold did not withdraw his candidacy and subsequently France declared war on July 15, 1870.

The public sentiments in summer 1870 in Germany were highly patriotic. Bismarck and the Prussian government were quick to utilise those strong anti-French feelings by using the national press dominated by the National Liberal Party. In this war conservatives and liberals, Catholics and Protestants fought together against the French threat. Nietzsche, who had done his military service in the mounted section of a field artillery regiment just a year after the Prussian triumphant victory over Austria volunteered to take part in this war with France. Although not any longer a Prussian citizen he obtained leave from Basel University and began his service in the medical corps of the Prussian army on 11th of August. On the 4th of September 1870 just a few days before Nietzsche collapsed with dysentery and diphtheria in Erlangen the French troops suffer a humiliating defeat in the battle of Sedan. MacMahon, a French marshal, could not relieve the French Rhine Army besieged in Metz because Moltke encircled the whole of Sedan and thus forced Napoleon III to surrender the town and the army. The way to Paris was open to Moltke and the Prussian troops. By January 1871 when Nietzsche was already back in Basel Paris was taken and Prussia secured her dominant position in Europe. As Williamson contends: "The implications of France's defeat in 1871 were far reaching."⁹¹ He agrees with Disraeli who "only slightly exaggerated contemporary fears when he observed that 'the war represents the German revolution ... a greater event than the French Revolution of the last century'." The Franco-Prussian war in which Nietzsche took part established the superior position of Prussia within Germany and created Germany, the *Reich*, as a

⁹⁰ There was a controversy up until recently about Bismarck's role in engineering this war but as archives have revealed, Bismarck did lie to his contemporaries about his knowledge of the Hohenzollern candidacy.

⁹¹ Williamson, p.70

European and the world power. I argue that those events had a significant impact on Nietzsche and prompted him to rethink his own political stand and philosophy.

In order to grasp German public sentiments in the first half of the 1870s one must note that before defeat by Prussia in 1871 France was a significant European and world power. Since the mid-seventeenth century when Spain lost her dominant position in Europe France steadily gained her political, economic and cultural strength and importance. By the beginning of the nineteenth century France's position was so strong that only a coalition of all other great powers of Europe could defeat her. Kennedy stresses the fact that in 1814-1815 "all the other great states had shown themselves determined to prevent French attempts to maintain a hegemony over Europe."⁹² This resulted in the creation of a coalition which beat the French at Waterloo. However, France maintained her hegemonic position in Europe up until the middle of the nineteenth century. "Even after its defeat in 1815," as Kennedy maintains, "France remained one of the leading states."⁹³ Thus until the 1860s there were five Great Powers in Europe - France, the Habsburg Empire, Britain, Russia, and Prussia. One should note that Prussia was relatively speaking the smallest and weakest of all the Great Powers and France was the biggest and strongest. Kennedy makes it clear in his *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* that "Despite its losses during the Napoleonic War, the position of France in the half-century following 1815 was significantly better than that of either Prussia or the Habsburg Empire in many respects. Its national income was much larger, and capital was more readily available; its population was far bigger than Prussia's and more homogeneous than the Habsburg Empire's; it could more easily afford a large army, and could pay for a considerable navy as well."⁹⁴

⁹² RF, p.214

⁹³ RF, p.95

⁹⁴ RF, p.214

One must note that for centuries France was not just politically, economically, or militarily superior to other European states but she was considered by other European nations also to be culturally superior. Paris became during the eighteenth century the cultural capital of Europe. It is clear that both Hegel and Nietzsche, as European intellectuals, shared this commonly held view of the superiority of the French culture.

For example Hegel in his lectures on the *Philosophy of History* points to French cultural superiority during the Middle Ages: “the flourishing state of the poetic art in the hand of the Troubadours, and the growth of the scholastic theology, whose especial centre was Paris, gave France a culture superior to that of the other European states, and which secured the respect of foreign nations.”⁹⁵ Hegel recognises that “France, too, had the consciousness of its intellectual superiority in a refinement of culture surpassing anything of which the rest of Europe could boast.”⁹⁶ In his lectures Hegel refers to the rule and conquests of Louis XIV (1638-1715) and the time when French culture “made its way everywhere with the language that embodied it, and was the object of universal admiration: they could therefore plead a higher justification than those of the German Emperor [Charles V, K.K].” Thus the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were, as Hegel sums up his ideas, a period of “cultural ascendancy of France within Europe, symbolised by the Palace of Versailles.”⁹⁷

Nietzsche, too, regarded French language and culture to be superior to that of Germans. Only the French, Nietzsche claims in his first meditation *David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer* (*David Strauß, der Bekenner und der Schriftsteller*) (published in August 1873), “have a genuine, productive culture.”⁹⁸ The Germans

⁹⁵ PH, p.404

⁹⁶ PH, p.432

⁹⁷ PH, p.432

⁹⁸ *David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer*, hereafter DS, p.9

imitate other cultures and have a mixture of all cultures; thus they lack their own original culture. Nietzsche insists in his second meditation *History in the Service and Disservice of Life* (*Von Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*) that the Germans have so far at best imitated French culture like apes or buffoons by their mode of walking, standing, speaking, dressing, and dwelling.⁹⁹ In *David Strauss* Nietzsche contends that Germans live “under the illusion of having a genuine culture.”¹⁰⁰ In his autobiographical book *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche again contends that “I believe only in French culture and consider everything in Europe that calls itself ‘culture’ a misunderstanding, not to speak of German culture [...]. The few instances of high culture I have encountered in Germany have all been of French origin, above all Frau Cosima Wagner [...].”¹⁰¹ For Nietzsche German culture remains entirely dependent upon French culture. “Even if we had actually ceased to imitate the French,” Nietzsche writes after the jubilant victory of Prussian troops, “that would still not imply that we had triumphed over them, but only that we had liberated ourselves from our subordination to them: only if we had imposed upon the French an original German culture would we legitimately be able to speak of a triumph of German culture.”¹⁰² In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche reflects on the consequences of the Franco-Prussian war and points out that as far as Germany extends it *ruins* culture: “it was only the war that ‘redeemed’ the spirit in France”.¹⁰³ Therefore, a few years after the Prussian military victory over France Nietzsche talks about the true victory, i.e. cultural victory. He admits that in Germany “our inner life is too weak and chaotic to act externally and achieve form.”¹⁰⁴ German culture remains weak “because all those

⁹⁹ *History in the Service and Disservice of Life*, hereafter HS, p.106

¹⁰⁰ DS, p.10

¹⁰¹ EH, p.57

¹⁰² DS, p.9

¹⁰³ EH, p.58

¹⁰⁴ HS, p.106

fine individual strands are not interwoven into a single hard knot.”¹⁰⁵ This ‘single hard knot’ is what Nietzsche’s ‘grand politics’ seeks to accomplish.

Here it interesting to point out that Nietzsche’s views about the originality of French culture vary slightly in different works. For example in *Beyond Good and Evil*, published in 1886, Nietzsche claims says that “the French have been only the apes and actors” of English and German ideas.¹⁰⁶ However, despite this Nietzsche still considers France to be “the seat of Europe’s most spiritual and refined culture and the leading school of taste.”¹⁰⁷ In his notebooks, published later by his sister as *The Will to Power (Der Wille zur Macht)*, Nietzsche admits that he wishes that he did not write in German but in French because he does not want to promote even superficially the *Reich* and its ideologists. Thus, one can argue, Nietzsche’s views on the superiority of French culture in Europe remained relatively unchanged.

It is not easy to pinpoint the reasons for Prussia’s swift victories over Austria and France. As was said above, Prussia was the smallest of the Great Powers in Europe. In 1850 the Prussian population was sixteen million which was smaller than the Austrian and French. As Breuille points out in 1860 the Prussian army was also smaller than the Austrian or French.¹⁰⁸ The share of military spending in Prussia was also relatively smaller than in Austria or France. The French Navy was superior to that of Prussia and her infantry had the best rifle at the time, the Chassepot, which could fire 150 rounds per minute. Despite all those factors Prussia was victorious against Austria and France and by the beginning of the 1870s became the European super-power.

Historians note that although Prussia was a relatively small state she produced more steel and had a more extensive railway network than Austria or France. And

¹⁰⁵ HS, p.106

¹⁰⁶ BGE, p.185

¹⁰⁷ BGE, p.186

¹⁰⁸ GH, p.126

although her army was smaller she could mobilise it more rapidly than Austria or France. Prussia's General Staff was more efficient in employing the railway networks and organising the general movement of the troops. In addition the international situation in Europe was in favour of Prussia since neither Austria nor France could create an alliance with Russia or Britain against Prussia. As Williamson sums it up in his *Bismarck and Germany 1862-1890* : "luck, the skill of the Prussian General Staff, the effectiveness of the new Krupp field batteries and the superior morale of the Prussian troops ensured a rapid series of French defeats culminating in the great Prussian victory of Sedan in September [...]"¹⁰⁹ As the result of the Franco-Prussian war France lost Alsace-Lorraine and subsequently had to pay indemnity of five milliard francs over the next four years. Germany was finally united under Prussian leadership into the new *Reich* and Bismarck's political goals were finally achieved. As Williamson sums it up after the Prussian victory "the military and diplomatic balance had shifted from Paris to Berlin ..."¹¹⁰

The results and consequences of the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian wars had a crucial impact on the young Nietzsche and subsequently inspired him to re-interpret world history and set forward his own political project. At the beginning of seventies Nietzsche works on a collection of essays and publishes four of them under the title *Untimely Mediations (Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen)*. Those 'unfashionable' mediations are Nietzsche's reaction to the new political and historical situation in Germany and Europe. One can argue that the problems set and themes touched on by Nietzsche in the *Untimely Meditations* will remain present in all his works. Nietzsche's meditations or observations were not 'untimely' in the sense they of being beyond his time but they were 'unfashionable' (as Gray translates) in his time. His meditations were unfashionable because the people in Germany was jubilant

¹⁰⁹ Williamson, p.39

over Prussia's triumphant victories over Austria and France. Nietzsche knew that his observations were going to be unfashionable since after such a victory nobody seems to "speak of the deleterious and dangerous consequences of war, especially of a war that ends in victory."¹¹¹ After a victorious war nobody seems to inquire "into the powerful phenomenon of its influence on morality, culture, and art."¹¹² Therefore, Nietzsche said "a great victory is a great danger."¹¹³ The great victory is a great danger because it blinds the victorious side, deceives it, produces misleading goals and thus leads to real defeat. Nietzsche reminds to all the victorious sides of any wars in his first observation: "It is more difficult for human nature to endure victory than to endure defeat; indeed, it even appears to be easier to achieve such a victory than to endure it in such a way that it does not result in a more serious defeat."¹¹⁴ The apparent victory, political or military, might lead, as Nietzsche warns, to a more serious defeat, a cultural defeat. In his *Meditations*, Nietzsche drafts his own political programme in order to prevent this cultural defeat. His political programme does not focus on politics or economics but instead puts a strong emphasis on culture. In this sense Nietzsche differs from Hegel who seems to identify in his *Philosophy of History* political success in world history with cultural superiority. In other words Hegel does not stress the difference between political or military power and cultural power which are manifested in Spirit. After the Franco-Prussian war Nietzsche cautions his contemporaries in his first meditation, *David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer*, against the 'fashionable' concept of world history as follows: "[of] all the deleterious consequences of the recently fought war with France, the worst is perhaps one widely held, even universal error: the erroneous idea harboured by public opinion and all public opinionators that in this struggle German culture also came away victorious,

¹¹⁰ Williamson, p.70

¹¹¹ DS, p.5

¹¹² DS, p.5

¹¹³ DS, p.5

and that it must therefore now be adorned with laurels befitting such extraordinary events and achievements.”¹¹⁵

Prussia’s triumphant victories over Austria and France led the German people to believe that their culture as well as their military strength was superior to that of France. They believed that Hegelian history finally reached its *telos* and “we are,” as Nietzsche mockingly describes the sentiments of his contemporaries, “clearly in the heaven of heavens.”¹¹⁶ Nietzsche radically rejects this idea and warns his contemporaries in his *Meditations* about the deceitful opinions and misleading conception that the general public has after the creation of the *Reich*: “This delusion is extremely pernicious; not simply because it is a delusion - for delusions can be of the most salutary and blessed nature - but rather because it is capable of transforming our victory into a total defeat: *into the defeat - indeed, the extirpation - of the German spirit for the sake of the ‘German Reich.’*”¹¹⁷

It seems that in Nietzsche’s view this delusion originates from Hegelian philosophy which identifies “Reality” with “philistine reason”. Nietzsche does not believe “that there has not been a dangerous turn or crisis in German culture in this century which has not become more dangerous because of the enormous and still spreading influence of this Hegelian philosophy.”¹¹⁸ Nietzsche calls this period in German history “the age of cynical philistine confessions”¹¹⁹ and associates cultural philistines like Strauss and Vischer with Hegelian philosophy. For that reason he prefers French contemporary writers to German philosophers because they have not been ruined by Hegel’s philosophy: “Between ourselves, I prefer *this* generation (nineteenth century French intellectuals, K.K.) even to their great teachers, who have

¹¹⁴ DS, p.5

¹¹⁵ DS, p.5

¹¹⁶ DS, p.25

¹¹⁷ DS, p.5

¹¹⁸ HS, p.127

¹¹⁹ DS, p.18

all been ruined by German philosophy (M. Taine for example by Hegel, whom he has to thank for this misunderstanding of great human being and ages).¹²⁰

Hegel himself seems to be for Nietzsche a grand cultural philistine whose ideas are expressed and promoted by the 'Idols of the age' in the newspapers and party political programs not just in Germany but all across Europe. Only the Schopenhauerian hailstorm seems to stand against the "beautiful green crop of Hegelianism" which was growing in all fields in Germany up until the mid-nineteenth century.¹²¹ The delusion that "this cultivation (official culture) is supposed to have triumphed over France" is dangerous to genuine culture.¹²² If one promotes such a delusion then it has, Nietzsche maintains, the potential "to extirpate the German spirit."¹²³

Nietzsche, in contrast to Hegel, draws a sharp distinction between military and cultural victory. In his *Nachlass* Nietzsche suggests that the popular side of Hegel's philosophy of history is that "right is with the victorious: they represent the progress of mankind."¹²⁴ Contrary to this claim Nietzsche contends that in recent wars "German culture played no part whatsoever in our military successes."¹²⁵ He continues his argument by insisting that "strict military discipline, natural courage and perseverance, superiority of leadership, unity and obedience among the led - in short, qualities that have nothing at all to do with culture - brought us victory over enemies who lacked the most important of these qualities."¹²⁶ Prussian victory was not due to her historic or cultural superiority but due to "more comprehensive knowledge of the German officers, in the superior training of the German troops, and in their more

¹²⁰ EH, p.58

¹²¹ SE, p.252

¹²² DS, p.8

¹²³ DS, p.6

¹²⁴ WP, p.223

¹²⁵ DS, p.6

¹²⁶ DS, p.6

scientific conduct of war.”¹²⁷ Nietzsche goes on by referring to the political genius of Bismarck and military genius of Moltke, “for the Germans never lacked the most clear-sighted and daring leaders and generals; these latter, however, often lacked Germans.”¹²⁸ Nietzsche focuses on world history and points out that this was not the first time the culturally superior state was defeated by the culturally inferior state: “for the moral qualities of stricter discipline and of silent obedience, which distinguished, for example, the Macedonian armies from the incomparably more cultivated Greek armies, have nothing at all to do with cultivation. Only a confusion makes it possible to speak of the victory of German cultivation and culture, a confusion that derives from the fact that in Germany the pure concept of culture has been lost.”¹²⁹ In *We Philologists* Nietzsche suggests that the idea of unity of cultural, political, and military success might originate in Greece, whose political defeat “has given rise to the atrocious theory that culture cannot be pursued unless one is at the same time armed to the teeth.”¹³⁰ Nietzsche blames cultural philistines and their grand master Hegel for the loss of the pure concept of culture not mixed with historical success in the shape of Spirit.

Historians seem to agree with Nietzsche that Prussia’s victories over Austria and France had nothing to do with her culture. The first reason was Prussia’s Industrial revolution which took place in 1850s and 1860s. Kennedy points out those reasons as follows: “Germany had more miles of railway lines, better arranged for military purposes. Its gross national product and its iron and steel production were just then overtaking the French totals. Its coal production was two and a half times as great, and its consumption from modern energy sources was 50 per cent larger. The Industrial Revolution in Germany was creating many more large-scale firms, such as

¹²⁷ DS, p.6

¹²⁸ DS, p.7

¹²⁹ DS, p.8

the Krupp steel and armaments combine, which gave the Prusso-German state both military and industrial muscle.”¹³¹

Secondly, as Kennedy points out, the ‘Military Revolution’ was taking place in Prussia in the beginning of the 1860s. After the partial mobilisation in 1859 it became clear to Wilhelm I that Prussia needed to radically reform its army. Wilhelm I hoped by his reforms to double the size of his army. He needed to finance those extensive army reforms from the budget, yet the liberal majority in the lower house (the *Landstag*) was against those reforms and did not approve the budget. Bismarck, who was appointed Minister-President of Prussia in September 1862, tried to resolve this constitutional crisis between Wilhelm I and the liberal majority in Parliament. On 29th September he delivered his notorious ‘Blood and Iron’ speech in which he contends that “Germany doesn’t look to Prussia’s liberalism, but to its power” and ended his speech by declaring that “not by means of speeches and majority verdicts will the great decisions of the time be made - that was the great mistake of 1848 and 1849 - but by iron and blood”¹³² Only after the victory over Austria for which the Governments sold the rights to buy the stock of the Cologne-Minden railway, did Bismarck finally secure the support of the Liberal party for the indemnity bill.

After the Franco-Prussian war it became clear to the heads of European states that in order to maintain their position countries need to radically reform their economical, industrial and military infrastructures. It became clear that the new era in European affairs was “bringing defeat upon those societies which failed to modernise their military systems, and which lacked the broad-based industrial infrastructure to support the vast armies and much more expensive and complicated weaponry now

¹³⁰ See in volume eight of *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, The Case of Wagner* ed. O. Levy, hereafter CW, p.161

¹³¹ RF, p.240

¹³² quoted by Williamson, p.97

transforming the nature of war.”¹³³ Thus the most successful state is a state with the largest economical base to uphold its military structure. As Kennedy points out the “economic wealth did not immediately or always, translate into military power.”¹³⁴ But economic strength and population size were (and are) still good indicators of military power.

As Lee notes, the state “was heavily involved in the industrialisation process in Germany.”¹³⁵ “The state,” Lee argues, “effectively promoted economic development through financial and administrative reforms [...] Specifically through the abolition of the feudal agrarian regime, the dismantling of guild controls and the introduction of more liberal trade policies, as well as through the provision of an appropriate legal framework for capitalist production.”¹³⁶ As the result of those changes any political party who wanted to stay in power made those reforms its first political priority.

Nietzsche rejected the ideals of the *Reich* and its parties and proposed that one ought to promote not economy or industry but culture. He thought that political parties ought not to promote capitalist production and create favourable conditions for the production of bureaucrats and powerful industrialists but rather that they should promote culture and create an environment for the production of genius. Only after this fundamental change in political priorities could one speak about ‘great politics’.

One must remember that Nietzsche writes his *Meditations* after the deceitful optimism of the *Gründerjahre* (1871-73) when the German economy went into recession because of the collapse of the Viennese stock market in April 1873. Throughout Nietzsche’s life the German economy was in recession and stabilised at its *Gründerjahre* level only at the beginning of nineties. As Williamson points out, the

¹³³ RF, p.xix

¹³⁴ RF, p.185

¹³⁵ GH, p.72

¹³⁶ GH, p.73

real consequence of the Industrial Revolution: “was the cultural and psychological trauma it inflicted on the Germans, which showed itself in ‘the violent resentment against the new industrialism, which in different guises erupted time and time again’.”¹³⁷ The crash of financial markets in 1873, he continues, “discredited both economic and political liberalism and enabled the Conservatives and survivors of the pre-capitalist era successfully to attack the Liberal ethos.”¹³⁸ It seems that Nietzsche was influenced by this periodic resentment against new industrialism. It is clear from his *Meditations* that Nietzsche was well aware of the main political agendas, problems and conflicts of his time. His reflections and reaction against them makes him, I shall argue, a profound political thinker. However, his political philosophy differs fundamentally from his contemporaries since it seeks to promote culture and production of genius instead of economic strength and capitalist production. By advocating the politics of culture he questions the very meaning of the word ‘politics’.

As Williamson notes, in the mid-seventies when Nietzsche is writing his *Meditations* “the commercial, financial and legal infrastructure of the new *Reich* was in place.”¹³⁹ By the mid-seventies Bismarck had reformed all the *Reich*’s departments. “These reforms,” as Williamson points out, “played a decisive role in welding together the German states into a national entity.”¹⁴⁰ But during those years not much was done for culture and cultural unification of Germany. As Gordon Graig argues “the victory over France and the unification of German states inspired no great work of literature or music or painting.”¹⁴¹ As Jeffries points out, apart from imperial building projects (for example, Paul Wollot’s *Reichstag* building) and numerous statues and memorials erected in the name of *Germania* Germany’s cultural life deteriorated. It was greatly due to the fact that, as Jeffries argues, “neither Wilhelm I

¹³⁷ Williamson, p.53

¹³⁸ Williamson, p.51

¹³⁹ Williamson, p.44

¹⁴⁰ Williamson, p.45

nor Bismarck showed much interest in culture.”¹⁴² In *Daybreak* written nearly ten years after the unification of Germany Nietzsche calls Bismarck “an enemy of everything Wagnerian and Schopenhauerian.”¹⁴³ As Williamson notes, “the increasing concentration of German industry into large units produced an elite of powerful industrialists and bankers [...]”¹⁴⁴ Nietzsche seemed to realise that Bismarck’s (and any political party’s) policies would produce only great industrialists like Krupp and Borsig or speculators like Dr. Strousberg and not geniuses like Beethoven, Goethe, Schopenhauer or Wagner. In addition the economic depression would produce also a powerful working class with a socialist political agenda and active network across the borders. Nietzsche’s political project, as I shall argue in detail in the fourth chapter of this study, was directed against the *Gründerzeit* values of Bismarckian Germany. “Nietzsche was,” as the historian Jeffries notes, “a fierce critic of almost every aspect of Imperial Germany and its culture.”¹⁴⁵

Nietzsche starts by rejecting what he terms the “false and sterile concept of culture.”¹⁴⁶ He returns to the Greek concept of culture - in contrast to the Christian - “the concept of culture as a new and improved physis.”¹⁴⁷ The current German culture is not Greek for it aims to produce a scholar who separates himself from life “in order to observe it as objectively as possible.”¹⁴⁸ It aims to produce “cultural philistines” who think the *real is reasonable and reasonable is real*. Nietzsche – unlike Hegel in his earlier political works and Bismarck with his policies – aims not at the political unification of Germany under the Hohenzollern dynasty but a genuine cultural unification of Germany under great educators like Schopenhauer. Nietzsche writes:

¹⁴¹ quoted by Jeffries, GH, p.186

¹⁴² GH, p.186

¹⁴³ D, p.102

¹⁴⁴ Williamson, p.50

¹⁴⁵ GH, p.187

¹⁴⁶ HS, p.140

¹⁴⁷ HS, p.145

¹⁴⁸ HS, p.140

“I hereby explicitly declare that it is *German unity* in its highest sense to which we aspire, and we aspire to it more passionately than to political unity - *the unity of German spirit and life, after we have annihilated the gulf between form and content, between inwardness and convention.*”¹⁴⁹ Nietzsche claims that there is no necessary association between “intelligence and property” and “wealth and culture”.¹⁵⁰ The victory of Prussia over Austria and France proved to him that genuine culture has nothing to do with wealth or military strength. For Hegel world history seems to be the ‘battlefield’ between different cultures where the superior culture always comes out victorious. Nietzsche, on the other hand, argues that “Even if we were to grant that this war represented the battle between two cultures the measure of value for the victorious culture would still be a very relative one.”¹⁵¹ Nietzsche insists, in opposition to his contemporaries, that “in the case at hand [namely, Prussia’s victory over France. K.K.] one can by no means speak of victory of German culture, if only for the simple reason that French culture subsists as it did heretofore, and because we Germans are just as dependent on it as we were heretofore.”¹⁵² This arrogant delusion is cultivated, according to Nietzsche, by “cultivated philistines” with their grand master Hegel.

For Nietzsche the true culture is “a unity of artistic style that maintains itself throughout all the vital self-expressions of a people. However, vast knowledge and pedantic learning are neither a requisite means to, nor a symptom of, culture; indeed, these generally prove themselves most compatible with the opposite of culture, with barbarism - that is, with absence of style, or with the chaotic hodgepodge of all styles.”¹⁵³ German culture lacked this ‘stylistic unity’ and thus was not a genuine culture. Hollingdale notes that Nietzsche did not like Bismarck’s policies: “its

¹⁴⁹ HS, p.108

¹⁵⁰ SE, p.219

¹⁵¹ DS, p.6

¹⁵² DS, p.6

political ambitions, misunderstood as cultural, were in reality inimical to culture, and to German culture in particular. It was diverting and impoverishing Germany in the only sphere that counted.”¹⁵⁴ As Hollingdale continues “This is a point of view from which he never afterwards deviated: on the contrary, he came increasingly to think that the warnings uttered in *David Strauss* had been all too justified, and the fears which inspired it very comprehensively realised.”¹⁵⁵ “The main question, here as everywhere in his writings on the subject,” Hollingdale quite rightly points out, “is whether a nation has a high culture, not whether it is a ‘great power’.”¹⁵⁶ I shall argue that to be a ‘great power’ for Nietzsche is to be great cultural power. This position became the foundation of Nietzsche’s political philosophy and is expressed throughout his works. For example this position is expressed in *Twilight of the Idols* written in 1888 and published in 1889. In the chapter, ‘What the Germans Lack’, Nietzsche still argues, in line his early *Meditations*, that what the Germans still lack is high culture. It seems that in *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche also changes his views about Hegel. Although Hegel is still considered to be an arch-philistine he is regarded as one of the founders of German culture equal to Goethe, Heine and Schopenhauer. In *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche asks his fellow Germans: “haven’t you so much as one spirit who *means something* to Europe? In the way your Goethe, your Hegel, your Heinrich Heine, your Schopenhauer meant something? That there is no longer a single German philosopher – there is no end of astonishment at that.”¹⁵⁷ From this passage it is clear that Hegel despite his ‘idealism’ becomes for Nietzsche one of the greatest German thinkers who lifted the status of German culture in Europe.

Two wars between Austria and France and their consequences were what triggered Nietzsche to set forward his own political agenda. Nietzsche fights the

¹⁵³ DS, p.9

¹⁵⁴ N, p.19

¹⁵⁵ N, p.20

¹⁵⁶ N, p.20

deleterious consequences of the wars and “the erroneous idea harboured by public opinion and all public opinionators that in this struggle German culture also came away victorious, and that it must therefore now be adorned with laurels befitting such extraordinary events and achievements.”¹⁵⁸ The consequences of the Franco-Prussian War made clear to Nietzsche that in world history the uncultured nations can be victorious and successful over high cultured nations. The success in world history is not a proof, as Hegelian understanding of world history seems to suggest, of a nation’s superiority. Nietzsche defends this point rigorously in his works and that is why he asks us to radically re-think the Hegelian understanding of world history.

¹⁵⁷ TI, p.74

¹⁵⁸ DS, p.5

II. Hegel's and Nietzsche's interpretations of world history

*Only strong personalities can endure history;
the weak are completely annihilated by it.*

Nietzsche

In the previous chapter I argued that Prussian victories over Austria (in 1866) and France (in 1870), and the unification of Germany into the new *Reich* under Wilhelm I and Bismarck (in 1871), compelled the young Nietzsche to radically reinterpret the then 'fashionable' Hegelian understanding of World History. I suggested that it is within this politico-historical context that one should read Nietzsche's early works in particular and his political philosophy in general. In this chapter I propose to examine the main differences between Hegel's and Nietzsche's understanding of history. Many commentators seem to overlook the importance of Prussian victories and the establishment of the new *Reich* for the young Nietzsche. It is difficult to decide whether it was just one crucial event – the Prussian victory over France, as I suggest – or disillusionment with modern society in general that compelled Nietzsche to radically rethink the 'fashionable' interpretation of World History and consequently inspired him to set forward his own political project – the promotion of culture.¹⁵⁹ However, it is clear that already during the first half of the 1870s Nietzsche's sentiments towards the new *Reich* and Bismarck's policies as well as his attitude towards Hegelian philosophy, which he regarded as the historical foundation and philosophical justification of the new *Reich*, became quite negative. Nietzsche rejects the 'fashionable' Hegelian understanding of World History as a just and evolutionary process that is governed by Reason. In *We Philologists* Nietzsche points out that "up to the present time all history has been written from the standpoint

¹⁵⁹ The biographical evidence seems to suggest that up until the 1860s Nietzsche had a quite positive disposition towards the Prussian state and her hegemonic position in Europe since he volunteered to participate in the war against France although he was no longer a Prussian citizen.

of success, indeed, with the assumption of a certain reason in this success.”¹⁶⁰ Consequently, Nietzsche asserts, Germany has become the breeding place of this historical optimism for which he blames Hegel.

I suggest that Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s political projects are based on their respective interpretations of world history. Therefore, in this chapter I shall examine more closely Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s respective interpretations of world history.¹⁶¹ During the first half of the nineteenth century the study of history became more important and prevalent than it had been during previous centuries. One can argue that Hegel was one of the first thinkers to stress the importance of history and to offer a new interpretation of world history as an alternative to the Christian, Kantian or positivist understanding of history.¹⁶²

Hegel does not regard history as something inferior to the dogmas of the Church but understands it as an emancipatory and evolutionary process of the world spirit. By the middle of the nineteenth century it became evident that history could be used to promote and justify different political agendas. The German nationalists used history (in particular Hegel’s interpretation of history) in order to promote the idea of the historical superiority of the German nation and culture. Nietzsche, on the other hand, opposes this general trend “to understand everything historically” initiated by Hegel. For Nietzsche the excess of history is a symptom of sickness of the Modern Age. Overwhelming historical knowledge makes history dominate and degrade life. Nietzsche points out that this Hegelian study of history “stops at the thoughts and

¹⁶⁰ CW, p.170

¹⁶¹ One can find Hegel’s interpretation of history in his lectures on world history (lecture course of 1830, published after his death by Karl Hegel) and in a brief outline at the end of the *Philosophy of Right*. Nietzsche’s interpretation of history is scattered throughout his works but the notion is first introduced and closely discussed in his *Unmodern Observations [Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen]*, in particular in his second meditation *History in the Service and Disservice of Life (Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben)*.

¹⁶² For a general introduction to Hegel’s philosophy of history see Houlgate *Freedom, Truth and History. An Introduction to Hegel’s Philosophy*.

sentiments of culture, but never becomes cultural resolve.”¹⁶³ Therefore, Nietzsche calls David Strauss (and any other philosopher), whose interpretation of history in his view does not preserve life, a ‘cultural philistine’. Nietzsche contends that “the Straussian philistine dwells in the works of our great poets and composers like a maggot that lives by destroying, admires by consuming, and worships by digesting.”¹⁶⁴ Yet, the ‘arch-philistine’ who introduced first the life-destroying philosophy of history is according to Nietzsche not Strauss but Hegel.

For many nineteenth-century German historians the unification of Germany was the culmination of German and indeed World History. They wanted to link the idea of freedom to the idea of the strong State (the idea which is present in all Hegel’s works but especially in the *Philosophy of Right*) and they believed that such a state should and would emerge in Germany. Furthermore, like Hegel, many German historians promoted the ideal of constitutional monarchy as the best, just, and most ethical way of government against liberal, democratic, and republican ideals. Thus, history was used to advocate certain political agendas and to promote certain political ideologies – such as constitutional monarchy. As Berger notes in *German History since 1800*: “Prussian historiography underpinned both Prussia’s hegemonic position within a united Germany after 1870/71 and Germany’s claim to become a world power in the Wilhelmine era.”¹⁶⁵ Nietzsche expresses a similar view in his *Ecce Homo*: “German historians have [...] altogether lost the grand view for the course, for the values of culture, and are one and all buffoons of politics (or of the church).”¹⁶⁶

One can argue that Hegel, too, was among those thinkers who provided the Second *Reich* with an intellectual justification for its existence and victories. Furthermore, according to Nietzsche, he was the thinker who initiated this deification

¹⁶³ HS, p.104

¹⁶⁴ DS, p.32

¹⁶⁵ GH, p.482

¹⁶⁶ EH, p.120

in the first place. Nietzsche thought that for his contemporaries Hegel's political project, the ethical state, was finally being realised in the *Reich* and that therefore there was no need for philosophy any more.

Jakob Burckhardt, the eminent nineteenth-century Swiss historian, warned his contemporaries that there would be historians who would regard the establishment of the *Reich* as the culmination of World History and he blames the prevalent Hegelian philosophy of history for this. Burckhardt was Nietzsche's close colleague and friend in Basel whose lectures Nietzsche often attended and admired. Burckhardt's criticism of Hegel seems to dominate Nietzsche's own perception of Hegel and his understanding of history.

Nineteenth-century historiography proved first that history could be misused by society and the state. One can argue that this was a general tendency of the age. While German Protestant historians were justifying the superiority of Prussia, Catholic historians defended Austrian superiority and leadership. Therefore, it seems right to suggest here that one's political views determine one's perspective on history.¹⁶⁷

Hegel's *Philosophy of History* is regarded by many historians as a work that introduced the idea of *Historizismus* into historiography. Broadly speaking it is the idea that history advances according to pre-determined rational laws towards a certain end or *telos*.¹⁶⁸ Although Nietzsche's interpretation of history is aimed directly against Hartmann's and Strauss'¹⁶⁹ popular philosophy of history, it is clear from

¹⁶⁷ The most recent controversial case of the historian David Irving might serve here as an example. His view on history (particularly concerning the Holocaust) was determined by his political sympathies (pro-Nazi and anti-Jewish). As the libel trial judge ruled Irving, because of his political views, deliberately manipulated and distorted the historical evidence.

¹⁶⁸ Here it is important to stress the difference between *Historizismus* and *Historismus*. The former is represented by Hegel, the latter by Ranke. According to Ranke a historian ought to understand the context of historical phenomena. In order to determine the historic event "as it actually was" (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*) one must not judge this event from the standpoint of one's own time.

¹⁶⁹ David Strauss (1808-1874) was a neo-Hegelian philosopher and theologian. He died right after Nietzsche published his second meditation. Strauss defended the idea of constitutional monarchy during the 1848/49 revolutions. Similarly to Bismarck he later became a supporter of the National

numerous comments that his real opponent is Hegel, who in his view initiated at the beginning of the nineteenth century this objective and teleological study of history.

In his first meditation on *David Strauss* Nietzsche renounces Strauss' 'new faith' which he saw as a further mystification of Hegel's philosophy of history. While Strauss was for Nietzsche "the philistine as the founder of the religion of the future"¹⁷⁰ Hegel was the "arch-philistine" from whom this new 'theology' originates. Nietzsche makes ironical remarks concerning Strauss' lack of understanding of Kantian philosophy and his solid Hegelian background. "Of course," Nietzsche writes, "it is true that at certain times in their lives it is impossible for people to understand Kant, especially if, as in Strauss's case, already in one's youth one understood - or thought oneself to have understood - Hegel, that 'intellectual giant,' or if one, on top of this, had to come to grips with Schleiermacher, 'a man possessing almost too much acumen,' as Strauss says."¹⁷¹ Nietzsche also points out that Strauss' philosophical position (as well as those of other Young Hegelians) is not an original one but derives entirely from Hegel's philosophy. Nietzsche maintains: "It will sound strange to Strauss when I tell him that even now he stands in a relationship of 'absolute dependence' on Hegel and Schleiermacher, and that his doctrine of the universe, his tendency to regard things *sub specie biennii*, and his lack of backbone where the status quo in Germany is concerned, but above all his shameless philistine optimism, can all be explained by certain youthful impressions, earlier habits, and certain pathological disorders. Once infected by Hegelism or Schleiermachinations, one can

Liberal party and remained a Prussian monarchist and radically opposed any kind of socialism. Nietzsche's first meditation was a critical response to Strauss' controversial book *The Old and the New Faith*, which was published in 1868. In his book Strauss did not deny the historical reality of Jesus Christ but criticised the gospels and the Church's interpretation of Jesus' life and deeds. More specifically he criticised the supernatural deeds of Jesus Christ thus laying foundation for the rational theology which became later the core of the Tübingem School of Protestantism.

¹⁷⁰ DS, p.22

¹⁷¹ DS, p.35

never again be completely cured.”¹⁷² Young Nietzsche, as a devoted disciple of Schopenhauer, opposes both Hegel’s and Strauss’ theoretical optimism and prompts his contemporaries to take pessimism more seriously.

In his meditation on Strauss Nietzsche challenges an idea, then prevalent in German *academia*, set forward in his words by the ‘language-perverting philosophers’: namely, “that fanatical-purposive view of history, that carnival of all gods and myth that the Romantics put together, as well as those poetic fashions and insanities born out of intoxication.”¹⁷³ In Nietzsche’s view, public opinion and the philosophical stance of his contemporaries were directly influenced by Hegel’s philosophy and in particular by his interpretation of world history. The works of Strauss and many other Hegelians proved to Nietzsche that Hegelian philosophy is “still smoldering on in the heads of the older generations through its distinction between the ‘idea of Christianity’ and its many imperfect ‘phenomenal forms,’ thereby allowing us to believe that the ‘passion of the Idea’ is to reveal itself in ever purer forms, and finally attain its purest, most transparent, indeed almost invisible, form in the mind of the contemporary *theologus liberalis vulgaris*.”¹⁷⁴ From this passage as well as from the following passages it is clear that Nietzsche associates Hegel’s philosophy of history with Protestant Theology and therefore rejects it entirely. In *The Anti-Christ* Nietzsche notes that “the Protestant Pastor is the grandfather of German philosophy [...]”¹⁷⁵ and referring to Hegel’s (and Schelling’s and Hölderlin’s) old university and Swabian origin ironically remarks: “One has only to say the words ‘College of Tübingen’ to grasp what German philosophy is at bottom

¹⁷² DS, p.36

¹⁷³ DS, p.15

¹⁷⁴ HS, p.120

¹⁷⁵ TI, p.133

– a cunning theology. [...] The Swabians are the best liars in Germany, they lie innocently.”¹⁷⁶

At the same time Nietzsche seems to be confident that in the end Schopenhauer’s pessimistic philosophy will prevail in Germany and Europe despite the current strength of Hegel’s “philistine” optimism. “I believe,” Nietzsche writes in *Schopenhauer as Educator*, “that at present there are already more people who know his name than know Hegel’s.”¹⁷⁷ In Nietzsche’s view, one needs to get rid of the “philistine” philosophy not just because it has a degrading effect on philosophy but also because it eradicates culture and prevents the production of geniuses taking place in society. Nietzsche maintains that “the very same obstacles that prevent a great philosophy from having an effect also stand in the way of the production of a great philosopher.”¹⁷⁸ Later in his life Nietzsche seems to change his views about Schopenhauer’s role in the annihilation of Hegelian philosophy of history and its consequences for German culture. In *Beyond Good and Evil* written in 1886 Nietzsche claims that Schopenhauer with his unintelligent rage against Hegel “succeeded in disconnecting the entire last generation of Germans from German culture, which culture was, all things considered, a high point and divinatory refinement of the *historical sense*: but Schopenhauer himself was in precisely this respect poor, unreceptive and un-German to the point of genius.”¹⁷⁹ It seems that later Nietzsche realised that although Hegel’s philosophy had a negative impact on the Germans it lies at the very foundation of German culture. Yet, it is the same culture that Nietzsche seeks to overcome with his grand political project.

In general, Nietzsche opposes the idea of Providence but at the same time he is also against the historical ‘optimism’ and ‘sickness’ of the nineteenth-century German

¹⁷⁶ TI, p.134

¹⁷⁷ SE, p.236

¹⁷⁸ SE, p.237

¹⁷⁹ BGE, p.130

academia. He reminds his contemporaries that “Our esteem for history may be merely a Western prejudice.”¹⁸⁰ For, as he points out, every great historical event takes place within an unhistorical atmosphere. In Nietzsche’s view, mainly because of Hegel his contemporaries have been infected with history and worse still history itself has become contaminated by reason. Hegel popularised in Germany the idea of history as a evolutionary process towards a certain rational supra-personal *telos*. In his meditation on history Nietzsche clearly refers to Hegel’s philosophy of history when he writes:

Such a way of thinking has accustomed Germans to talking about ‘world process’ and justifying their own age as the inevitable result of this world-process; this way of thinking has established history in the place of the other spiritual powers, art and religion, as sole sovereign, insofar as it is the ‘self-realising concept’, the ‘dialectic of the spirit of nations,’ and the ‘universal judgement.’¹⁸¹

Although Hegel opposes the dogmatic history of the Church, for Nietzsche he remains a supreme advocate of the existence of God and Reason in World History. Nietzsche insists that “this Hegelian notion of history has been scornfully dubbed God’s sojourn on earth (though this God himself was first created by means of history).”¹⁸² And he continues his argument against Hegel’s ‘theological’ interpretation of history as follows:

But in Hegelian heads this God has become visible and intelligible to himself and has already ascended all the dialectically possible stages of his Becoming up towards this self-revelation. Thus, for Hegel the climax and terminal point of world-process coincide with his own Berlin existence.¹⁸³

Nietzsche (and here he clearly follows Schopenhauer’s criticisms) was convinced that for Hegel nineteenth-century Germany and more specifically Prussia represents the summit of world history. Nietzsche radically rejects this idea as well as the opposite idea that the modern age is only the penultimate stage of world history. For Nietzsche

¹⁸⁰ HS, p.94

¹⁸¹ HS, p.127

¹⁸² HS, p.127

¹⁸³ HS, p.127

both those ideas are symptoms of the malady of the modern age. As Nietzsche puts it his meditation on Strauss: “In truth, the belief that one is the lateborn offspring of prior ages is paralysing and upsetting, but it must seem horrible and destructive when one day, in a brazen inversion, such a belief deifies this lateborn offspring as the true meaning and purpose of all previous historical events, when his knowing wretchedness is identified with the culmination of world history.”¹⁸⁴

In general, Hegel’s interpretation of history, according to Nietzsche, represents an ill-concealed “deification of success”. Hegel’s reading of history will in Nietzsche’s view lead society to subjugate itself to success and the justification of the real. As Nietzsche himself puts it in his meditation on history, Hegel “has instilled in the generations nurtured in his philosophy that admiration for the ‘power of history’ which in point of fact is constantly transformed into naked admiration of success and leads to idolatry of the fact.”¹⁸⁵ German jubilation after the victory over France might serve here as an example of this idolatry of success Nietzsche is referring to in his meditations. For Nietzsche, Hegel is the first philosopher who proclaims the “religion of historical power” among his “priests of the mythologies of ideas”.¹⁸⁶ In opposition to this ‘new religion’ Nietzsche declares sarcastically: “If every success contains its own rational necessity; if every event is a victory of the logical or the ‘Idea,’ then fall to your knees this minute and kow-tow to the whole scale of ‘successes’!”¹⁸⁷

One needs to ask why Nietzsche thinks this idolatry of historical power and success is so dangerous? Nietzsche seems to suggest that it is dangerous because it leads to the degradation of the creative and cultural within society. He gives an example explaining why he thinks one ought to admire the human genius instead of historical success. For example, in Nietzsche’s view, Raphael could not express

¹⁸⁴ DS, p.143

¹⁸⁵ HS, p.127

¹⁸⁶ HS, p.128

¹⁸⁷ HS, p.128

himself fully in his works because he died at the age of thirty-six. On the other hand, the apologists of the factual (and with them Hegel), Nietzsche argues, “will say that Raphael expressed everything that was in him; longer life would have enabled him to repeat himself, not to create new beauty, etc., etc. You would thereby become the devil’s advocate, precisely because you idolise the event, the fact; but the fact itself is always stupid and has always resembled a calf more than a god.”¹⁸⁸ Nietzsche expressed the same view regarding Goethe. He was outraged by the suggestion that Goethe “exhausted” himself at age eighty-two and therefore declares: “Yet I would happily exchange whole cartloads of fresh, ultramodern lives for a few years of the exhausted Goethe, simply to take part in conversations like those with Eckermann [...].”¹⁸⁹ It seems that Nietzsche treats cultures and nations similarly to great artists - the early death of culture is not a sign of its inferiority. Quite the contrary, if one studies history closely enough more often the inferior culture defeats the superior and thus is historically more successful. In the political sphere this idolatry of success will lead in Nietzsche’s view to indifference and apathy and the triumph of the mass morality within society, for politics is aimed only at enhancing political, economical and military powers in order for society to be ‘successful’. Nietzsche warns his contemporaries as follows: “But once a man has learned to bow and scrape before the ‘power of history,’ sooner or later, like a Chinese puppet, he nods approval to every power, whether that of government, public opinion, or numerical majority, dancing in perfect time to the tune of any ‘power’ that pulls his strings.”¹⁹⁰

As a ‘cultural physician’ Nietzsche seeks to cure modern society and culture of this historical sickness and proposes his own interpretation of history. According to Nietzsche one ought not ‘kneel down’ before history but fight against the factual and

¹⁸⁸ HS, p.128

¹⁸⁹ HS, p.129

¹⁹⁰ HS, pp.127-128

history itself. Nietzsche points out to his contemporaries: “But, fortunately, history also preserves for us the memory of the great fighters *against history*, that is, against the blind power of actuality, and indicts itself by exalting as truly historical men precisely those who disregard ‘the way things are’ in their serenely proud quest of ‘the way things ought to be’.”¹⁹¹ Those great fighters do not consider themselves to be either the “apex and aim of the world process” or the lowest stage in human history. Their lives and works point beyond history while the modern human being is firmly rooted in it. In Nietzsche’s view, it is largely due to Hegel’s philosophy of history that the modern man considers himself to be at the summit of the world process. As Nietzsche mockingly refers to the modern man: “He stands tall and proud atop the pyramid of the world-process; at the apex he sets the capstone of his knowledge, and he seems to shout aloud to nature listening all around him, ‘We have reached the peak; we are at the goal; we *are* the goal; we are the fulfilment of nature!’ Overproud European of the nineteenth century, you are raving mad.”¹⁹²

In addition to their overemphasis on progress, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Hartmann, and Strauss all suffer, in Nietzsche’s view, from an ‘excess of history’. They all suffer from historicism for understanding history as an apocalyptic process that helps them to justify the present, the modern human condition. In looking at history as merely a process and justification of the actual, these philosophers and historians are blind since they do not understand life. “These historical men,” Nietzsche writes about the followers of Hegel, “believe that the meaning of human existence will be increasingly revealed in the *process* of life. Thus, they look backwards only in order to understand the present by reflecting on the process leading to it, and to learn to desire the future even more acutely. In spite of all their history, they have no idea how unhistorically they think and act, and how their pursuit of

¹⁹¹ HS, p.129

history serves not pure knowledge, but life.”¹⁹³ In order to overcome historicism modern society needs, according to Nietzsche, to overcome Hegelianism. As Dannhauser notes in his Introduction to the *Meditations*, “in criticising historicism, Nietzsche also critically confronts Hegel, his great predecessor and Germany’s philosopher of history.”¹⁹⁴ Dannhauser also points out, however, and here I agree with him, that Nietzsche often ‘oversimplifies’ Hegel’s thought.

In this chapter I hope to demonstrate where exactly Nietzsche and Hegel differ but also what premises Nietzsche might share with Hegel. I shall also ask whether there is any textual or doctrinal justification for Nietzsche’s critique of Hegel’s philosophy of history. From the outset, it is clear that Nietzsche rejects the idea that nineteenth-century Germany might represent an apex of world history. Rather the opposite is true, as Nietzsche often argues. Nietzsche, in contrast to Hegel, argues that there is no reason and no *telos* in world history. However, as many commentators have noted, Nietzsche’s own philosophical project is not entirely different from that of Hegel. As Dannhauser, I believe rightly, points out, “Closer analysis of *History in the Service and Disservice of Life* reveals that Nietzsche actually bases his criticism of Hegel on a crucial area of agreement with him.”¹⁹⁵ As I stated above my aim in this chapter is to focus on the areas of disagreement between Hegel and Nietzsche but at the same time I shall try not to overlook the essential similarities between their understanding of history.

Before I focus on Nietzsche’s critique of Hegel’s philosophy of history I need to point out that Nietzsche challenges not just Hegel’s philosophy but also his style of writing. According to Nietzsche, Hegel was the first thinker who introduced a purely scientific language into German philosophy and more crucially into philosophy of

¹⁹² HS, p.130

¹⁹³ HS, p.93

¹⁹⁴ HS, p.76

¹⁹⁵ HS, p.77

history. Many nineteenth-century German thinkers later just followed his style and developed his philosophy further. For Nietzsche the style of writing is as important as the content of writing because there is an intimate relationship between language and culture in Nietzsche's philosophy.

The young Nietzsche is against the 'scientific' style of writing, which was, according to him, first introduced into Germany by Hegel. In other words he is against the "madness of general concepts".¹⁹⁶ For Nietzsche, Hegel's style (unlike Machiavelli's whom he admired) degrades language and turns humans into "will-less slaves of false feeling".¹⁹⁷ As the next passage from his first meditation demonstrates, Nietzsche accuses Hegel and his philosophy of degrading the German language and of turning the Germans into numb and will-less theoretical beings.¹⁹⁸ Nietzsche refers to German philosophy at the beginning of the nineteenth century as "language-perverting philosophies, that fanatical-purposive view of history, that carnival of all gods and myth that the Romantics put together, as well as those poetic fashions and insanities born out of intoxication."¹⁹⁹

As an example of Hegel's influence over German thinkers Nietzsche focuses in his first meditation on Strauss, a celebrated historian and philosopher whose book *The Old and the New Faith* became quickly popular and was translated into many European languages. While Nietzsche regarded Kant's and Schopenhauer's style as "simple and magnificent", he dismissed Strauss's style as "confused and illogical".²⁰⁰ In his meditation Nietzsche criticises Strauss's style and writing skills as well as his lack of originality. Although Nietzsche does give some credit to Strauss he attacks

¹⁹⁶ WB, p.281

¹⁹⁷ WB, p.287

¹⁹⁸ In fact Nietzsche blames not just Hegel but also Socrates for transforming Greek 'mythical' culture into the purely 'theoretical' one. I shall discuss Nietzsche's views of Socrates in Appendix 'The problem of Socrates in Nietzsche's philosophy'.

¹⁹⁹ DS, p.15

²⁰⁰ DS, p.69

the source of Strauss's corruption i.e. Hegel and Hegelian philosophy. Nietzsche refers clearly to Hegel in his meditation on Strauss:

Strauss does not write as poorly as do the vilest of all the corrupters of German, the Hegelians and their crippled progeny. At least Strauss seeks to crawl up out of this swamp and, in part, has succeeded, although he by no means stands on solid ground. It is still obvious that in his youth he stammered that Hegelian idiom; at that time, something inside him was dislocated, some muscle or other was strained; at that time, his ear, like that of a boy who grows up hearing the constant beating of drums, was so dulled that it could never again be sensitive to those aesthetically subtle and powerful laws of tone that hold sway over the writer when trained on good examples and with rigorous discipline.²⁰¹

Passages like these demonstrate that for Nietzsche Hegel and his philosophy is the biggest threat to German culture and that thus he is Nietzsche's greatest philosophical opponent. In *Daybreak* Nietzsche suggests that Hegel's 'bad style' was due to his fear of anti-moral *espirit*: "Of the celebrated Germans, none perhaps possessed more *espirit* than Hegel – but he also possessed so great a German fear of it that this fear was responsible for creating the bad style peculiar to him. For the essence of his style is that a kernel is wrapped round and wrapped round again until it can hardly peep through [...] but this kernel is a witty, often indiscreet inspiration on the most intellectual subjects, a daring and subtle phrase-coinage such as is appropriate to the *society of thinkers* as a condiment to science. – but swathed in its wrapping it presents itself as the absurdest of sciences and altogether a piece of the highest moral boredom!"²⁰² From this passage it is also clear that Nietzsche grasped the general speculative method of Hegel's writings in which concept after concept is 'wrapped round' and 'wrapped around again' thus making it very difficult to grasp the often witty and subtle kernel of his philosophy.

Now let us return to the question why it is important for Nietzsche to criticise Hegel's style of writing. As I noted earlier, for Nietzsche language and culture are intimately related. In his first meditation on Strauss Nietzsche stresses this by

²⁰¹ DS, p.70

maintaining that “anyone who has sinned against the German language has profaned the mystery of all our Germanness; it (the German language, K.K.) alone has been preserved over the entire course of that mixing and changing of nationalities and customs, and with it, as though by means of metaphysical magic, the German spirit. It alone guarantees as well the future of this spirit, provided it does not perish at the hands of the profligate present.”²⁰³ In his last meditation on Wagner he warns against Hegelian theoretical style. He claims “there is no greater danger than that this *verbal language* awakens in us the theoretical human being and thereby transports us into another, non-mythic sphere.”²⁰⁴ Nietzsche believes that Hegel’s language affected German thought and led German culture into degradation and debilitation. Hegel’s purely conceptual and non-poetic style corrupts language, infects society with theoretical malaise. To sum up, the science of history ultimately fails to understand the world, which belongs to the mythical sphere.

For early Nietzsche Wagner is *the* anti-Hegelian thinker who did not think in pure concepts but in “visible and palpable events”.²⁰⁵ Unlike Hegel Wagner thinks poetically or mythically. Nietzsche argues that Wagner thinks “mythically, just as the common people have always thought.”²⁰⁶ Nietzsche explains what he means by ‘mythical’: “The basis of myth is not a thought, as the children of an overrefined culture suppose, but rather myth itself is a kind of thought; it communicates an idea of the world, but in a succession of events, actions, and sufferings.”²⁰⁷ For example, Nietzsche suggests in *Wagner in Bayreuth*, “*The Ring of the Nibelungen* is an immense system of thought without the conceptual form of thought.”²⁰⁸ Hegel’s *Philosophy of History* or *Science of Logic* on the other hand are clearly examples of

²⁰² D, p.114

²⁰³ DS, p.71

²⁰⁴ WB, p.309

²⁰⁵ WB, p.309

²⁰⁶ WB, p.309

²⁰⁷ WB, p.309

what Nietzsche would call a ‘conceptual form of the thought’. This form of thought, Nietzsche contends in his third meditation, turns “every experience into a dialectical game of question and answer and into a purely intellectual matter.”²⁰⁹ Furthermore, the conceptual form of thought reduces every human being to a “skeleton of human being” without the flesh of passions, desires and drives.

Nietzsche opposes Hegel’s interpretation of history and suggests that history can be interpreted only from the private perspective of great individuals. To quote Nietzsche: “Besides, no age or generation ever has the right to pass judgement on all preceding ages and generations. This uncomfortable mission falls only and always to individuals, and only to the rarest among them.”²¹⁰ Only individuals who are beyond their own time can offer a just and genuine interpretation of history. Or as Nietzsche puts it “Only from the highest power of the present can you interpret the past. Only by the most vigorous exertion of your noblest qualities will you sense what in the past is great and worth knowing and preserving. Like for like!”²¹¹ In other words, according to Nietzsche, neither historians nor scientists have the right to judge the past but only the most ‘powerful’ i.e. the great artists of the time. “Otherwise,” Nietzsche points out, “you drag the past down to your own level.”²¹² Nietzsche warns his contemporaries who were affected by different post-Hegelian philosophers: “Do not trust history unless it springs from the most extraordinary mind.”²¹³ In his meditation on history and life Nietzsche sums up his thoughts about the proper way to write history as follows: “Only men of experience and superiority can write history. The man whose experience is not higher and greater than all other men’s cannot understand the greatness and sublimity of the past. The past always speaks with an

²⁰⁸ WB, p.309

²⁰⁹ SE, p.224

²¹⁰ HS, p.118

²¹¹ HS, p.118

²¹² HS, p.118

²¹³ HS, p.118

oracular voice.”²¹⁴ Only the greatest artists of the time will have the right to judge the past: “Only those who build the future have a right to judge the past.”²¹⁵ In his meditation on history Nietzsche explains what he means by the genuine understanding of history: “The true historian,” he suggests, “must have the power of making the familiar sound like something wholly new, and of stating universal laws with such simplicity and profundity that we overlook the simplicity because of the profundity, and the profundity because of the simplicity.”²¹⁶ For Nietzsche the true historian is the artist not Hegel with his ‘cold’, ‘objective’ and ‘scientific’ style. Yet, Hegel has the power to prevent the true historians from becoming influential. Nietzsche writes in his meditation on history: “the most pitiful animal can, by eating the acorn, prevent the mightiest oak from sprouting”, so can the objective historians by analytically digesting great individuals like Mozart or Beethoven prevent human greatness happening in the future.²¹⁷ Instead of Hegel’s *Philosophy of History* Nietzsche proposes to read Wagner whose “writings do not have anything canonical or rigorous; instead, the canon lies in his works.”²¹⁸ Wagner is for the young Nietzsche a ‘true’ historian who offered an anti-scientific or mythical interpretation of history. For intellectuals, Nietzsche suggests, Wagner is “the prophet of the future” but for common people he is rather “the interpreter and transfigurer of the past.”²¹⁹ Nietzsche regards Hegel’s philosophy of history as a ‘cold’ scientific work and thus opposed to the artistic history of Wagner. Contrary to the general academic trend of his time Nietzsche firmly believes that history ought to be not science but rather a work of art. It was clear to him that it is mainly because of Hegel’s influence that history has been transformed into science. Nietzsche opposes this ‘scientification’ of history and

²¹⁴ HS, p.118

²¹⁵ HS, p.118

²¹⁶ HS, p.118

²¹⁷ HS, p.121

²¹⁸ WB, p.323

²¹⁹ WB, p.331

promotes an artistic alternative that will serve and not degrade life. To quote Nietzsche: “And only when history can be transformed into a work of art - that is, become pure artistic creation - can it perhaps preserve or even awaken instincts. But such historiography would be wholly at odds with the analytical and anti-artistic temper of our times; indeed, it would be regarded as a perversion of it.”²²⁰ It seems that Nietzsche’s own interpretation of ancient Greek history and culture, his first book *The Birth of Tragedy* [*Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*] that was rigorously opposed by the German classicists might serve as an example of such an artistic history. An artistic approach to history is not interested in discovering laws or ‘dialectics’ of world history and it does not see history as a process (or progress) but as a field of creativity. Therefore, Nietzsche would like to see history written not by scholars/philosophers who pass judgements but by great individual storytellers who thus promote culture and create an environment for future artists

Before I focus on Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s respective interpretations of history I need to point out that for both there are three main ways to understand history. For Hegel there are three kinds of history: firstly - original history, second - reflective history, and third - philosophical history (Hegel’s own *Philosophy of History* belongs to the third category). Nietzsche too claims that there are three main interpretations of history but understands them differently: firstly - monumental history, second - antiquarian history and third - critical history.

Hegel argues that there are three types of history: original, reflective and philosophical history. By original history he understands the works of contemporaries about current events and deeds without the expression of judgement. The works of Herodotus and Thucydides might serve here as examples. The second interpretation of history is reflective history i.e. a judgmental narrative by later authors. For example,

²²⁰ HS, p.119

the works of Livy represent, in Hegel's view, this type of history.²²¹ The third type of history is Hegel's own interpretation of history - philosophical history. Philosophical history seeks to reveal the relationship between narration and reality and tries to discover the truth in history.

Nietzsche, on the other hand, looks at history from a different perspective. He did not believe that philosophy can discover the truth in history (mainly because in his view there is no truth, only different perspectives) and was not convinced that history is anything more than a narrative. Nevertheless, he agrees that history affects society and points out the dangers that written history might have for culture and society in general. In other words, Nietzsche, unlike Hegel, is well aware that history can be used as well as misused. That is why his sentiments are often anti-historical. However, Nietzsche recognises that there are three main types of history that might have a positive effect on culture and life. Firstly, there is monumental history, i.e., history which deals with great deeds and events of the past and thus helps us to create our own greatness. Second, there is an antiquarian history, i.e., history that encourages the love of tradition and emphasises the greatness of the past (this, however, might also lead to the unproductive and uncreative present). Finally there is critical history, i.e., history that differentiates between the just and unjust events and deeds of the past in order for the present to abolish the latter.

For Hegel, although history is a narrative, it is an objective or 'scientific' narrative. He seems to overlook Nietzsche's worry that history might all too easily be misused. In his early meditations Nietzsche puts a special emphasis on the misuse of history and under this category, it seems, falls also Hegel's philosophy of history. Nietzsche opposed many nineteenth-century historians and philosophers who claimed to transform history into 'pure' science. In Nietzsche's view, the task of historians and

²²¹ Hegel divides this type of history further into universal, pragmatic and critical history (prevalent in

philosophers is not to discover the reason behind every deed or event but to serve life. In other words the goal is not to *know* life but to *serve* it.

There is some overlapping between Hegel's and Nietzsche's triadic interpretations of history. I shall discuss it in this chapter later in more detail. However, there is one substantial difference between Hegel's and Nietzsche's interpretations of history. Hegel firmly believed that there is reason in history and that this reason governs world history. In Introduction to the *Philosophy of History* Hegel states his position quite lucidly: "Reason is the Sovereign in the World; that the history of the world, therefore, presents us with a rational process."²²² Thus Hegel interprets history in the light of this general principle. Furthermore, he founds his method of enquiry on this rational principle and seeks to discover and understand the general laws of this evolutionary process. Nietzsche, on the other hand, maintains throughout his works that even if there are traces of rationality in history, history itself is not governed by reason. Quite the opposite is rather true. It is Nietzsche's contention that history "could never, and should never, become a pure science like mathematics."²²³ Therefore there are no rational rules to reveal or understand. For Nietzsche written history is a personal perspective of great individuals that ought to advance culture and promote the production of genius.

Despite the above-mentioned fundamental difference, there are obvious similarities between Hegel's and Nietzsche's interpretations of history. As it was argued above, Nietzsche suggests that history is broadly speaking a storytelling by great individuals. Similarly, Hegel in his *Philosophy of History*, referring to the etymology of the German word 'history' [*Geschichte* comes from *Geschehen* - to happen], maintains that history is fundamentally "the narration of what has

Hegel's view in Germany at his time).

²²² PH, p.9

²²³ HS, p.94

happened.”²²⁴ In other words according to Hegel history is a union of what happens and the narration of this happening.²²⁵ Thus, one can say that Hegel and Nietzsche share a common ground. The apparent antagonism seems to appear over the method of narration (rational or non-rational) as well as the content of narration (reasonable or non-reasonable). Or in other words it is the question of *truth* in history that separates Hegel’s philosophy of history from Nietzsche’s interpretation of history. Nietzsche rejects the idea of truth in the name of artistic creativity. In *The Science of Logic* Hegel argues that one needs to go beyond the intuitional understanding of history as a pure narration and seek truth in history through philosophy. Nietzsche, on the other hand, suggest that there is no *truth* in history and therefore even philosophy cannot overcome the historical narrative dictated by our feelings and intuitions.

This so called ‘excess’ of what is taken to be truth in history in Hegel’s philosophy represents, according to Nietzsche, a clear danger to culture, and thus is hostile to life. Hegel’s *Philosophy of History* is in danger of ‘externalising’ modern human beings and destroying the artistic creativity of the present. The two tendencies which are present in Hegel’s philosophy of history, the one that idealises the present (as discussed above) and the other that idealises the past, are both destructive for German culture. By ‘idolising’ the past one makes modern human beings feel undignified and their lives meaningless. Nietzsche calls this general feeling of his time the sentiment of ‘epigones’ or ‘latecomers’. By ‘idealising’ the past (ancient Greece, Rome, etc.) one loses the will and aspiration to create something new. Nietzsche is referring to Hegel’s lectures on *The Philosophy of History* as the main source of this corruption, which was “the dominant historical orientation of our time -

²²⁴ PH, p.60

²²⁵ However, in the second part of *The Science of Logic*, in subjective logic where the relationship between reality and phenomenal appearance is examined, Hegel makes it clear that philosophers can claim to be more than storytellers for philosophy extracts the truth of/in history. To cite Hegel: “But philosophy is not meant to be a narration of happenings but a cognition of what is *true* in them, and

one which, everyone knows, has been powerfully visible for two generations, especially among the Germans.”²²⁶ It is clear that during the first half of the nineteenth century numerous studies on history were written under the conceptual dominance of Hegel’s philosophy of history.²²⁷

As Dannhauser suggests in the Introduction, Nietzsche with his meditations seeks to maintain the balance between the past and present i.e. neither to idealise nor to undervalue either of them. However, he also points out that there is “a crucial degree of agreement” between Hegel and Nietzsche which allows us to compare and examine their respective interpretations of history in close relation. Both Hegel and Nietzsche reject the Christian dogmatic understanding of history as one predetermined by God who transcends the world. For Hegel, as it is for Nietzsche, our perspectives are always historically determined and nobody can truly claim to be or rule beyond them.²²⁸

Nietzsche is pre-eminently concerned with human ennoblement from his very first works on. He uses history to serve his purpose and to advocate his political project – the promotion of culture in order to produce geniuses. Therefore, the question of history is addressed in nearly all his works.²²⁹ The excess of history that is taken to be true or the ‘historical fever’ as Nietzsche calls it “injures and finally destroys a living thing, whether a man, a people, or a culture.”²³⁰ Nietzsche firmly believes that one needs to overcome this historical sickness in order to establish the

further, on the basis of this cognition, to *comprehend* that which, in the narrative, appears as a mere happening.” (*Hegel’s Science of Logic*, hereafter SL, p.588)

²²⁶ HS, p.87

²²⁷ One of the consequences of this dominance was for example Strauss’ popular history of Christianity, which, according to Nietzsche, succeeded not to understand or serve religion but to destroy it. In his meditation on history Nietzsche claims that the only thing he learned from this Hegelian or ‘scientific’ treatment of Christianity is that it annihilated faith and demolished the Church. Nietzsche contends that Christianity “has become apathetic and unnatural through historicizing treatment, and in the end a totally historical - that is, a just - treatment has now reduced it to pure knowledge about Christianity, thereby destroying it.” HS, p.120

²²⁸ In claiming this they both differ from Ranke for example.

²²⁹ See for example aphorism 224 in *Beyond Good and Evil*.

²³⁰ HS, p.90

stronghold for his political project – the production of genius. In *History in Service and Disservice of Life* he confidently declares:

The time will come when we will wisely avoid all interpretations of the world-process, or even human history; when historians generally will no longer consider the masses, but rather those individuals who form a kind of bridge over the wild torrent of Becoming. These individuals by no means continue a process, but, thanks to history which makes concerted effort possible, they live as timeless contemporaries in that republic of genius described by Schopenhauer.²³¹

Nietzsche offers his own interpretation of history, which I suggest one can understand against a Hegelian background. Next I shall discuss Hegel's and Nietzsche's respective interpretations of history in detail. I hope to highlight the main differences between Hegel's and Nietzsche's understanding of history but also hope to pinpoint some common themes which run throughout both their works.

History, Spirit, and Nature

Now I shall focus on Hegel's philosophy of history rather than Hegel-as-Nietzsche-sees-him. In his lectures on history Hegel seeks to comprehend history philosophically. He introduces the notions of Spirit and Nature into his philosophy of history. History itself, as Hegel puts it, is nothing else than "the manifestation of the Spirit in the World."²³² In other words Hegel believes that there is Spirit in the World and that World History is in a sense an emancipatory process of this Spirit. Furthermore, this Spirit is a rational governing force within History. According to Hegel, at first Spirit is "simple" or "unreflected"; in time Spirit transcends itself and becomes reflective. As Hegel puts it in his *Philosophy of History*: "Spirit is essentially the result of its own activity: its activity is the transcending of immediate, simple,

²³¹ HS, p.134

²³² PH, p.79

unreflected existence - the negation of that existence, and the returning into itself.”²³³
 For Hegel Spirit is a rational judgmental force within history which “has the History of the World for its theatre, its possession, and the sphere of its realization.”²³⁴
 Throughout history, according to Hegel, although Spirit develops it is always present and remains relatively unchanged.

To outline Hegel’s philosophy of history, one can see that it is based on a few basic assumptions. First, there is a higher force called Spirit in the World which rules or guides history. Second, this force is rational, and third, this force progresses from unreflected existence towards absolute reflection and freedom. Hegel defines Spirit as something contrary to Matter. “Spirit,” Hegel writes in the *Philosophy of History*, “may be defined as that which has its centre in itself. It has not a unity outside itself, but has already found it; it exists in and with itself. Matter has its essence out of itself; Spirit is self-contained *existence (Bei-sich-selbst-sein)*.”²³⁵ Thus for Hegel Spirit is a force in the World that does not depend on anything external. Therefore, only Spirit can in principle be free. And that is what happens according to Hegel in World History. As history unfolds, Spirit becomes self-conscious and therefore free. History, according to Hegel, is in fact the process of Spirit’s becoming self-conscious. As Hegel himself puts it, universal history is “the exhibition of Spirit in the process of working out the knowledge of that which it is potentially.”²³⁶

However, there is another important assumption in Hegel’s *Philosophy of History*, namely Nature. In order to explain destruction, annihilation and irrationality in the World Hegel admits that there is another force in the World, an irrational one, which he calls Nature. However, those two forces are seen by Hegel in a dialectical unity: “History in general is therefore the development of Spirit in *Time*, as Nature is

²³³ PH, p.78

²³⁴ PH, p.54

²³⁵ PH, p.17

²³⁶ PH, pp.17-18

the development of the Idea in *Space*.”²³⁷ According to Hegel there are ultimately two forces in the World that determine its course - rational Spirit and irrational Nature. World History is in a sense a battlefield of those two forces. Whereas Spirit makes things eternal and rational, Nature, according to Hegel, is a force in the World that makes things perish and irrational. All things in Hegel’s view have in a sense a dual existence in the realm of Nature and in the realm of Spirit. As forms things exist in the domain of nature and are thus “perishable, and exposed to decay and corruption.”²³⁸ As ideas things exist in the domain of spirit and are eternal, incorruptible, ideal. Hegel claims that because of Nature’s corruptive and finite influence the World is corrupt and irrational. Hegel writes in *Philosophy of History*: “But as to what concerns the perversion, corruption, and ruin of religious, ethical, and moral purposes, and the states of society generally, it must be affirmed, that in their *essence* these are infinite and eternal; but that the forms they assume may be of the limited order, and consequently belong to the domain of mere nature, and be subject to the sway of chance.”²³⁹

Nietzsche’s understanding of history is fundamentally different from that of Hegel. I argue that, because of Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s understandings of Spirit and Nature, their respective interpretations of history differ radically. Furthermore, I claim that because of that, their respective political projects differ also because one cannot forget the fact that for Hegel “the perfect embodiment” and complete realisation of Spirit” in the phenomenal world is the State.”²⁴⁰

For Nietzsche there is no governing, self-reflective, eternal, independent Spirit in the World. There is only one force in the world and that is Nature. Therefore World History is not an emancipatory process of Spirit but rather it is a ‘theatre’ of Nature.

²³⁷ PH, p.72

²³⁸ PH, p.37

²³⁹ PH, p.37

²⁴⁰ PH, p.17 and p.54

However, Nietzsche's notion of Nature differs radically from Hegel's. It seems that for Nietzsche Nature can be both a rational and an irrational force within history. For example, Hegel would say that Spirit produces philosophers and artists, whereas Nietzsche says it is Nature. In *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche claims that Nature produces philosophers and artists in order to make "existence intelligible and meaningful for human beings."²⁴¹ However, this process is not teleological (as Hegel's claims) but accidental: "Nature shoots the philosopher, like an arrow, into the midst of humanity; it does not take aim, it simply hopes that its arrow will hit something."²⁴²

Whereas for Hegel art is one of the highest forms of Spirit (beside religion and philosophy), for Nietzsche it is the most pure form of Nature. In Nietzsche's view art is the very essence of nature and the highest form of art, i.e., music, is purified and transformed nature. In his work on Wagner Nietzsche claims that through art nature is transformed into love.

For Hegel, as was shown above, Spirit is the purposeful, rational, eternal, independent, free force within history which however operates within the domain of Nature or of irrational, corruptive force. World History is in a sense the result of the competing forces of Spirit and Nature. For Nietzsche, on the other hand, there is no Spirit in World History. World History is determined by Nature which sometimes has rational characteristics such as creating great human beings and cultures, sometimes destructive and irrational characteristics.

Ultimately for Hegel World History is rational and progressive because of Spirit, and irrational and destructive because of Nature which Spirit seeks to overcome. Contrary to Hegel's claims that "history is the exhibition of the divine,

²⁴¹ SE, p.234

²⁴² SE, p.235

absolute development of Spirit in its highest forms”²⁴³ Nietzsche maintains that history is the manifestation of Nature which “never ceases to be annoyed with itself and its own ineptitude.”²⁴⁴ Nietzsche’s position is expressed in *Schopenhauer as Educator*, where he argues: “The artist and philosopher bear witness against the purposiveness of nature in its means, despite the fact that they provide the most splendid evidence for the wisdom of nature’s purposes.”²⁴⁵

For Hegel it seems that Spirit manifests itself in history through its reflective process. At first, Spirit is unreflective, much like Nature, and only through a reflective and emancipatory process does it become rational and free. Hegel writes: “The inorganic existence of Spirit - that of abstract Freedom - unconscious *torpidity* in respect to good and evil (and consequently to laws), or, if we please to term it so, “blessed ignorance” - is itself not a subject of History.”²⁴⁶

However, even for Hegel the relationship between Nature and Spirit is not as clear cut as it was expressed above or as Nietzsche understood it. In his *Philosophy of History* Hegel seems to suggest that Spirit appears only as a result of the development of Nature in history. In fact, Spirit is an emancipated and self-conscious Nature. For example he says that “The History of the World begins with its general aim - the realization of the Idea of Spirit - only in an *implicit* form that is, as Nature; a hidden, most profoundly hidden, unconscious instinct; and the whole process of History (as already observed), is directed to rendering this unconscious impulse a conscious one.”²⁴⁷ Therefore Hegel can claim that in its proper domain Nature is rational. Hegel writes in *The History of Philosophy* : “Our task does not require us to contemplate Nature as a Rational System in itself – though in its own proper domain

²⁴³ PH, p.53

²⁴⁴ SE, p.235

²⁴⁵ SE, p.235

²⁴⁶ PH, p.59

²⁴⁷ PH, p.25

it proves itself such – but simply in its relation to *Spirit*.”²⁴⁸ Rationality in Nature leads, in Hegel’s view, to reflective and teleological Spirit whereas for Nietzsche Nature remains ultimately irrational and a-teleological force in history.

Hegel admits that there are irrational forces in the World and that they lie at the foundation of World History. However, at the same time he also argues that those forces overcome themselves and become self-conscious and free. Hegel explains the presence of irrational (natural) forces in history and their relation to the rational (spiritual) ones as follows:

Thus appearing in the form of merely natural existence, natural will - that which has been called the subjective side - physical craving, instinct, passion, private interest, as also opinion and subjective conception - present themselves at the very commencement. This vast congeries of volition, interests and activities, constitute the instruments and means of the World-Spirit for attaining its object; bringing it to consciousness, and realizing it. And this aim is none other than finding itself - coming to itself - and contemplating itself in concrete actuality.²⁴⁹

In the end Hegel seems to suggest that Nature as a creation of God cannot fundamentally differ from Spirit and that they both must be rational. He argues that “Spirit perceives that Nature - the World - must also be an embodiment of Reason, for God created it on principles of Reason.”²⁵⁰ In the end Nature similarly to Spirit becomes for Hegel embodiment of universality since phenomena such as “sorts, genera, power, gravitation”²⁵¹ exist in Nature. Scientists only discover those laws which are universally present in Nature. Thus one can say Nature is for Hegel “a system of known and recognised Laws; Man is at home in it.”²⁵²

Although Hegel examines the notion of Nature in detail in the second part of his *Encyclopedia* entitled *The Philosophy of Nature* there is still a controversy concerning the exact meaning of Hegel’s philosophy of nature. For example, Maker

²⁴⁸ PH, p.16

²⁴⁹ PH, p.25

²⁵¹ PH, p.439

²⁵² PH, p.440

argues in his essay ‘The very Idea of the Idea of Nature, or Why Hegel is not an Idealist’ that Hegel is not an idealist because he has a concept of Nature which is radically different from Spirit or thought. Halper, on the other hand, argues in his essay ‘The Logic of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Nature: Nature, Space and Time*’ (published in the same book *Hegel and the Philosophy of Nature*) more in line with Hegel that Nature is not radically different from thought for it is a determination of the absolute Idea (similarly to Spirit).²⁵³ It seems that for Hegel the irrational in Nature itself contributes dialectically to Nature’s rational aim, i.e. the emerging Spirit. Hegel’s notion of “the cunning reason” means that he sees irrationality in history but he thinks that it serves ultimately a rational end despite itself. Nietzsche denies that there is such a rational, dialectical ‘putting to work’ of the irrational in history although at the same time he sees reason and purposefulness in Nature.

There is another fundamental difference between Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s understanding of Spirit and Nature. Hegel claims that only in the Spiritual sphere, in History, does a real change take place. Although Nature itself leads to Spirit, according to Hegel, *in Nature* everything is constant and unchanging. Hegel argues that “only in those changes which take place in the region of Spirit does anything new arise.”²⁵⁴ The domain of Nature, on the other hand, is according to Hegel “a perpetually self-repeating cycle.”²⁵⁵ Hegel writes “The changes that take place in Nature - how infinitely manifold they may be - exhibit only a perpetually self-repeating cycle; in Nature there happens ‘nothing new under the sun’.”²⁵⁶ For example, in Hegel’s view, man is different from natural objects in two main characteristics: “a real capacity for change” and “an impulse of perfectibility.”²⁵⁷

²⁵³ About current discussion of Hegel’s philosophy of nature see *Hegel and the Philosophy of Nature* (1998), ed. Houlgate.

²⁵⁴ PH, p.54

²⁵⁵ PH, p.54

²⁵⁶ PH, p.54

²⁵⁷ PH, p.54

Nietzsche, on the other hand, claims in his later works that History is a self-repeating cycle of eternal recurrence. It seems that Nietzsche expands the Pythagorean idea of the self-repeating pattern of heavenly bodies and applies it to human history as the idea of the eternal recurrence of the same.²⁵⁸ Nietzsche says that a powerful man wants everything repeated in exactitude –“that is, to describe precisely the peculiarity and uniqueness of every fact.”²⁵⁹ In his meditation on history Nietzsche describes the Pythagorean idea of recurrence which he later developed (without any notion of progress) into the concept of eternal recurrence as follows:

In point of fact, what was once possible could be possible again only if the Pythagoreans were right in their conviction that, given the same configuration of heavenly bodies, earthly events must be repeated down to the minutest detail - so that every time the stars resume a certain pattern, a Stoic will conspire with an Epicurean and murder Caesar, and every time they reach another position, Columbus will discover America.²⁶⁰

It seems that Nietzsche expanded Hegel’s notion of Nature and applied its characteristics to his own understanding of History. In other words, Hegel’s notion of Nature is not unlike Nietzsche’s notion of History. Furthermore, Nietzsche’s notion of Nature seems to resemble Hegel’s notion of Spirit in that they both are rational and determinate forces in World History. Nietzsche seeks to overcome the opposition of Spirit and Nature in the World by uniting the notions of Spirit and Nature into a single notion of Nature; Hegel on the other hand seeks to overcome this opposition by dialectical unity of Spirit and Nature as determinations of the absolute Idea.

In order to understand Hegel’s concept of history one cannot overlook the importance of the notion of progress in it. Hegel firmly believed that there is progress in history, i.e., that Spirit develops from an unreflective form into a reflective one. Hegel writes “Spirit begins with a germ of infinite possibility, but *only* possibility -

²⁵⁸ As Kirk and Raven pointed out according to Eudemus, the Pythagoreans held that “the same individual things will recur, then I shall be talking again to you sitting as you are now, with this pointer in my hand, and everything else will be just as it is now, and it is reasonable to suppose that the time then is the same as now.” *The Presocratic Philosophers*, p. 223

²⁵⁹ HS, p.97

containing its substantial existence in an undeveloped form, as the object and goal which reaches only in its resultant - full reality.”²⁶¹

For Hegel World History is a restless mutation of individuals and people. In each stage of World History nations and cultures appear and disappear by necessity. In World History there is a manifold of different people and nations, states, individuals and there is change, transaction, and succession. Yet, as Hegel points out, there is also a “decay of a splendid and highly cultured national life.”²⁶² He asks why some great cultures, for example Carthage, Palmyra, Persepolis, and Rome, disappear while new cultures emerge on the ruins of the old culture. He seeks to explain this change by the notion of Spirit which gains self-consciousness and eventually Freedom during the course of World History. For Hegel freedom is “ the final aim of this progression”.²⁶³ According to him every nation has a principle or National Genius, i.e., a common peculiarity which characterises a nation, and once this principle is fully achieved the old culture decays and gives rise to a new culture. He argues that “once the principle is manifested it is the death of that principle but also the rise of a new principle.”²⁶⁴ Thus in Hegel’s view one should seek the reasons for decay not beyond the culture concerned but within it.

Hegel understood World History as a succession of different peoples governed by self-realising Spirit. In general terms Spirit is understood by Hegel as an actualisation of what Hegel calls “the latent germ of being” in the World. In Hegel’s words, the “latent germ of being - a capacity or potentiality striving to realize itself. This formal conception finds actual existence in Spirit.”²⁶⁵ In World History Spirit takes the form of different people and cultures, or as Hegel puts it “In the History of

²⁶⁰ HS, p.97

²⁶¹ PH, p.57

²⁶² PH, p.72

²⁶³ PH, p.78

²⁶⁴ PH, p.78

²⁶⁵ PH, p.54

the World, the Idea of Spirit appears in its actual embodiment as a series of external forms, each one of which declares itself as an actually existing people.”²⁶⁶

In his lectures on history Hegel claims that “Universal History - as already demonstrated - shows the development of the consciousness of Freedom on the part of Spirit, and of the consequent realization of that Freedom.”²⁶⁷ The end result of this historic process is in Hegel’s words “more adequate expressions or manifestations of Freedom.”²⁶⁸ Hegel explains this process by the dialectical nature of the Idea which assumes forms which it successively transcends. Furthermore, he believes that there is certain progress in history since Spirit (as a determination of the Idea) becomes richer, freer and more reflective. In Hegel’s words “by this very process of transcending its earlier stages, it gains an affirmative, and, in fact, a richer and more concrete self.”²⁶⁹ Although in danger of oversimplifying Hegel’s philosophy of history one can say that for him the progress of a World Spirit resembles a growing up of a child.

Hegel argues that history does not begin with a *conscious* aim but its aim is progressively revealed in the process of self-reflection. He describes the first stage in this process as “immersion of Spirit in Nature”. At the second stage Spirit develops consciousness of its freedom. The third and final stage is that of “pure universal form; that state in which the spiritual essence attains the consciousness and feeling of itself.”²⁷⁰ These stages are for Hegel the “ground-principles of the general process.”²⁷¹ Hegel believes that there is an upward movement, in other words progress, in the course of World History. World History is characterised by Hegel as an advance to something better, more perfect. Hegel was convinced that “the Christian world is the world of completion; the grand principle of being is realized, consequently the end of

²⁶⁶ PH, p.79

²⁶⁷ PH, p.63

²⁶⁸ PH, p.63

²⁶⁹ PH, p.63

²⁷⁰ PH, p.56

²⁷¹ PH, p.56

days is fully come.”²⁷² He also believed that in the nineteenth century the World entered into “the last stage in history”.²⁷³ Furthermore, he was convinced that the German Spirit is the embodiment of the Christian and rational principle. “We have said,” Hegel notes, “that the Germans were predestined to be the bearers of the Christian principle, and to carry out the Idea as the absolutely Rational aim.”²⁷⁴ Hegel seems to suggest that, similarly to the Greeks who “surrendered the sceptre of domination and of civilisation to the Romans”²⁷⁵ the Germans themselves might one day be subdued by “the land of the future”, i.e. America. As Hegel forecasts at the beginning of nineteenth century: “America is therefore the land of the future, where, in the ages that lie before us, the burden of the World’s History shall reveal itself.”²⁷⁶

Hegel notes that in World History the characteristics that are no longer beneficial for the survival of a particular culture disappear. For example, the move from feudalism to monarchy involved “the termination of the sway of individual caprice and of the isolation of power.”²⁷⁷ He also points out that the oldest cultures are not necessarily higher than newer ones because “the imperishable mountains are not superior to the quickly dismantled rose exhaling its life in fragrance.”²⁷⁸ Thus India or China, although in existence for many thousand of years, are not higher than European nations only a few centuries old.

The young Nietzsche dislikes this ‘evolutionary’ aspect of Hegel’s philosophy of history for he understands that without Hegel there would have been no Darwin. It is no surprise that Darwin’s revolutionary work on *The Origin of Species* became immensely popular among Hegelians since it echoed Hegel’s own evolutionary understanding of history. Nietzsche is highly critical towards Strauss who claims that

²⁷² PH, p.342

²⁷³ PH, p.442

²⁷⁴ PH, p.354

²⁷⁵ PH, p.221

²⁷⁶ PH, p.86

²⁷⁷ PH, p.398

he is no longer Christian, and who “covers himself with the shaggy cloak of our ape-genealogist and praises Darwin as one of humankind’s greatest benefactors.”²⁷⁹ Nietzsche’s rejects Darwin’s theory of evolution on the grounds that the outcome of the struggle for life in nature (even if one believes in it) is the exact opposite to Darwin’s thesis: “Species do *not* grow more perfect: the weaker dominate the strong again and again – the reason being they are the great majority, and they are also *cleverer*.”²⁸⁰ In Nietzsche’s view the human being is not an apex of animal evolution but “the most unsuccessful animal, the sickliest, the one most dangerously strayed from its instincts.”²⁸¹

For similar reasons Nietzsche opposes Hegel’s ‘evolutionary’ idea that there is progress in history and that nineteenth-century Germany is the culmination or the ‘perfection’ of World History. In opposition to Hegel, Nietzsche contends in *The Anti-Christ*: “Mankind does not represent a development of the better or the stronger or the higher in the way that is believed today. ‘Progress’ is merely a modern idea, that is to say a false idea.”²⁸²

As was said above, Hegel believes in progress in World History. He measures this progress in terms of freedom for “the History of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of Freedom.”²⁸³ For example, he believes that German culture is superior to Asian, Greek or Roman in its consciousness of freedom. He claims that “The German nations, under the influence of Christianity, were the first to attain the consciousness that man, as man, is free: that it is the *freedom* of Spirit which constitutes its essence.”²⁸⁴

²⁷⁸ PH, p.221

²⁷⁹ DS, p.39

²⁸⁰ TI, p.87

²⁸¹ *The Anti-Christ*, hereafter AC, p.136

²⁸² AC, p.128

²⁸³ PH, p.18

²⁸⁴ PH, p.18

In his lectures on *The Philosophy of History* Hegel divides World History into four main phases: Orient, Greek, Roman and Germanic Worlds.

First, he claims that in the Oriental World Spirit remained on the level of unreflective consciousness and therefore lacks subjective freedom: “Unreflected consciousness - substantial, objective, spiritual existence - forms the basis; to which the subjective will first sustains a relation in the form of faith, confidence, obedience. In the political life of the East we find a realized rational freedom, developing itself without advancing to *subjective* freedom. It is the Childhood of History.”²⁸⁵ Second, in the Greek World there is a unity of moral and subjective Will, yet it remained unreflective about its own morality. Third, the Roman World is the phase of history in which subjective will is subjugated to universal aims. It is a stage of conflict between the State as the abstract universal principle on the one hand and, the abstract personality of the individual on the other.²⁸⁶ And finally there is the Germanic World in which there is a genuine unity of universal and particular and Spirit finally realises the Ideal of Reason from the Secular principle alone.²⁸⁷

Nietzsche regards this progressive understanding of history as a modern misconception and opposes it for many reasons. First he claims that this misinterpretation would give the *science* of history a superiority over *art* of history and second, it would allow people to justify any action in the present from the position of superiority over the past. It seems that Nietzsche refers directly to Hegel’s way of thinking history when he argues in his meditation that “such a way of thinking has accustomed Germans to talking about the ‘world-process’ and justifying their own age as the inevitable result of this world-process; this way of thinking has established history in the place of the other spiritual powers, art and religion, as sole sovereign,

²⁸⁵ PH, p.105

²⁸⁶ PH, p.108

²⁸⁷ PH, p.109

insofar as it is the 'self-realizing concept,' the 'dialectic of the spirit of nations,' and the 'universal judgement'.²⁸⁸

Nietzsche, however, seems to oversimplify (if not misunderstand) Hegel's concept of progress and history. As a speculative thinker, Hegel believes that the imperfect contains within itself its opposite, the perfect. Hegel explains this dialectic as follows: "In actual existence Progress appears as an advancing from the imperfect to the more perfect; but the former must not be understood abstractly as *only* the imperfect, but as something which involves the very opposite of itself - the so-called perfect - as a *germ* or impulse."²⁸⁹ Throughout his works Hegel gives Spirit a superiority over Nature, and claims that the higher, i.e., more perfect state, is a rational one. In his lectures on history he argues as follows: "Imperfect, as involving its opposite, is a contradiction, which certainly exists, but which is continually annulled and solved; the instinctive movement - the inherent impulse in the life of the soul - to break through the rind of mere nature, sensuousness, and that which is alien to it, and to attain to the light of consciousness, *i.e.* to itself."²⁹⁰

Throughout his works Nietzsche opposes what he thinks is Hegel's concept of history. He would like to erase both the notions of progress and the notion of regress from any interpretation of history. Nietzsche does not like the idea that his epoch is inferior than any previous epochs but at the same time he also rejects the idea that it is superior. In his view both those ideas will inevitably lead to the decline and destruction of culture. In *David Strauss* Nietzsche writes:

In truth, the belief that one is the lateborn offspring of prior ages is paralyzing and upsetting, but it must seem horrible and destructive when one day, in a brazen inversion, such a belief deifies this lateborn offspring as the true meaning and purpose of all previous historical events, when his knowing wretchedness is identified with the culmination of world history.²⁹¹

²⁸⁸ HS, p.127

²⁸⁹ PH, p.57

²⁹⁰ PH, p.57

²⁹¹ DS, p.143

Thus for Nietzsche World history is not a linear process of progress or regress but rather the co-existence and development of different non-comparable cultures in the same and different epochs. Nietzsche was convinced that Hegel's understanding of history will lead to the glorification and deification of nineteenth century Germany - the idea he himself wholly rejects. He attacks Hegel's interpretation of history when he writes:

Heirs of the Greeks and Romans? Of Christianity? All this seems insignificant to these cynics. But heirs of the world-process! Apex and goal of the world-process! Ripest fruit on the tree of knowledge, meaning and solution of the whole riddle of Becoming – this is what I call inflated grandeur [...].²⁹²

Nietzsche thinks that it was Hegel who gave to the World the 'mad' idea that modern human beings are not just the apex of the animal and plant world but also the culmination of world history. Nietzsche sums up the 'Hegelian' mentality of modern man as follows:

He stands tall and proud atop the pyramid of world-process; at the apex he sets the capstone of his knowledge, and he seems to shout aloud to nature listening all around him, 'We have reached the peak; we are at the goal; we *are* the goal; we are the fulfillment of nature!'. Overproud European of the nineteenth century, you are raving mad! Your knowledge does not fulfill nature; it merely kills your own nature.²⁹³

In Nietzsche's view, his contemporaries are even more corrupt than Hegel since they think (especially after the victories over Austria and France) that German *culture* is the culmination of World History. Nietzsche writes that the Germans share a universal error: "the erroneous idea harbored by public opinion and all public opinionators that in this struggle German culture also came away victorious, and that it must therefore now be adorned with laurels befitting such extraordinary events and achievements."²⁹⁴ Nietzsche admits that Prussia was successful in her war against France in 1870-71. Yet, for him, it does not mean that German culture is superior to

²⁹² HS, p.130

²⁹³ HS, p.130

that of France as Hegel's philosophy of history seems to suggest. For him Germany is not in the zenith of human history but rather the nadir of it. Nietzsche writes to his contemporaries that they are "*disciples of an ancient world in decline.*"²⁹⁵

It is Nietzsche's contention that political, economic or military success in World History is not a criterion for greatness or superiority of any culture. Nietzsche contends that "Greatness cannot depend upon success, and Demosthenes is great, even though he failed to succeed."²⁹⁶ Furthermore, Nietzsche argues that even the historical success of Christianity - it has existed for two millennia and prevails in many countries in the World - does not grant it superiority over other religions or cultures. In fact, Nietzsche argues the contrary is true. He claims in his meditation on history that "The historical success of Christianity, its historical power, tenacity, and endurance, fortunately prove nothing about the greatness of its founder, and indeed would even be evidence against it."²⁹⁷ Thus historical success for Nietzsche, contrary to Hegel, is rather a sign of cultural inferiority than superiority. Even genuine Christians, in Nietzsche's view, agree with this position for they too disregard historical success: "The purest and most authentic disciples of Christianity have always doubted and obstructed, rather than promoted, its worldly success, its so-called historical power."²⁹⁸ For Nietzsche those who are the most 'powerful' in history are not necessarily historically or politically successful but they are rather "anonymous and unknown to history."²⁹⁹ It seems that for Nietzsche 'success' ought to be measured culturally, i.e. how many 'higher types' or geniuses live in a particular epoch or society. And because there are fewer 'higher types' among Nietzsche's contemporaries than in Ancient Greece or even during the Renaissance he concludes

²⁹⁴ DS, p.5

²⁹⁵ HS, p.126

²⁹⁶ HS, p.136

²⁹⁷ HS, p.136

²⁹⁸ HS, p.136

²⁹⁹ HS, p.136

in *The Anti-Christ* that “The European of today is of far less value than the European of the Renaissance; onward development is not by any means by any necessity the same thing as elevation, advance, strengthening.”³⁰⁰

Hegel and Hegelians, on the other hand, in Nietzsche’s view, still deify this ‘onward development’ as progress in world history. Strauss’ mistakes are not entirely his but Hegel’s because he based his understanding of the World on “Hegelian devotion to the real as the reasonable, that is, to the *idolatry of success*.”³⁰¹ Hegel’s fundamental mistake is, according to Nietzsche, to claim that the World is governed by Reason and that there is progress in World History. Nietzsche argues that Strauss (in line with Hegel) “simply assumes without further ado that everything that occurs in the world has the highest intellectual value, in other words, that it is ordered in an absolutely reasonable and purposive manner, and hence that it embodies a revelation of eternal goodness itself.”³⁰²

A similar mistake is made according to Nietzsche by another Hegelian - Eduard Hartmann, the author of *The Philosophy of the Unconscious*. Hartmann also believed, as Nietzsche points out, that the mankind is approaching “that ideal state in which the human race makes its own history in full consciousness of what it does.”³⁰³ Nietzsche says that even if mankind reaches this ideal, self-conscious and free state, nobody should take Hartmann’s interpretation of history seriously. Nietzsche writes: “If we ever reach that state, it will be impossible for anyone to speak of ‘world-process’ without smiling, for the phrase will recall an age when Hartmann’s evangelistic parody was actually heeded, studied, debated, admired, elaborated, and canonized with all the sincerity of the ‘German Mind’.”³⁰⁴ Nietzsche criticises Hegel’s idea that in the Modern Age Spirit finally reached self-consciousness and is free.

³⁰⁰ TI, p.128

³⁰¹ DS, p.41

³⁰² DS, p.41

³⁰³ HS, p.133

Nietzsche thinks that as the consequence of Hegel's philosophy of history, the Germans of his time can proclaim that "the race has reached its peak since it now finally possesses self-knowledge and has become open and honest with itself."³⁰⁵

It seems that Nietzsche refers to Hegel's and his followers understanding of history when he claims that history is still "camouflaged theology".³⁰⁶ Indeed, Hegel would say that God in the form of Absolute Reason governs the World and therefore there is progress in history. Nietzsche prefers the idea that it is the devil that governs the world and makes us think that there is reason and progress in history. Nietzsche points out that "in Christian terms, it is the devil who rules this world, who is the lord of success and progress; he is the real power behind all historical powers, and so he will essentially remain - though this may be painful news to an age accustomed to deify success and historical power."³⁰⁷

As was said above, Nietzsche would like to take the idea of progress and evolution out of history because these ideas belong to the realm of Becoming not Being. He argues as follows: "Anyone who conceives his life merely as a point in the evolution of a race or a state or a field of knowledge, and who therefore seeks to integrate himself completely into the history of becoming, into history, has not learned the lesson taught to him by existence".³⁰⁸ According to Nietzsche, one must try to live in the realm of Being, because "everything that is in the process of becoming is empty, deceitful, faulty, and worthy of our contempt."³⁰⁹ Later, Nietzsche himself becomes a philosopher of Becoming and thus, I argue, becomes closer to Hegel's 'evolutionary' and 'dialectical' philosophy he rejects in his early works. For example, in *Joyful Wisdom* Nietzsche, referring to Hegel's 'logical' method, writes

³⁰⁴ HS, p.134

³⁰⁵ HS, p.127

³⁰⁶ HS, p.125

³⁰⁷ HS, pp.136-137

³⁰⁸ SE, p.206

³⁰⁹ SE, p.206

quite positively: “Let us take thirdly, the astonishing hit of *Hegel*, who stuck at no logical usage or fastidiousness when he ventures to teach that the conceptions of kinds develop *out of one another*: with which theory the thinkers in Europe were prepared for the last great scientific movement, for Darwinism – for without Hegel there would have been no Darwinism.”³¹⁰

Nietzsche admits that because of his ‘evolutionary’ (or dialectical) insights Hegel became a European philosopher equal to Leibniz or Kant. In *Daybreak* Nietzsche points out that Hegel’s ‘dialectical principle’ “assisted the German spirit to conquer Europe.”³¹¹ It seems that Nietzsche likes Hegel’s philosophy because of its intrinsic contradiction (or dialectics, one might say) for he writes: “*Ability to Contradict*. – Everyone knows at present that the ability to endure contradiction is a good indication of culture.”³¹² Although Hegel’s philosophy is a synonym for ‘theoretical optimism’, his ability to contradict is, for the ‘positivist’ Nietzsche, a sign of his underlying pessimism.³¹³ Nietzsche’s sees the utility of contradiction in his fight against old dogmas, customs, and traditions. In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche points out that the German soul (which Hegel reduced to a system and Wagner expressed it in music) is contradictory in nature. That is why Nietzsche claims in *Joyful Wisdom* “We Germans should still have been Hegelians, even though there had never been a Hegel, inasmuch as we (in contradiction to all Latin peoples) instinctively attribute to becoming, to evolution, a profounder significance and higher value than that which ‘is’ – we hardly believe at all in the validity of the concept ‘being’.”³¹⁴ As it was pointed out earlier Nietzsche changes his views on Hegel and ‘dialectics’. Nevertheless, he remains convinced that Hegel’s philosophy was in the

³¹⁰ JW, p.306

³¹¹ D, p.9

³¹² JW, p.232

³¹³ See for example *Daybreak*, p.9

³¹⁴ JW, pp.306-307

end harmful to German culture for it promoted theoretical optimism and not artistic creativity.

History and Reason

As was said above, the early Nietzsche opposes Hegel's understanding of history as progress towards freedom governed by the "positive existence of Spirit" in the form of Reason.³¹⁵ The immediate question arises whether Nietzsche understood Hegel correctly and whether his criticism is not just a result of a fundamental misunderstanding of Hegel's *Philosophy of History*. In order to evaluate Nietzsche's position one needs to study carefully Hegel's *Philosophy of History*.

First, Nietzsche claims that according to Hegel the World is governed by Reason and that therefore the World progresses towards self-reflection and freedom. Indeed, Hegel claims in the Introduction to *The Philosophy of History* that "Reason is the Sovereign in the World; that the history of the world, therefore, presents us with a rational process."³¹⁶ However, as Hegel himself points out he was not the first philosopher to do so. Hegel admits that "Anaxagoras had been the first to say that *Nous* governs the World"³¹⁷ but he notes that he himself developed this principle to the idea that "Thought ought to govern spiritual reality."³¹⁸

Hegel takes Anaxagoras' claim further by arguing that Reason is not just the governing force of the World but also the substance of human beings and therefore it is the governing principle of human history. Hegel maintains that "the Rational has necessary existence, as being the reality and substance of things, and we are free in recognizing it as law, and following it as the substance of our own being. The

³¹⁵ In *Philosophy of History* Hegel explains this connection between Absolute and Subjective Reason: "Reason in general is the Positive Existence (*Wesen*) of Spirit, divine as well as human." PH, p.335

³¹⁶ PH, p.9

³¹⁷ PH, p.11

³¹⁸ PH, p.11 and p.447

objective and the subjective will are then reconciled, and present one identical homogeneous whole.”³¹⁹

Hegel is critical of Anaxagoras’ concept of *Nous* as well as of the religious interpretation of Reason as divine Providence. In his view the former did not apply this universal cosmic principle to concrete historical reality and the latter is based not on knowledge but on belief in transcendental being. For Anaxagoras, Hegel points out, *Nous* is not “self-conscious Reason - not a Spirit as such that is meant”³²⁰ but rather a cosmic intelligence. Hegel’s own concept of Spirit is self-conscious intelligence; Spirit that reflects on its own laws and development.³²¹

On the other hand, Hegel does not believe that divine Providence rules the World since this is based on religious belief, not on a philosophical examination of World History. Hegel, unlike Christian thinkers, claims that not Church dogma but World History provides us with evidence that Reason governs the World. For Hegel Reason is not Providence but emancipated Thought. Hegel writes: “The truth, then, that a Providence (that of God) presides over the events of the World - consorts with the proposition in question; for *Divine* Providence is Wisdom, endowed with an infinite Power, which realizes its aims, viz., the absolute rational design of the World. Reason is Thought conditioning itself with perfect freedom.”³²²

In the introduction to his *Philosophy of History* Hegel argues that while Reason is “exclusively its own basis of existence, and absolute final aim, it is also the energizing power realizing this aim; developing it not only in the phenomena of the Natural, but also of the Spiritual Universe - the History of the World.”³²³ Further Hegel maintains that “Reason reveals itself in the World, and that in that World

³¹⁹ PH, p.39

³²⁰ PH, p.11

³²¹ Hegel says it was Socrates who first wholly understood Anaxagoras’ principle and applied it correctly to the world. Hegel says that Socrates understood that “Reason in harmony with Reason, aim and grand Object of the Universe.” PH, p.12

³²² PH, p.13

nothing else is revealed but this and its honor and glory.”³²⁴ Thus, the fundamental idea Hegel seeks to prove in his lectures on history is that “The Reason governs the world, and has consequently governed its history.”³²⁵

Furthermore, Hegel claims that the question of Reason and the design of the World are essentially one and the same. He makes it quite clear when he maintains that “inquiry into the essential destiny of Reason - as far as it is considered in reference to the World - is identical with the question, *what is the ultimate design of the World?*”³²⁶

As a German Protestant thinker Hegel believes that the Reformation made Reason a single governing force in history. He argues that after the Reformation “political life was now to be consciously regulated by Reason. Customary morality, traditional usage lost its validity; the various claims insisted upon, must prove their legitimacy as based on rational principles. Not till this era is the Freedom of Spirit realized.”³²⁷ For Nietzsche, the Reformation was only “a wild and vulgar counterpart to the Italian Renaissance.”³²⁸ One must also note that, contrary to Hegel, for many Catholic thinkers the Reformation was rather a sign of Unreason in history which caused tragic upheavals in Europe and provoked a schism within the Church, not properly healed even today.

Nietzsche’s first fundamental disagreement with Hegel concerns the role of reason in history. In his *Nachlass* Nietzsche points out that “*Hegel’s* way of thinking is not far different from *Goethe’s*: one needs only to listen to Goethe about *Spinoza*. Will to deify the universe and life in order to find repose and happiness in contemplation and getting to the bottom of things; Hegel seeks reason everywhere –

³²³ PH, p.9

³²⁴ PH, p.10

³²⁵ PH, p.25

³²⁶ PH, p.16

³²⁷ PH, p.345

³²⁸ WP, p.57

before reason one may submit and acquiesce.”³²⁹ For him Hegel is the arch-philosopher of ‘cultivated philistines’ because of his faith in reason in human history. Although Nietzsche writes about Strauss’ philosophy his real opponent is Hegel when he claims that this philosophy is based on the assumption that everything real is rational. In Nietzsche’s view neo-Hegelians and German intellectuals in general remained truthful to the fundamentals of Hegel’s doctrine, the superiority of Reason in the World and therefore he calls all of them ‘philistines’. Nietzsche thinks that there has been no real criticism of Hegel’s philosophy when he writes in his meditation on Strauss that “everything had yet to remain as it was; at all costs, whatever is “rational,” whatever is “real” - that is, whatever is philistine - was to remain unassailed.”³³⁰ Nietzsche’s own project is directed against the doctrine of ‘cultivated philistines’ who in his view corrupt and destroy German language and culture. Hegel is in his view the “chieftain of all philistines”.

In order to criticise Hegel Nietzsche turns surprisingly to Kant’s philosophy. In *David Strauss* he claims that Hegel and the Hegelians never really understood Kant and his philosophy “For the philistine chieftain and his ‘we,’ Kantian philosophy simply does not exist. He hasn’t the foggiest notion of the fundamental antinomies of idealism and of the extreme relativity of all knowledge and reason. Or: it is precisely reason that should inform him how little reason can discern about the in-itself of things.”³³¹

After careful study of different events, nations and epochs in history Hegel concludes that there is Reason in history and furthermore, that it governs the world and is its final aim. He claims that “it is only an inference from the history of the World, that its development has been a rational process.”³³² His conclusion was

³²⁹ WP, p.60 but also TI section 49

³³⁰ DS, p.15

³³¹ DS, p.35

³³² PH, p.10

directly opposite to that of Nietzsche, who as a classical scholar, also studied history but concluded that there is no Reason in World History and that World History is rather the manifestation of Unreason than Reason.

However, one must bear in mind that Hegel himself is well-aware of the criticism one might provoke by claiming that human history is governed only by Reason. He makes several amendments to his initial claim during his lecture course on *Philosophy of History*. It seems that in some sense Hegel agrees with Nietzsche when he argues that in order to explain history one needs to take into account not just Reason but also non-Reason. Hegel agrees that “to explain History is to depict the passions of mankind, the genius, the active powers, that play their part on the great stage.”³³³ However, Hegel immediately adds that Reason is superior to any other force in history. He maintains that in relation to Reason i.e. “in relation to this independently universal and substantial existence - all else is subordinate, subservient to it, and the means for its development.”³³⁴

History and Freedom

The next concept fundamental to Hegel’s understanding of history is the concept of freedom. According to Hegel history is a process in which Spirit becomes self-conscious and free. Furthermore, he equates Spirit and Freedom for “the essence of Spirit is Freedom.”³³⁵ Hegel maintains that Freedom is the “sole aim of Spirit” and thus of history. “For the History of the World,” Hegel claims in his *Philosophy of History*, “is nothing but the development of the Idea of Freedom.”³³⁶ “Freedom is,”

³³³ PH, p.12

³³⁴ PH, p.25

³³⁵ PH, p.17

³³⁶ PH, p.456

Hegel writes, “the fundamental object, and therefore also the leading principle of the development - that whereby it receives meaning and importance.”³³⁷

Progress in history can be measured according to Hegel by the extent and level of freedom in the World. Hegel describes the relation between freedom and history as follows: “Universal History exhibits the *gradation* in the development of that principle whose substantial *purport* is the consciousness of Freedom.”³³⁸

Hegel’s classification of World History is well-known: the Oriental World, the Greco-Roman World and the Germanic World. His *Philosophy of History* is a philosophical study of those periods. The status and progressiveness of each stage is determined by the level of freedom present in them. Hegel famously claims that “the East knew and to the present day knows only that *One* is Free; the Greek and Roman World, that *some* are free; the Germanic World knows that *All* are free.”³³⁹ Therefore he divides World History politically into four main periods: Despotism, Democracy, Aristocracy, and Monarchy.³⁴⁰

It seems that Nietzsche agrees in principle with Hegel in that the final aim in history is Freedom for he asks in his meditation on Wagner how to create conditions for “freer humanity.”³⁴¹ But they differ in the way they conceive of freedom. One must recall that Nietzsche’s philosophy is written for the ‘free and fearless ones’, for the ‘solitary ones, free in spirit’. Furthermore, Nietzsche’s call for education in *Schopenhauer as Educator* is an ultimate call for freedom and liberation. Nietzsche writes “your educators can be nothing other than your liberators.”³⁴² In Nietzsche’s view, education does not give you what you do not have but reveals what you already

³³⁷ PH, p.55

³³⁸ PH, p.56

³³⁹ PH, p.104

³⁴⁰ PH, p.104

³⁴¹ In *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* Nietzsche writes: “How can we rescue this homeless art for that future, how can we dam up the flood of the revolution that everywhere appears inevitable so that the blissful anticipation and guarantee of a better future, of a freer humanity, will not be swept away along with the many things that are doomed and deserve to be doomed?” WB, p.328

are. He unequivocally declares in *Schopenhauer as Educator* “education is liberation.”³⁴³ However, Nietzsche totally disagrees with Hegel’s claim in *The Philosophy of History* in that Freedom is “the self-consciousness of Reason”³⁴⁴ For Hegel “Man is not free, when he is not thinking.”³⁴⁵ Or in other words, only because man is a thinking being, he is free. For Nietzsche, the notion of freedom does not necessarily involve the notion of Reason. It seems that Nietzsche understands freedom more in terms of the artistic freedom to create rather than the rational freedom to make political judgements. For Hegel subjective freedom of the individual must be subjugated to the objective freedom of society. In his lectures on *Philosophy of History* Hegel points out that: “Objective Freedom - the laws of real Freedom - demand the subjugation of the mere contingent Will - for this is in its nature formal. If the Objective is in itself rational, human insight and conviction must correspond with the Reason which it embodies, and then we have the other essential element - Subjective Freedom - also realized.”³⁴⁶ Nietzsche agrees with Hegel’s main thesis that the aim of history is freedom, yet he argues that in order to be free one needs to be beyond good and evil, beyond traditional morality or in Hegel’s vocabulary beyond objective freedom. Nietzsche argues in *Wagner in Bayreuth* that “Passion is better than stoicism and hypocrisy; that being honest, even where evil is concerned, is better than losing oneself in traditional morality; that the free human being can be both good and evil, but the unfree human being is a disgrace to nature and shares neither in any heavenly nor in any earthly consolation.”³⁴⁷

As I argued above, the idea of freedom is central to both Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s interpretations of history. For both, freedom is the origin and the goal of

³⁴² SE, p.174

³⁴³ SE, p.175

³⁴⁴ PH, p.70

³⁴⁵ PH, p.439

³⁴⁶ PH, p.456

³⁴⁷ WB, p.328

History. For Hegel History is the means by which Freedom develops in the World. The idea of freedom is linked with the notion of thinking. Thinking makes man free since it elevates the object to Universality. Absolute freedom is thinking Universality.³⁴⁸ It is a “conscious will of men” that makes man free, according to Hegel, and without objective self-reflection there is merely “natural will.” Through the notion of freedom Hegel links his philosophy of history with his political project. For Hegel thinking universality in the historical sphere means creating abiding laws and rules of society and the State. In *The Philosophy of History* Hegel explains his understanding of freedom as follows: “Freedom is nothing but the recognition and adoption of such universal substantial objects as Right and Law, and production of a reality that is accordant with them - the State.”³⁴⁹ In other words Hegel argues that in order to have objective freedom, subjective freedom needs to be subjugated to its own essence, i.e. Reason, which in turn is objective freedom. It seems that the fact that Hegel regards freedom as falling within the State might explain why, for Hegel, a *culturally* superior state will also be *politically* and *historically* superior.

Hegel is accused by many commentators of being a totalitarian thinker because his concept of freedom is subjugated to the idea of the State. In his *Philosophy of History* Hegel unambiguously declares: “the Universal is to be found in the State, in its laws, its universal and rational arrangements. The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth.”³⁵⁰ Despite this passage from *Philosophy of History* I disagree with the idea that Hegel is a totalitarian thinker. As I shall discuss later, I believe that this passage ought to be read in the light of Hegel’s speculative method, i.e. *The Science of Logic*. Only through understanding dialectics it becomes transparent why Hegel cannot be a totalitarian thinker.

³⁴⁸ PH, pp.438-39

³⁴⁹ PH, p.59

³⁵⁰ PH, p.39

Nietzsche, in opposition to Hegel, claims that freedom is not the subjugation of the subjective will of individual to the objective will of the State. In *Wagner in Bayreuth* he argues that any person who wants to become free can accomplish this not through political structures of the state but through art. In sharp contrast to Hegel he argues that freedom is not subjugation to the state but the overcoming of this subjugation. In Nietzsche's view, only beyond the state may a philosophical and artistic genius emerge. He describes this 'Hellenic' condition in his meditation on Schopenhauer as follows: "free manliness of character; early knowledge of human nature; no scholarly education; freedom from the narrowness and patriotism; exemption from the need to be a breadwinner; no ties with the state - in short, freedom and nothing but freedom, that same wonderful and dangerous element in which the Greek philosophers flourished."³⁵¹

In order to overcome this widespread Hegelian understanding of history Nietzsche calls upon his contemporaries to become 'unhistorical'. He calls this overabundance of Hegelian history "*historical sickness*" and contends that life is sick with reason and historicism. In order to overcome this historical sickness (and before one can start to write artistic history) man needs to learn to forget. The superabundance of history will not help to overcome hatred and antipathy created by history but will eventually lead to self-consumption and self-destruction. Nietzsche admits that one is always bound by one's own horizon. Yet, he declares that one must overcome or go beyond it. "It is a general law that no living being can become healthy, strong, and productive except within a horizon; if it is incapable of describing its own horizon and yet too selfish to enclose its vision within another horizon, then it will fall into feeble decline or perish prematurely."³⁵²

³⁵¹ SE, p.241

³⁵² HS, p.90

Nietzsche argues that: “A man who totally lacks the power to forget [...] is doomed to see becoming everywhere. Such a man no longer believes in his own being, no longer believes in himself; he sees everything disintegrating into turbulent particles and becomes lost in this flux of becoming. Like a true disciple of Heraclitus, he will end by scarcely daring to lift a finger.”³⁵³

In his meditation on history Nietzsche names two remedies against Hegelian philosophy of history: the “*unhistorical*” and “*supra-historical*”. Both terms define freedom as an urge to live beyond the horizon of one’s own time. For Nietzsche, to be unfashionable and to be unmodern is “to act against the age, by so doing, to have an effect on the age, and let us hope, to the benefit of future age.”³⁵⁴ By the term “unhistorical” Nietzsche means one’s power to forget and to transgress one’s limited horizon. And by the term “supra-historical” he means one’s power to create great works of art. Nietzsche writes that supra-historical are “forces which direct our eyes away from Becoming and toward that which gives existence its eternal and unchanging character, toward art and *religion*.”³⁵⁵

Hegel, too, regarded religion as being beyond history, for he argues in *Philosophy of History* that “Religious Feeling is extraneous to History, and has no History; for History is rather the Empire of Spirit recognizing itself in its *Subjective Freedom*, as the economy of social morality [*sittliches Reich*] in the State.”³⁵⁶ For that reason Hegel regarded Africa not in the domain of history but belonging to the ante-historical or pre-historical. Yet, differently from Nietzsche, who was quite positive about any unhistorical culture, Hegel is, if not wholly negative, then at least dismissive of it. Nietzsche calls upon his contemporaries to go back to “far beyond this Alexandrian culture” and seek out models in “primitive and archaic Greek world

³⁵³ HS, p.89

³⁵⁴ HS, p.88

³⁵⁵ HS, p.142

³⁵⁶ PH, p.380

of the great, the natural, and the human.”³⁵⁷ He is confident that one can find “*the reality of a basically unhistorical culture, a culture which, despite its lack of history or rather precisely because of it, is unbelievable rich and vital.*”³⁵⁸

Nietzsche, in contrast to Hegel, believes that the unhistorical is more important than the historical since “it provides the only foundation upon which any just, healthy, great, or truly human enterprise can develop.”³⁵⁹ In other words the unhistorical is an atmosphere which engenders and preserves life. Within this unhistorical or anti-historical environment not just reasonable, free, and right acts occur but also unreasonable, unfree, and wrong acts. Nietzsche argues “yet this condition - unhistorical, anti-historical through and through - is the womb not only of an unjust act, but of every just act as well. No artist would ever paint a picture, no general would win a victory, no people would gain its freedom without first having longed for and struggled toward that end in such an unhistorical condition.”³⁶⁰

History and Unreason

What Nietzsche finds unacceptable in Hegel’s interpretation of history is the idea that Reason in the form of Spirit governs World History. In *Daybreak* he points out that everything in the world is gradually ‘saturated’ with reason so that it is impossible even to suggest that everything originates in unreason. Nietzsche, similarly to Hegel, examines World History but comes to the radically opposite conclusion – the World is governed not by Reason but Unreason.

While describing modern Germany’s drive to egoism, Nietzsche argues, that egoism and not Reason has been the predominant force in human history. Nietzsche points that out to his contemporaries: “Men seem on the verge of discovering that the

³⁵⁷ HS, p.126

³⁵⁸ HS, p.126

³⁵⁹ HS, p.91

³⁶⁰ HS, p.91

egoism of individuals, groups, or masses has always been the motivating power of historical movements. But at the same time, they are not alarmed by this discovery: egoism will be our god.”³⁶¹ Nietzsche is against this egoism, yet he is also against the optimism of the ‘philistines’. As a disciple of Schopenhauer Nietzsche is against the idea that human history is governed by Reason. In his meditation on Strauss he calls this idea a “bitter mockery of the nameless suffering of humankind.”³⁶² He refers to Schopenhauer’s criticism of Hegel when he says that this optimism “is not merely an absurd, but, indeed, even a truly invidious form of thought.”³⁶³ Furthermore, Hegel’s ‘philistine’ philosophical system is for Nietzsche a “inordinately idiotic doctrine”.³⁶⁴

Throughout his works Nietzsche declares there is no God in history, no Justice in history, no Reason in history. In his meditation on history he claims that throughout human history not just reason but irrational force of life has been ruling. He writes: “It is not justice that sits in judgement here; even less is it mercy that here pronounces the verdict; but life alone, that dark, compulsive power, insatiably avid of itself. Its verdicts are always unmerciful, always unjust, because they never flow from a pure fountain of knowledge.”³⁶⁵ Also in his *Nachlass* Nietzsche rejects the idea that history is the self-revelation and self-realisation of reason in the form of spirit in the world. He claims that this idea is the most harmful and destructive idea in human history.

Now I hope to demonstrate that Hegel is not an absolute rationalist as Nietzsche suggests. Had Nietzsche read Hegel’s *Philosophy of History* more carefully he would have discovered that Hegel did not deny the existence and importance of irrational forces in history. Indeed, in the Introduction to his *Philosophy of History* Hegel argues that “the motive power” that gives to the Idea a “determined

³⁶¹ HS, p.137

³⁶² DS, p.37

³⁶³ DS, p.37

³⁶⁴ DS, p.37

³⁶⁵ HS, p.102

existence”(*Dasein*) is “the need, instinct, inclination, and passion of man.”³⁶⁶ In fact Hegel agrees with Nietzsche that there is a lot of madness in World History. He admits that there is not just progress in history but also corruption. Hegel points out that there is a “universal taint of corruption: and, since this decay is not the work of mere Nature, but of the Human Will - a moral embitterment - a revolt of the Good Spirit (if it have a place within us) may well be the result of our reflection.”³⁶⁷ Hegel points out in his lectures that World History is “the slaughter-bench at which the happiness of peoples, the wisdom of States, and the virtue of individuals have been sacrificed.”³⁶⁸

However, Hegel does not blame God or Nature for this corruption but unreflective human Will. He says if there are periods of disharmony in history then “the human will is to blame for that.”³⁶⁹ In his lecture course Hegel gives us examples of countries which are not governed by Reason. For example, India is, in Hegel’s view, in a state of dream or understanding rather than Reason.³⁷⁰ Another example is closer to Germany, France before and after the Revolution. Hegel argues that political conditions in France were utterly irrational. In France, prior to the Revolution, there were “confused mass of privileges altogether contravening Thought and Reason - an utterly irrational state of things, and one with which the greatest corruption of morals, of Spirit was associated - an empire characterized by Destitution of Right, and which, when its real state begins to be recognized, becomes shameless destitution of Right.”³⁷¹ Hegel admits that the French political system was unreasonable and unjust and therefore the radical change was necessary. He writes about the French conditions before the Revolution:

³⁶⁶ PH, p.22

³⁶⁷ PH, pp.20-21

³⁶⁸ PH, p.21

³⁶⁹ PH, p.26

³⁷⁰ PH, p.140

³⁷¹ PH, p.446

The sums extorted from the people were not expended in furthering the objects of the State, but were lavished in the most unreasonable fashion. The entire political system appeared one mass of injustice. The change was necessarily violent, because the work of transformation was not undertaken by the government.³⁷²

As was demonstrated above, Hegel in fact agrees with Nietzsche that there is Unreason in history and that it is also an important force. Yet, he, differently from Nietzsche, wants to subjugate this force to Reason. Hegel writes: “The History of the World is the discipline of the uncontrolled natural will, bringing it into obedience to a Universal principle and conferring subjective freedom.”³⁷³ Or more precisely, Hegel thinks that this Unreason itself develops into Reason. As was said above, History is, according to Hegel, a struggle of subjective will to become self-reflective and free.

Hegel agrees with Nietzsche when he claims that “*nothing great in the World* has been accomplished without *passion*.”³⁷⁴ He admits that not reason but “passion, private aims, and the satisfaction of selfish desires, are [...] most effective springs of actions.”³⁷⁵ He adds: “Their power lies in the fact that they respect none of the limitations which justice and morality would impose on them; and that these natural impulses have a more direct influence over man than the artificial and tedious discipline that tends to order and self-restraint, law and morality.”³⁷⁶ Hegel also writes: “The first glance at History convinces us the actions of men proceed from their needs, their passions, their characters and talents; and impresses us with the belief that such needs, passions and interests are the sole springs of action - the efficient agents in this scene of activity.”³⁷⁷ However, he differs radically from Nietzsche in that he believes the union of reason and human passion is possible “under the conditions of

³⁷² PH, p.446

³⁷³ PH, p.104

³⁷⁴ PH, p.23

³⁷⁵ PH, p.20

³⁷⁶ PH, p.20

³⁷⁷ PH, p.20

morality in a State.”³⁷⁸ Throughout his works Hegel puts emphasis on Reason for he dislikes the idea that Unreason is the dominant force in World History. Hegel talks about the “selfishness and corruption in the unbound passion and egoistic interests of men”³⁷⁹ and believes that only within the ethical state will universal freedom be upheld.

Hegel also believes that even if people think that they follow and fulfil their own private desires and passions they are at the same time “the means and instruments of a higher and broader purpose of which they know nothing - which they realize unconsciously.”³⁸⁰ In other words Hegel claims that “in history an additional result is commonly produced by human actions beyond that which they aim and obtain - that which they immediately recognise and desire. They gratify their own interest; but something further is thereby accomplished, latent in the actions in question, though not present to their consciousness, and not included in their design.”³⁸¹

I think that Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s interpretations of history differ so radically partly because of their fundamentally different understanding of human nature. Contrary to Hegel, Nietzsche thinks that passion in history is not a source of corruption but of freedom. For Hegel, human essence is Reason, human form is Passion.³⁸² For Nietzsche Hegel’s ‘reasonable human being’ is only a “skeleton of human being” because it lacks passions and desires. In contrast to Hegel and in anticipation of Freud, Nietzsche points out in *Joyful Wisdom* that “the greater part of our intellectual activity goes on unconsciously and unfelt by us.”³⁸³

In Nietzsche’s philosophy the line between the animal and human is very vague. He claims that all human activity is a sign of animality rather than of reason.

³⁷⁸ PH, p.23

³⁷⁹ PH, p.77

³⁸⁰ PH, p.25

³⁸¹ PH, p.27

³⁸² PH, p.39

³⁸³ JW, p.257

Nietzsche writes in *Schopenhauer as Educator* that human beings' "founding of cities and states, their waging of wars, their ceaseless gathering and dispersing, their confused mingling, their imitation of one another, their mutual outwitting and trampling underfoot, their cries in distress and their joyous cheers in victory - all this is a continuation of animality."³⁸⁴ Nietzsche claims that we all are not just the products of rational choice and justice of earlier generations but also of their irrationality and injustice. In his meditation on history Nietzsche maintains that "we happen to be the products of earlier generations, we are also the products of their blunders, passions, and misunderstandings, indeed, of their crimes; it is impossible to free ourselves completely from this chain."³⁸⁵

History and God

Hegel, in sharp contrast to Nietzsche, believes that there is God in history and that this God is Reason in the form of Spirit. That is why Nietzsche labels Hegel's philosophy of history in *The Anti-Christ* a 'cunning theology'. Hegel has no problem translating his philosophy of history into Christian theology by claiming that the ultimate aim of history is God willing himself, i.e., the Idea of Freedom: "This final aim is God's purpose with the world; but God is the absolutely perfect Being, and can, therefore, will nothing other than himself - his own Will. The Nature of his Will - that is, His Nature itself - is what we here call the Idea of Freedom; translating the language of Religion into that of Thought."³⁸⁶

It seems that in an attempt to avoid a confrontation with the Protestant Church Hegel maintains that there is unity between Religious Reason in the Church and

³⁸⁴ SE, p.210

³⁸⁵ HS, p.103

³⁸⁶ PH, p.20

Secular Reason in the State and they both fundamentally carry out the same task – the enhancement of Freedom. As Hegel himself puts it:

Religion as such, is Reason in the soul and heart – [...] it is a temple in which Truth and Freedom in God are presented to the conceptive faculty: the State, on the other hand, regulated by the selfsame Reason, is a temple of Human Freedom concerned with the perception and volition of a reality, whose purport may itself be called divine. Thus Freedom in the State is preserved and established by Religion, since moral rectitude in the State is only the carrying out of that which constitutes the fundamental principle of Religion.³⁸⁷

For Hegel the sign of progress in history is that “the antithesis of Church and State vanishes” and the ultimate result of history is the union of Church and the State. The aim of Hegel’s *Philosophy of History* is to demonstrate that the State is no longer inferior to the Church and the Church is no longer inferior to the State. This equilibrium of the Church and the State is in Hegel’s words “the ultimate result which the process of History is intended to accomplish.”³⁸⁸

Hegel believes, unlike some Romantic poets, that universal Reason does realise itself in the World. It was Hegel’s great insight that “the truly good - the universal divine reason - is not a mere abstraction, but a vital principle capable of realizing itself.”³⁸⁹

Whereas Nietzsche might praise certain ‘evolutionary’ aspects of Hegel’s philosophy of history he completely rejects the idea that history is a self-reflective development of divine Reason and that this development culminates in the Modern Age. In his meditation on Strauss Nietzsche fiercely attacks Hegel for spreading this illusion. Nietzsche points out that “understood in this Hegelian manner, history has scornfully been dubbed the sojourn of God on earth - although this God, for his part, is himself only the product of history. But it was inside Hegelians’ heads that this God became transparent and comprehensible to himself, and it has already climbed up

³⁸⁷ PH, p.335

³⁸⁸ PH, p.110

³⁸⁹ PH, p.36

through all the dialectically possible stages of its process of becoming, up to the point of that self-revelation, so that for Hegel the apex and culmination of the world process coincided with his own existence in Berlin”³⁹⁰ In *Joyful Wisdom* Nietzsche blames Hegel’s philosophy for the survival of Christianity in Europe for he sees behind it reformed and refined Christian doctrine. Hegel’s philosophy delayed the victory of atheism in Europe. Reminiscent to Schopenhauer’s criticism Nietzsche writes in *Joyful Wisdom*: “Hegel especially was its (atheism, K.K) retarder *par excellence*, in virtue of the grandiose attempt which he made to persuade us the very last of the divinity of existence, with the help of our sixth sense, ‘the historical sense’.”³⁹¹ Nietzsche points out that this is the chief reason for Schopenhauer’s hostility towards Hegel: “The non-divinity of existence was regarded by him as something understood, palpable, indisputable.”³⁹²

Nietzsche’s philosophy compels us to admit that “our world is more the showplace of *error* than of reason, and that there is nothing comforting in any natural laws because all these laws are ordained by an erring God, indeed, by a God who takes pleasure in erring.”³⁹³ In *Daybreak* Nietzsche argues that rationality has its origins in chance, accident, or irrationality. In part of *Human, All Too Human* added later and called *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* Nietzsche describes history from the standpoint of an unreasonable or mad God: “*Historia in nuce* (History in a nutshell). – The most serious parody I have ever heard is the following: ‘in the beginning was the madness, and the madness *was*, by God!, and God (divine) was the madness’.”³⁹⁴ From this paragraph it is clear that, in Nietzsche’s view, even if one assumes that God is not dead, one must admit that he is insane. Consequently, World History is the manifestation not of divine reason but divine insanity. One might want to take this

³⁹⁰ DS, p.42

³⁹¹ JW, p.307

³⁹² JW, p.308

³⁹³ DS, p.42-43

claim even further by saying that the world as God's creation becomes his own asylum. Nietzsche suggests that God could have created the World only as an oversight. He refers to Martin Luther who "himself once supposed that the world began only through an oversight of God; that is, if God had thought of 'heavy artillery,' he would have not created the world."³⁹⁵ That is why Nietzsche vehemently argues against the fundamental error by Hegel and his followers who seek the "inkling of the reasonableness of all becoming and all natural laws."³⁹⁶ In *Joyful Wisdom* Nietzsche, criticising Hegelian philosophy, maintains that one cannot look at nature as proof "of the goodness and care of a God" or to interpret history "in honour of a divine reason" as a testimony of moral order in the world.³⁹⁷ He argues that this type of philosophy of history is not fundamentally different from the Christian doctrine of the divine Providence, against which atheists like Schopenhauer have long fought. In spite of all 'cultivated philistines' in Germany Nietzsche openly declares in his meditation on Strauss there is no living God in history, only painted idols. Nietzsche believes that the future of mankind should not depend on a transcendent god who 'legislates' through saints and priests but on the will of mankind and its greatest 'exemplars', i.e. geniuses. That is why the madman in *Joyful Wisdom* cheerfully announces: 'God is dead!'

To sum up Nietzsche's thought one can say that he is not an 'anti-historian' for he understands the importance of history. He admits that people need (artistic) history but also warns his contemporaries about the negative impact of (scientific) history on life and culture. He asks them not to follow blindly fashionable history but to use history in order to promote culture: "Man must above all to learn to live, and

³⁹⁴ *Human all too Human*, hereafter HAH, p.218

³⁹⁵ HS, p.102

³⁹⁶ DS, p.42

³⁹⁷ JW, p.308

use history only in service of the life he has learned to live.”³⁹⁸ Nietzsche maintains that “only insofar as history serves life do we wish to serve history.”³⁹⁹ Nietzsche reminds his contemporaries that “*the unhistorical and the historical are equally necessary to the good health of a man, a people, and a culture.*”⁴⁰⁰

Nietzsche does not believe that history can be science and is governed by rational laws. He believes that history must serve another purpose – life. Nietzsche writes:

Every man, every nation, requires, according to its goals, strengths, and necessities, a certain knowledge of the past, a knowledge now in the form of exemplary history, now in antiquarian history, and now of critical history. What is never needed is a crowd of pure thinkers merely observing life, or individuals hungry for knowledge who are satisfied by knowledge only, whose sole purpose is the increase of knowledge. What is always needed is history whose aim is life and which must therefore be subject to the authority and ultimate control of life.⁴⁰¹

In other words Nietzsche does not believe there is a single absolute Idea governing history which is manifested in the World as Spirit. Nietzsche argues that history ought to be a storytelling in order to promote creativity and culture. Nietzsche hopes, in sharp contrast to Hegel’s *Philosophy of History*, that “history may discover that its meaning is not general ideas as the final fruit of its effort, but that its value lies precisely in the spirited retelling, enhancing, and heightening of a familiar or even ordinary theme, and everyday tune, into a comprehensive symbol, and thereby intimating in the original theme the presence of a whole world of profound meaning, ..power, and beauty.”⁴⁰²

In order to overcome this ‘historical sickness’ of the modern age Nietzsche asks his contemporaries to live artistically. He asks them to turn towards artistic

³⁹⁸ HS, p.139

³⁹⁹ HS, p.87

⁴⁰⁰ HS, p.90

⁴⁰¹ HS, p.103

⁴⁰² HS, p.117

creativity rather than historical scholarship for “art is opposed to history.”⁴⁰³ He adds “only when history can be transformed into a work of art - that is, become pure artistic creation - can it perhaps preserve or even awaken instincts. But such historiography would be wholly at odds with the analytical and anti-artistic temper of our times; indeed, it would be regarded as a perversion of it.”⁴⁰⁴ Nietzsche’s own interpretation of ancient Greece, his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, might serve as an example of such creative historiography. Not surprisingly this book, although cherished by many German intellectuals of his time was regarded by the classical scholars of his time as a perversion of ‘true’ Greek culture and history.

Nietzsche was convinced that the Germans up until the 1860s were highly influenced by Hegel’s *Philosophy of History*. The Germans thought that there is progress, justice and freedom in history and that Reason governs the World. Furthermore, they believed that nineteenth-century Germany is the summit of World History. Nietzsche did not share this highly widespread and popular view. Instead he argues, in opposition to Hegel, that in World History there is no progress, no justice, and no reason. Whereas for Hegel the Roman conquest of the Hellenic World was a manifestation of the superiority of the Roman World, for Nietzsche it was a sign of its inferiority. For Hegel the historic success of Christianity over the Roman World was ultimately a sign of the superiority of the Christian World. For Nietzsche the opposite is true. Whereas Hegel believed that there has been a steady progress in World History, Nietzsche argues there has been a steady decline since the Socratic period. Thus, Hegel believed that in human history only the best cultures survive, whereas Nietzsche believes that only the mediocre and herd morality prosper. In short, for Hegel World History is the manifestation of the reason of Spirit, for Nietzsche of the irrationality of peoples. For Nietzsche World History is not an emancipatory process

⁴⁰³ HS, p.119

of World Spirit but a battle between “organised groups of individual egoisms, brotherhoods whose purpose is the greedy exploitation of nonbrothers.”⁴⁰⁵

In general Hegel firmly believes that there are rational laws in history and he sets himself the task of revealing them in his lecture course on *The Philosophy of History*. Nietzsche believes that even if there are laws of history they are the laws of stupidity, mimicry, and mediocrity. Nietzsche in contrast to Hegel claims that “Insofar as there are laws in history, the laws are worthless and history is worthless.”⁴⁰⁶

As I argued at the beginning of this chapter Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s interpretations of history are closely related to their respective political projects. In the next chapter I shall examine Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s political projects. I shall focus on the relationship between the State and Individual in their political philosophies.

⁴⁰⁴ HS, p.119

⁴⁰⁵ HS, pp.135-36

⁴⁰⁶ HS, p.136

III. Hegel and Nietzsche on the state, society and individual

Anyone who by his nature and not simply by ill-luck has no state is either too bad or too good, either subhuman or superhuman.

Aristotle *Politics* 1253a1

Hegel's and Nietzsche's notions of the state

In the *Philosophy of History*, as discussed in the previous chapter, Hegel comes to the conclusion that world history is governed by reason and that there is therefore progress towards freedom in the world. *The Philosophy of History* concludes with the claim that reason and freedom can be fully manifested only with a high level of political organisation - the state. In other words, Hegel is convinced that truly rational and free human interaction and co-existence is possible only within a certain complex political organisation which he calls the state. In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel discusses in detail the dialectics of human society from the family through civil society to the state. More importantly, in the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel explains what kind of state he means when he claims in the *Philosophy of History* that the state is the sojourn of god on earth. Therefore, Hegel's political philosophy is a logical continuation of his philosophy of history.

In the *Philosophy of History* Hegel argues that the state is the true object of history because only within the state is freedom truly expressed and fully manifested. Furthermore, he claims that in the State "freedom obtains objectivity, and lives in the enjoyment of this objectivity."⁴⁰⁷ For Hegel freedom is understood as obeying the laws of the state. He claims in the *Philosophy of History* that "only that will which obeys law, is free; for it obeys itself - it is independent and so free."⁴⁰⁸ In the *Philosophy of History* Hegel introduces a notion of "community of existence", i.e. a

⁴⁰⁷ PH, p.39

⁴⁰⁸ PH, p.39

society in which the conflict between freedom and oppression is overcome by the subjective will subjecting itself freely to the laws of the state. Hegel argues as follows: “When the State or our country constitutes a community of existence; when the subjective will of man submits to laws - the contradiction between Liberty and Necessity vanishes.”⁴⁰⁹ Because of this kind of claim Hegel is seen by many commentators as a totalitarian thinker. Indeed, in the *Philosophy of History* there are numerous passages which provide moral justification and a philosophical foundation for the existence of the state in general. Because Hegel, in his *Philosophy of History*, does not stress the fundamental difference between the state and what he calls the ethical state but uses general term “the state”, one can understand why Hegel is accused of authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Only in the *Philosophy of Right* does Hegel seek to overcome the fundamental conflict between liberty and necessity, or subjective will and universal laws, by differentiating between the ethical and the non-ethical state. However, even in this work Hegel’s overemphasis on the necessity of the subjective will to subject itself to the laws of the state leaves many commentators convinced that Hegel never really overcomes totalitarianism and authoritarianism.⁴¹⁰ As was said above, Hegel is convinced that only within the state is it possible to overcome the conflict between subjective and universal will. Yet, even in *The Philosophy of Right* he proposes to overcome this conflict by suggesting that the subjective will should in the end subject itself to the universal will and never the other way around. Hegel argues in *Philosophy of History* that the state as a moral “whole” is the union of the subjective will and rational will in which individuals can enjoy their freedom but only on the condition that the individuals recognise, believe and will that “which is common to the Whole.”⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁹ PH, p.39

⁴¹⁰ This view is expressed for example by Karl Popper in his book *The Open Society and its Enemies*, as well as by many post-modern thinkers such as Foucault and Lyotard.

⁴¹¹ PH, p.38

Hegel believes that in the world things are not perfect; they are finite, decay, and vanish. Hegel is convinced, however, that in the modern state the infinite ideal and absolute reason is manifested and realised. Hegel looks at European history and comes to the conclusion that in the modern era the state becomes a manifestation and realisation of reason. He is convinced that in the modern state the irrational particularities disappear, “the authority of the rational aim is acknowledged”, and furthermore “people will the Right in and for itself.”⁴¹²

According to Hegel reason that guides world history is interested in the existence of the state because only within the political framework of the state is individual freedom possible. This freedom is for Hegel the ultimate justification for the existence of the state. In the *Philosophy of History* Hegel puts this argument as follows:

It is the absolute interest of Reason that this moral Whole should exist; and herein lies the justification and merit of heroes who have founded states - however rude these may have been. In the history of the World, only those people can come under our notice which form a state. For it must be understood that this latter is the realisation of Freedom, i.e. of the absolute final aim, and that it exists for its own sake.”⁴¹³

From this passage it is clear that for Hegel only on the level of high political organisation can human beings not just become mere spectators of history but actually produce history. Furthermore, it seems that for the realisation of freedom, the establishment of the state becomes crucial and justified. Because Hegel does not specify in *Philosophy of History* which kind of state he has in mind, these statements become potentially dangerous and politically risky.

In *Philosophy of History* Hegel claims that “all the worth which the human being possesses - all spiritual reality, he possesses only through the State.”⁴¹⁴ For Hegel “the State is the universal spiritual life, to which individuals by birth sustain a

⁴¹² PH, p.340

⁴¹³ PH, p.39

relation of confidence and habit, and in which they have their existence and reality.”⁴¹⁵ Furthermore, for Hegel the state expresses the universal will of the people as well as being the divine idea on earth. He is convinced that “the Universal is to be found in the State, in its laws, its universal and rational arrangements. The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth.”⁴¹⁶

Now let’s examine Hegel’s concept of the modern state as it is discussed in his *Philosophy of History*. For Hegel there are three main elements of the modern state. Firstly, there are *laws* of rationality, i.e., intrinsic right, objective or real freedom. To this category belong freedom of property and freedom of the person.⁴¹⁷ On this level every individual has a right (protected by the state and in accordance with his or her abilities) to any job or position within the state. The second element is the government which implements laws and guarantees individual freedoms internally and represents the state in external affairs. The government gives laws practical effect. Hegel sums up the main functions of the government as follows: “Government is primarily the formal execution of the laws and the maintenance of their authority: in respect to foreign relations it prosecutes the interest of the State; that is, it assists the independence of the nation as an individuality against other nations; lastly, it has to provide for the internal weal of the State and all its classes - what is called administration.”⁴¹⁸

The third element in every modern state is the recognition of the superiority of laws through the free subjugation of individuals to them. Hegel calls this recognition the “disposition of individuals”. Hegel claims that in a well constituted state an individual needs to follow the laws of the state not just because of benefit or

⁴¹⁴ PH, p.39

⁴¹⁵ PH, p.104

⁴¹⁶ PH, p.39

⁴¹⁷ PH, p.447

⁴¹⁸ PH, p.448

punishment but an individual needs to “cordially recognise” the laws of the state and it is an obligation to subject his or her particular will to the laws.⁴¹⁹

As I argue later, Hegel, by stressing the superiority and priority of the state over the individual, in fact departs from his own speculative method outlined in *The Science of Logic*. Hegel’s insistence that “nothing must be considered higher and more sacred than good will towards the State” falls short of his own dialectical principle.⁴²⁰ Even religious convictions and rules must, according to Hegel, be subjected to the laws of the state. Hegel contends that even if religion is something higher or more sacred “it must involve nothing really alien or opposed to the Constitution.”⁴²¹

Hegel argues that obedience to the state is the very foundation of peaceful co-existence and individual freedom. Only with a high level of political organisation are rational and divine principles of co-existence realised. At the end of *Philosophy of History* Hegel openly states:

Obedience to the laws of the State, as the rational element in volition and action, was made the principle of human conduct. In this obedience man is free, for all that is demanded is that the Particular should yield to the General. Man himself has a conscience; consequently the subjection required of him is free alliance. This involves the possibility of a development of Reason and Freedom, and their introduction into human relations; and Reason and Divine commands are now synonymous.⁴²²

All the above mentioned ideas from Hegel’s *Philosophy of History* are used by critics to prove that the ultimate aim of Hegel’s political project is to justify the existence and actions of the state and therefore he is a totalitarian and authoritarian thinker. It seems that Hegel himself is partly to blame for this serious misunderstanding since in his lectures on history he often makes generalising remarks about the state and does not specify which state represents the “divine idea” on earth or in which state reason

⁴¹⁹ PH, p.449

⁴²⁰ PH, p.449

⁴²¹ PH, p.449

⁴²² PH, p.423

and freedom are fully manifested and realised. Only if one reads Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* in light of his *Science of Logic* does the non-totalitarianism of his political thought become evident. In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel makes it quite clear that no actual state yet qualifies to be a fully rational and free state and that only the ethical (*sittlich*) state might be called a divine idea on earth. Thus the question of the existence of the ethical state becomes crucial in deciding whether Hegel is a totalitarian or utopian thinker.

The exact status of the ethical state in Hegel's political philosophy is not clear but it seems that Hegel thinks that as an idea of the state it is present in all existing states. In this Hegel differs radically from Kant for whom universal moral laws are in a sense beyond actuality. Hegel famously criticises Kant for this abstract universality and argues that in every existing state the ideal, i.e. ethical state, is present. Hegel points out at the end of the *Philosophy of History* that "every 'Universal' in Thought has a corresponding generic principle in Reality, to which it gives intellectual expression or form [*idea, eidos*]."⁴²³ Thus, one can follow Hegel's argument and claim that although nineteenth-century Prussia was not the full and perfect embodiment of the ethical State (*sittlicher Staat*) it was a partial expression or manifestation of it in reality.

Hegel claims that the ethical state is a state in which the private interests of the individual and the universal interests of the state coincide. As he writes in the *Philosophy of History*: "a State is then well constituted and internally powerful, when the private interest of its citizens is one with the common interest of the State; when the one finds its gratification and realisation in the other."⁴²⁴ In the *Philosophy of History* Hegel seems to suggest that the state as such is in a sense an ethical (*sittlich*) organisation. In his lectures on history Hegel defines what he means by the state as

⁴²³ PH, p.417

follows: “the State is the actually existing, realised moral life. For it is the Unity of the universal, essential Will, with that of the individual; and this is ‘Morality’ (*Sittlichkeit*).”⁴²⁵ And because “the laws of morality are not accidental, but they are the essentially Rational”⁴²⁶ any state is, according to Hegel, in principle a rational organisation.

Hegel admits that the initial reason for establishing any kind of political organisation is to secure the life and protect the property of the individual. However he claims that there is a more universal reason for the existence of the state than just individual benefits or personal profits. In disagreement with Rousseau he argues that the complex political organisation, i.e. the state, is not just the means whereby the majority of the individuals gain benefits and protect their profits, but that the state is an ethical whole within which the positive existence of freedom is manifested and maintained. However, as history demonstrates, this does not happen very often in reality. In world history states are more often ruled by unreason and force than reason and freedom. Hegel admits that many actual states fall short of his ethical ideal. He points out that in reality “a State which had first to form itself, and which is based on force, must be held together by force. It is not a moral, liberal connection, but a compulsory condition of subordination, that results from such an origin.”⁴²⁷

In opposition to Hegel’s call to obey the laws of the state, critics, including Nietzsche, argue that Hegel is overoptimistic in his valuation of the rationality and morality of the state in general and wrong about the ability of the modern state to protect and promote individual freedom. As Nietzsche writes in *Human, all too Human* the origin of the ethical (*das Sittliche*) lies in two ideas: “‘the community is worth more than the individual’ and ‘enduring advantage is to be preferred to a

⁴²⁴ PH, p.24

⁴²⁵ PH, p.38

⁴²⁶ PH, p.39

⁴²⁷ PH, p.284

transient one’; from which follows that the enduring advantage of the community is to take unconditional precedence over the advantage of the individual, especially over his momentary wellbeing but also over his enduring advantage and even over his survival.”⁴²⁸ Nietzsche describes this kind of morality in *Joyful Wisdom* as follows: “By morality the individual is thought to become a function of the herd, and to ascribe to himself value only as a function.”⁴²⁹ Therefore, Nietzsche concludes, “morality is the herd-instinct in the individual.”⁴³⁰ I believe that world history and especially the great upheavals of the twentieth century prove that the laws of states are often based on the prejudices of the few and thus states themselves are ruled by unreason rather than reason. Therefore, Hegel’s call in *The Philosophy of Right* to subordinate the individual and even religious values to the political constitution of the state is regarded by many as a potentially dangerous policy which might be easily used and misused by totalitarian and authoritarian regimes.

Whereas Hegel in the *Philosophy of Right* seeks to establish a universal ethical state, Nietzsche calls in *Daybreak* for “as little state as possible”. Nietzsche rejects Hegel’s concept of the state on many grounds. In *We Philologists* Nietzsche points out that even if the well-organised state (similar to Hegel’s ‘ethical state’) is achieved it will result in cultural decline and the general degradation of humanity, for “the better state is organised, the duller will humanity be.”⁴³¹ In *Human, All too Human* Nietzsche explains why he is so critical of the well-organised state. He argues that “this comfortable life would destroy the soil out of which great intellect and the powerful individual in general grows [...]”.⁴³² Nietzsche points out that even “if this state is achieved mankind would have become too feeble still to be able to produce the

⁴²⁸ HAH, p.,231

⁴²⁹ JW, p.160

⁴³⁰ JW, p.161

⁴³¹ CW, p.189

⁴³² HAH, p.112

genius.”⁴³³ A similar argument is put forward by Nietzsche in *Joyful Wisdom*: “We do not by any means think it desirable that the kingdom of righteousness and peace should be established on earth (because under any circumstances it would be the kingdom of the profoundest mediocrity and Chinaism); we rejoice in all men, who like ourselves love danger, war and adventure, who do not make compromises, nor let themselves be captured, conciliated and stunted.”⁴³⁴

In opposition to Hegel, Nietzsche also argues that even if the state is an embodiment of reason, it is never a manifestation and realisation of freedom but only herd morality. In his meditation on Schopenhauer Nietzsche refers to Hegel’s political project when he points out that the crisis of modern society is caused by the dogma “that has of late been preached from all the rooftops, a dogma that asserts that the state is the highest aim of humanity and that a man can have no higher duty than service to the state.”⁴³⁵ Nietzsche is critical of parliamentary democracy for it makes no fundamental difference whether the people can choose between one or five political parties and opinions: “He who diverges from the five public opinions and goes apart, has always the whole herd against him.”⁴³⁶

In Nietzsche’s view, Hegel overlooks the fact that for the state the ultimate aim is the state itself not the freedom of creative individuals. The priority of the state is, according to Nietzsche, to preserve its own existence and protect its own interests. For Hegel, as becomes clear when we examine the *Philosophy of Right*, ‘selfishness’ is the problem only of civil society and the state which have not yet reached the level of reason. Nietzsche argues that within the modern state there is a “selfishness of money-makers” but further and more importantly “there is the *selfishness of the state*, which likewise desires the maximum dissemination and generalisation of culture and

⁴³³ HAH, p.112

⁴³⁴ JW, p.343

⁴³⁵ SE, p.197

⁴³⁶ JW, p.191

has in its hands the most effective tools for satisfying its desires.”⁴³⁷ Hegel, on the other hand, seems to overlook this notion of the selfishness of the state and is not critical enough towards the tools (government, social institutions, bureaucracy, and etc) the state is using in order to achieve its aims. For Nietzsche the state has self-interest (partly because it has property, institutions etc) and therefore it protects and promotes a political system, which in the end will lead to conflict with individual freedom. In more general terms, Nietzsche believes, it will lead to the corruption of society and degradation of culture. For example, in *Schopenhauer as Educator* Nietzsche argues that because of the selfishness of the state, Christianity, which used to be one of the purest manifestations of culture, became corrupt. Nietzsche argues that because the Church was used by the state not to produce saints but for its own selfish interests, it “gradually became sick to the very marrow, hypocritical and dishonest, until it degenerated to the point of standing contradiction to its original goal.”⁴³⁸ Hegel, on the other hand, claims that because of the secular influence of the state the Christian Church became genuinely free, especially after the Reformation.

Nietzsche regards Hegel’s dogma, that asserts that the highest duty of a man is to serve the state, as stupid and potentially criminal and makes it his task to erase this stupidity. Nietzsche writes in *Schopenhauer as Educator*: “It may be the case that a man who sees in service to the state his highest duty in fact knows no higher duty; but there are, nonetheless, other men and other duties - and one of these duties, one that I, at least, consider to be higher than service to the state, calls upon us to eradicate stupidity in all its manifestations, this one included.”⁴³⁹ Here it might seem ironic to point out that Nietzsche himself talks about the importance of serving the state by the true philosopher “if his fatherland is threatened by a real danger.”⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁷ SE, p.219

⁴³⁸ SE, p.220

⁴³⁹ SE, p.197

⁴⁴⁰ SE, p.239

In order to understand Nietzsche's criticism of Hegel's concept of the state one needs to ask why Nietzsche objects to the state in general. One needs to expose why, in Nietzsche's view, there is something fundamentally wrong with the state as such. Whereas Hegel argues that the state is the manifestation of reason and freedom Nietzsche maintains that the state is not interested in either freedom, truth or culture. Or more correctly the state is interested in them only so far as it provides a ground and justification for its own existence. In sharp contrast to Hegel, Nietzsche writes "the state is never interested in truth, but rather always only in that truth that is useful to it or, more precisely, in everything that is useful to it, be it truth, half-truth, or error."⁴⁴¹ In short, Nietzsche criticises Hegel for not seeing that the state always has its own agenda and that the interest and freedom of the individual is only protected so far it does not contradict interests of the state.

More importantly (and related to his political project) Nietzsche claims that the state because of its 'selfishness' has a corruptive and degrading influence on culture. It seems that seventeen years after the establishment of the *Reich* and towards the end of his philosophical life Nietzsche's sentiments towards the state became even more negative. For example in *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche comes to the following conclusion: "Culture and the state – one should not deceive oneself over this – are antagonists: the 'cultural state' is merely a modern idea. The one lives off the other, the one thrives at the expense of the other. All great cultural epochs are epochs of political decline: that which is great in the cultural sense has been unpolitical, even *anti-political*."⁴⁴²

Nietzsche criticises Kant for the subjugation of the individual will to the universal will. Furthermore, both Kant and Hegel, according to Nietzsche, followed their own political projects in their private life, for both stayed at the university and

⁴⁴¹ SE, p.251

thus served the state. However, Nietzsche admits that Kant, unlike Hegel, “displayed no greatness in his treatment of the state.”⁴⁴³ Only Schopenhauer’s philosophy is critical enough to address the conflict between the will of the state and the will of the individual. Nietzsche, although he admires Kant for his metaphysical insights, is at the same time very critical of Kant’s views on the state and authority in general. In his meditation on Schopenhauer Nietzsche points out that, although a great thinker, “Kant clung to the university, submitted to governmental authority, sustained the appearance of religious faith, put up with his colleagues and students: hence it is quite natural that his example produced above all university professors and professional philosophy.”⁴⁴⁴ For an example contrary to Kant and Hegel, Nietzsche refers to Schopenhauer whose philosophy did not serve the state and whose life pointed beyond society and the state. In his meditation Nietzsche writes that Schopenhauer “wants to have little to do with the learned classes; he keeps to himself, strives for independence from state and society - this is his example, his model - to begin with the most superficial aspects.”⁴⁴⁵ It is important, in Nietzsche’s view, for the individual to have “the drive to contradiction; the personality seeks to feel and be felt, in opposition to all others.”⁴⁴⁶ Hegel, in Nietzsche’s view, did not have this drive and therefore his philosophy in general and political philosophy in particular came to serve the state. Nietzsche points out that in the search for truth the philosopher who serves the state becomes motivated not by his own will but by “his servility to certain ruling people, classes, opinions, churches, or governments, since he senses that he will profit from placing ‘truth’ on

⁴⁴² TI, p.74

⁴⁴³ SE, p.243

⁴⁴⁴ SE, p.184

⁴⁴⁵ It is important to note that Nietzsche himself was a lecturer in Basel (Switzerland) on Classics and applied (although unsuccessfully) to become Chair of the Philosophy Department. Schopenhauer’s lectures were not attended by students for Hegel was at that time the central philosopher in the Department and official philosopher of the Prussian state. SE, p.184

⁴⁴⁶ SE, p.225

their side.”⁴⁴⁷ In order to create high culture one must raise oneself above ruling people, opinions, customs and morality in general. In *Daybreak* Nietzsche claims that this is the source of Plato’s greatness: “for as a critic of all customs he is the antithesis of the moral man, and if he does not succeed in becoming the lawgiver of new custom he remains in the memory of men as ‘the evil principle’.”⁴⁴⁸

Nietzsche believes that the state (like the Church for Hegel) can turn the truth into a lie, i.e. ‘the evil principle’, and thus corrupt society and degrade culture. Nietzsche’s task is to counterbalance Hegel’s servility to the state with the help of Schopenhauer’s philosophy of life. He hopes that Schopenhauer’s pessimistic philosophy soon overcomes Hegel’s optimism for he says that “I believe that at present there are already more people who know his name than know Hegel’s.”⁴⁴⁹ In Nietzsche’s view, Schopenhauer’s philosophy is necessary to tackle Hegel’s bias towards the state in order to free those “who profoundly suffer from this age.”⁴⁵⁰

Thus, it is clear that the fundamental difference between Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s political projects is the problem of freedom. The question is whether freedom is possible within or outside the state and society. Hegel’s philosophy seems to serve the state; Nietzsche wants to free philosophy, art and religion from serving the state. Unlike Hegel, Nietzsche argues that freedom is not possible within society or the state but beyond it. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Nietzsche notes that one should look for the Superman only where the state ceases.

Nietzsche points out that the state is afraid of free philosophers and “privileges only those philosophers of whom it is not afraid.”⁴⁵¹ Nietzsche, in contrast to Hegel, asserts that the state is an obstacle “that prevents a great philosophy from having an

⁴⁴⁷ SE, p.225

⁴⁴⁸ D, p.202

⁴⁴⁹ SE, p.236

⁴⁵⁰ SE, p.237

⁴⁵¹ SE, p.244

effect” and also “stands in the way of the production of a great philosopher.”⁴⁵² The state promotes only philosophy which, like Hegel’s, in Nietzsche’s view, justifies and legitimises its own existence. If any philosopher starts to critically examine the state it reacts and treats such a philosopher as an archenemy. Philosophers like Hegel who are employed by the state, in Nietzsche’s view, serve not the truth but only the state. Nietzsche is very critical of the German university system and doubts whether within state institutions it is possible to conduct non-biased and free research. He describes the dilemma of every university lecturer as follows: “at least as long as he is privileged and employed, he must recognise something higher than truth - the state. And not merely the state, but at the same time everything the state demands for its own well-being: for example, a particular form of religion, social order, and military organisation.”⁴⁵³ Nietzsche writes that it is “a requirement of culture that it eliminates from philosophy every form of state and academic recognition.”⁴⁵⁴ For Nietzsche only beyond society and the state can culture be genuinely free. Nietzsche admits that critical philosophical enquiry is possible within the state but he points out that “an alliance between the state and philosophy only makes sense if philosophy can promise to be absolutely useful to the state, that is, to place the interests of the state above truth.”⁴⁵⁵ Nietzsche thinks that Hegel’s political philosophy was useful for the state in this way because it provided the modern state with philosophical justification. The state needs justification and philosophy can provide it with that.

In Nietzsche’s view, the state uses universities and other political institutions like the Pope used the Church in order to produce not free and creative individuals but “submissive and useful citizens”.⁴⁵⁶ For example at the beginning of the nineteenth century when the Prussian state became a European power for the first time it used

⁴⁵² SE, p.237

⁴⁵³ SE, p.244

⁴⁵⁴ SE, p.250

⁴⁵⁵ SE, p.251

Hegel's political philosophy in order to justify its own existence and legitimacy. However, even within those 'dreadful' and oppressive conditions some philosophers were able to write free and genuine philosophy. For example, Schopenhauer is such a free philosopher whose philosophy, Nietzsche hopes, will one day destroy the "beautiful green crops of Hegelianism."⁴⁵⁷

Nietzsche argues that by the middle of the nineteenth century the Prussian state does not require any more philosophical justification and therefore "philosophy has become dispensable for the state."⁴⁵⁸ He welcomes this new situation since he maintains throughout his works that philosophy, art and religion must be free from the powers of the state. In this sense his views fundamentally differ from Hegel's who maintains that freedom in the state is the ultimate aim for all mankind. As Nietzsche himself writes, for him "the emergence of a philosopher on earth is infinitely more important than the continued existence of a state or a university."⁴⁵⁹ For Hegel, it seems, it is the other way around, the continued existence of the state is infinitely more important than the emergence of true philosophers. Nietzsche is concerned about not just philosophers but also artists and saints, for like philosophers they are not just great thinkers or artists or saints but "genuine human beings".

The state and society must, in Nietzsche's view, promote culture which leads to the production of philosophical, artistic or religious genius. Yet, at the same time he admits that the goal of modern society and the state is the opposite - the prevention of this production. For example in his meditation on Schopenhauer Nietzsche recognises that the emergence of true philosophers was prevented by philosophers supported by the state. In Nietzsche's view, the modern state made philosophy its servant by making it a paid civil occupation and as a result produces not great philosophers but

⁴⁵⁶ SE, p.251

⁴⁵⁷ SE, p.252

⁴⁵⁸ SE, p.252

⁴⁵⁹ SE, p.254

only “theoretical human beings”. This is in contrast to ancient Greece where philosophers “were not salaried by the state, but instead were at most honored just once, as was Zeno, by a golden crown and a grave in the Ceramicus.”⁴⁶⁰ Therefore, Nietzsche in his meditation on Wagner sees the need for further “Hellenisation” of modern society.⁴⁶¹

Following Schopenhauer’s (and Burckhardt’s) interpretation of the state, Nietzsche elaborates it further by claiming that the ultimate aim for the state is not just to protect its citizens but also to create an environment beneficial for the emergence of genuine human beings, i.e. philosophers, artists and saints. Nietzsche points out that Schopenhauer “believed that the only purpose of the state was to provide protection from internal enemies, protection from external enemies, and protection from the protectors, and that to ascribe to the state any other purpose other than protection could easily endanger its true purpose.”⁴⁶² Nietzsche with his political project seems to take a step further by claiming that the state ought to promote culture and create favourable conditions for the emergence of genius.

Both Hegel and Nietzsche examine the modern state in its relation to the development of the church and highlight similarities and differences in their respective structures and organisation. In general, according to Hegel, in the modern era the state took over the functions hitherto fulfilled by the church. For example in modern society ethics is not founded on a transcendent God but on the human will. Hegel writes that in the modern era “right and [Social] Morality [*Sittlichkeit*] came to be looked upon as having their foundation in the actual present Will of man, whereas formerly it was referred only to the command of God enjoined as extra, written in the Old and New Testament, or appearing in the form of *particular* Right [as opposed to

⁴⁶⁰ SE, p.243

⁴⁶¹ WB, p.274

⁴⁶² SE, p.238

that based on general principles] in old parchments, as privilegia, or in international compacts.”⁴⁶³ It seems in his critique of morality or values founded upon a transcendent God, Nietzsche, in fact does not differ fundamentally from Hegel. Nietzsche too regards morality or values as based on the human will rather than on divine reason. Hegel suggests that in modern society the notions of good and evil are constructed and guarded by the state. Hegel writes “What special course of action, however, is good or not, is determined, as regards the ordinary contingencies of private life, by the laws and customs of a State.”⁴⁶⁴ Nietzsche seems to agree with this statement but his political project seeks to overcome those state-established values and norms. As he writes in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* the new idol, i.e. state “lies in all languages of good and evil; and whatever it says, it lies – and whatever it has, it has stolen.”⁴⁶⁵ Nietzsche calls us to overcome the ethics which is based on the principles that society or the state is worth more than the individual and that the long-term gratification of the majority is preferable to the short-term benefit of the individual. This is the greatest insight Nietzsche thinks he contributed to the discussion on morality. In *Daybreak* Nietzsche argues that “morality [*Sittlichkeit*] is nothing other (therefore *no more!*) than obedience to custom [*Sitten*], of whatever kind they may be; customs, however, are the *traditional* way of behaving and evaluating.”⁴⁶⁶ One is considered immoral when one does not follow custom (*Sitten*) and moral if one obeys them. However, there were few individuals – the medicine men - who were above customs, beyond morality, i.e. beyond good and evil. Only a medicine man, a ‘kind of demigod’ was able to elevate himself above custom and become a lawgiver, i.e. creator of values.

⁴⁶³ PH, p.440

⁴⁶⁴ PH, p.29

⁴⁶⁵ *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, hereafter Z, p.76

⁴⁶⁶ D, p.10

For Hegel the Church became a political organisation during the Byzantine period and continued to be so later during the Crusades. In the Catholic Church, Hegel argues, reason is subordinated to religious conscience and this creates a contradiction within the church and conflict within society. Similarly to Nietzsche, Hegel suggests that during the middle ages truth became a lie because of the Church itself. Or as Hegel himself puts it in *Philosophy of History*, the three central Christian vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience “turned out the very opposite of what they [were] assumed to be.”⁴⁶⁷ And because of that Christian morality devalues itself. Or as Hegel puts it “social morality [*Sittlichkeit*] was degraded. The Church by acquiring property and possession turns its own eternal truth into a lie. As Hegel argues the Church itself “in its acquisition as an outward existence, of possessions and an enormous property - a state of things which, since that Church despises or professes to despise riches, is none other than a *Lie*.”⁴⁶⁸

As Hegel points out in *Philosophy of History*, the decline and degradation of the Church was not a result of outside forces but a consequence of its own development. Hegel believes that “the corruption of the Church was a native growth”.⁴⁶⁹ This corruption happened partly because Christian God is “sensuous - that the external in a coarse material form, is enshrined in its inmost being.”⁴⁷⁰ Although the Church claims to be an embodiment and manifestation of the absolute on earth, for Hegel it is merely a “sensuous, external thing - common outward existence.”⁴⁷¹

One needs to be aware of the fact that Hegel and Nietzsche share strong anti-Catholic sentiments. In Hegel’s view, the Catholic Church has promoted “slavish deference to Authority”⁴⁷² and degraded itself by remission of sins for money. For

⁴⁶⁷ PH, p.380

⁴⁶⁸ PH, p.381

⁴⁶⁹ PH, p.412

⁴⁷⁰ PH, p.412

⁴⁷¹ PH, p.381

⁴⁷² PH, p.413

example in the *Philosophy of History*, Hegel blames Catholicism for promoting “a slavish religious obedience” in opposition to Protestantism which promotes rational subjective freedom. Hegel regards the Inquisition as a malaise which possessed sixteenth-century Europe. In Hegel’s words “these persecutions spread like an epidemic sickness through Italy, France, Spain and Germany.”⁴⁷³ According to Hegel Martin Luther and the Reformation cured Europe of this moral degradation and malaise.

Hegel was convinced that the Reformation gave to the Germans the self-consciousness of thought which is missing in Catholic France. The French Revolution is the consequence of the lack of self-consciousness. Hegel believes that the Protestant attitude towards men is not as negative or pessimistic as the Catholic. For Catholics all men are sinful; the Protestants, on the other hand, have “confidence in the [Honourable] Disposition of men.”⁴⁷⁴

After the Reformation, Spirit, according to Hegel, advanced and gained a new level of consciousness of its freedom. After the Reformation, secular power gained a recognition that it is “capable of being an embodiment of Truth; whereas it had been formerly regarded as evil only, as incapable of Good.”⁴⁷⁵ Now the Church was transformed from being purely sensuous to being spiritual which Hegel understands as a “infinite subjectivity” embodied in Jesus Christ.

However, Hegel points out that despite the negative impact of the Catholic Church on social morality, in the end, religion and the state are not opposites because “the laws find their highest confirmation in Religion.”⁴⁷⁶ In order to overcome this initial opposition between the church and the state society must be based on reason which is realised, in Hegel’s view, in the modern state. Hegel criticises the Catholic

⁴⁷³ PH, p.427

⁴⁷⁴ PH, p.444

⁴⁷⁵ PH, p.422

⁴⁷⁶ PH, p.449

Church for its promotion of blind obedience and slavish servitude and therefore introduces the notion of the state which becomes for him a manifestation of reason and freedom.

I think that Hegel's critique of the Catholic Church becomes useful in understanding Nietzsche's criticism of the state. Nietzsche criticises the state on the same grounds Hegel criticises the Church. In his meditation on Wagner Nietzsche says that people ought to "condemn the state just as unconditionally as most people already condemn the church."⁴⁷⁷ In other words, he sees the need for radical break with the state; maybe as radical as the Reformation was for the Catholic Church.

Nietzsche agrees with Hegel that during the Middle Ages the church was the unifying force within society and that after the Reformation the state took over this unifying or universal function. Nietzsche recognises that the state in the modern era attempts to provide a link between individuals and keeps all inimical forces at bay. He understands that the state takes over the functions of the church. Yet, at the same time he warns his contemporaries that "the state wants people to worship the very same idols they previously worshipped in the church."⁴⁷⁸ Hegel's political philosophy is in Nietzsche's view, partly to blame for this worshipping of the state. The idea that not the church but the state is the embodiment of the divine on earth will lead to the 'sanctification' of the state.

Whereas Hegel argues that in order to become free one needs to live in the state, Nietzsche maintains that freedom is living beyond the political ramifications of the state. For Hegel the highest human creativity and culture in general are possible only within the state. Nietzsche, on the other hand, throughout his works promotes the idea that a true genius and a genuine culture are possible only outside political boundaries, i.e. beyond the state. In *Schopenhauer as Educator* Nietzsche puts

⁴⁷⁷ WB, p.284

forward his political project by saying that he is concerned only with “the type of men whose teleology points beyond the well-being of a state, that is, with philosophers, and with these only in respect to a world that, for its part, is quite independent of the well-being of the state: the world of culture.”⁴⁷⁹ Thus for Nietzsche, in contrast to Hegel, the world of politics and the world of culture belong to fundamentally distinct realms. This distinction between the sphere of culture (or private sphere) and the political sphere (the sphere of public) is not so significantly expressed in Hegel’s works on politics.

In order to understand Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s political projects one must look at their respective evaluations of the political situation in Germany and Europe during the nineteenth century. It is not surprising that their evaluations of the current political situation and historical events are quite different, for they, as I suggest, correspond to their respective political philosophies.

In general Hegel is quite optimistic and positive about the political and historical situation in Germany and Europe during his lifetime. Nietzsche nearly a half a century later is quite pessimistic in his evaluation of Germany and modern society in general. It seems that Hegel would have welcomed German unity and the establishment of the Second *Reich* for he is greatly disappointed by the loss of unity after the termination of Hohenstaufen rule.⁴⁸⁰ Nietzsche, as is well-known, was, in sharp contrast to Hegel’s sentiments, very critical of the establishment of the German *Reich* in 1871.

Hegel is against feudalism because the hereditary nobility used the powers invested in them by the state to promote their own private interests: “The powerful barons seemed to constitute an intermediate body charged with the defence of liberty;

⁴⁷⁸ SE, p.200

⁴⁷⁹ SE, p.197

⁴⁸⁰ see PH, p.401

but properly speaking, it was only their own privileges which they maintained against the royal power on the one hand and the citizens on the other.”⁴⁸¹ They did not use their power to promote freedom and justice but to gain benefits and privileges. The feudal system of the Middle Ages is for Hegel an expression not of reason but of unreason, “for the fidelity of vassals is not an obligation to the Commonwealth, but a private one - *ipso facto* therefore subject to the sway of chance, caprice, and violence. Universal injustice, universal lawlessness is reduced to a system of dependence on and obligation to individuals.”⁴⁸²

Hegel believes that after the Reformation Germany became a country in which the principle of Freedom had finally realised itself. He greatly idealises the situation in Germany when he writes that “offices of the State are open to every citizen, talent and adaptation being of course the necessary condition.”⁴⁸³ Hegel maintains that freedom manifested in England is only abstract freedom. The English Constitution protects “mere *particular* Rights and particular privileges: the Government is essentially administrative - that is, conservative of the interests of all particular orders and classes.”⁴⁸⁴ Thus English law is not based on a general ethical principle but on particular right; therefore it is not a manifestation of true freedom. Although he is quite critical of England, he likes the English political system which although “utterly inconsistent and corrupt” makes majority of men feel at home in politics.⁴⁸⁵

Nietzsche does not like the idea that every citizen, especially the greatest minds, are directly involved with politics. In *Daybreak* he maintains that “Political and economic affairs are not worthy of being the enforced concern of society’s most gifted spirits: such a wasteful use of the spirit is at bottom worse than having none at

⁴⁸¹ PH, p.429

⁴⁸² PH, p.370

⁴⁸³ PH, p.456

⁴⁸⁴ PH, p.454

⁴⁸⁵ PH, p.454

all.”⁴⁸⁶ The only concerns for gifted spirits should be the highest, i.e. culture. Thus, similarly to Hegel, he believes that politics must remain the domain of a small number of professional politicians (for Hegel, ‘deputies’). Nietzsche writes that “all states in which people other than politicians must concern themselves with politics are badly organised and deserve to perish from this abundance of politicians.”⁴⁸⁷

In general Hegel’s political sympathy lies with constitutional monarchy because he wants the final decision to be taken not by the vote of the majority but by single individual will, i.e. the monarch. He admits that people should have a share in political decisions but he is convinced that only a few are able to understand the complexities and consequences of these decisions. At the same time there are democratic elements in Hegel’s political system for he argues that there must be real deputies not the ‘despoilers’ of the many who represent their political will.⁴⁸⁸ However, it is clear that Hegel is against unlimited liberal democracy for he sees that this leads directly to the subjugation of the minority by the majority. Nietzsche, for similar reasons to Hegel, is against universal suffrage in particular and liberal democracy in general because in his view it will lead to the rule of herd morality and thus the degradation of culture. For Nietzsche, not the right of the majority but the will of the minority has highest value. He understands that in modern society individuals are asked to sacrifice themselves for the universal, i.e. for the state (this opinion is expressed in Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*). In modern society it seems absurd to ask an individual to sacrifice himself for another individual. For a modern man there is a conflict if “an individual rather than a state demands this sacrifice.”⁴⁸⁹ “It seems absurd,” Nietzsche writes, “that one human being should exist for the sake

⁴⁸⁶ D, p.107

⁴⁸⁷ SE, p.239

⁴⁸⁸ PH, p.448

⁴⁸⁹ SE, p.215

of another human being.”⁴⁹⁰ Under the influence of Hegel’s political philosophy, Nietzsche points out, in modern society an individual must sacrifice himself only “for the sake of all others, or at least for as many as possible!”⁴⁹¹ Therefore, in modern ‘mass’ society people do not understand “how your life, the life of the individual, can obtain the highest value, the deepest significance?”⁴⁹²

Hegel rejects the liberal tendencies of nineteenth-century Europe which in his view oppose rational and universal principles by promoting the “atomistic principle, that which insists upon the sway of individual wills.”⁴⁹³ The French Revolution introduced the idea of freedom to many European countries which became, in Hegel’s view, only formally or abstractly free. In France freedom was abstract because it did not emancipate conscience but left it subordinated to the Catholic Church. In Hegel’s view only the revolution which is based on emancipated conscience can claim to be genuinely liberating. In France the Revolution happened without the Reformation and therefore, according to Hegel, it was doomed. Without the Reformation, as history demonstrated, countries “sank back to their old conditions”.⁴⁹⁴ Hegel is not opposed to liberalism as such but he is opposed to the formalism of the French Revolution. I think in this sense Hegel is radically liberal for he insists that consciousness must be liberated from the blind slavish obedience to Church authority. Hegel maintains throughout his works that within a Catholic framework a rational constitution is impossible. And yet, he is seen (also by Nietzsche) as a totalitarian thinker. Nietzsche too opposes the slave morality promoted by Christianity in general and the Catholic Church in particular. Only after the Reformation, in Hegel’s view, has humanity attained the consciousness of freedom. There is “no revolt against the Divine, but a manifestation of that better subjectivity, which recognises the Divine in its own being,

⁴⁹⁰ SE, p.215

⁴⁹¹ SE, p.215

⁴⁹² SE, p.216

⁴⁹³ PH, p.452

which is imbued with the Good and true, and which directs its activities to general and liberal objects bearing the stamp of rationality and beauty.”⁴⁹⁵

Hegel argues that the aim for the German Spirit is “the realisation of absolute Truth as the unlimited self-determination of Freedom - *that* Freedom which has its own absolute form itself as its purport.”⁴⁹⁶ For Hegel, the German people, unlike the French, are the true bearers of the Christian principle which leads to the reconciliation between objective and subjective Spirit and thus to freedom. Hegel, as a Protestant thinker, regarded Luther’s activities and the Reformation in general very highly. For him “Protestantism had introduced the *principle* of Subjectivity, importing religious emancipation and inward harmony, but accompanying this with the *belief* in Subjectivity as evil, and in a power [adverse to man’s highest interests] whose embodiment is ‘the World’.”⁴⁹⁷ On the activities of Luther Hegel writes: “Luther had secured to mankind Spiritual Freedom and the Reconciliation [of the Objective and Subjective] in the concrete: he triumphantly established the position that man’s eternal destiny [his spiritual and moral position] must be wrought out *in himself* [cannot be an *opus operatum*, a work performed *for him*].”⁴⁹⁸

Many commentators seem to overlook the fact that in Hegel’s political system individual will plays a crucial part. Contrary to all those who claim that Hegel was a totalitarian thinker who subjugated the individual will to the will of the state, Hegel insists that the final decisions must be always be taken by an individual, i.e. the monarch. This individual will does not need to be hereditary, for Hegel points out that “Napoleon restored it as a military power, and followed up this step by establishing himself as an individual will at the head of the State.”⁴⁹⁹ Hegel is very positive about

⁴⁹⁴ PH, p.453

⁴⁹⁵ PH, p.408

⁴⁹⁶ PH, p.341

⁴⁹⁷ PH, p.438

⁴⁹⁸ PH, p.441

⁴⁹⁹ PH, p.451

the modern constitutional monarchy in which, according to him “subjects enjoy an equality of rights, and in which the will of the individual is subordinated to that common interest which underlies the whole. This is the advance from Feudalism to *Monarchy*.”⁵⁰⁰ The monarch, in Hegel’s view, gives to the state “an immovable centre”. Hegel argues that the final decision must be taken by an individual who is not elected by majority but selected in “natural way”, i.e. by the hereditary principle. Hegel writes: “The State must have a final and decisive will: but if an individual is to be the final deciding power, he must be so in a direct and natural way, not as determined by choice and theoretic views, etc.”⁵⁰¹ The true monarch prioritises the general interests of the state. For example, Frederick II, in Hegel’s view, was the first monarch who “kept the general interest of the State steadily in view, ceasing to pay any respect to particular interests when they stood in the way of the common weal.”⁵⁰² For Hegel Frederick the Great is the greatest political leader because he “had the consciousness of Universality, which is the profoundest depth to which Spirit can attain, and is Thought conscious of its own inherent power.”⁵⁰³ For Hegel constitutional monarchy is the most preferred political system because it provides stability, continuity and reason in the state affairs which might be lacking in the liberal and democratic political systems. For Hegel monarchy becomes equated with reason. He believes that only those who have “a competent knowledge, experience, and a morally regulated will” have the right to govern.⁵⁰⁴ In other words for Hegel “those who know ought to govern - *oi aristoi*, not ignorance and the presumptuous conceit of ‘knowing better’.”⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰⁰ PH, p.398

⁵⁰¹ PH, p.427

⁵⁰² PH, p.441

⁵⁰³ PH, p.438

⁵⁰⁴ PH, p.456

⁵⁰⁵ PH, p.456

Hegel's concept of the ethical state (*der sittliche Staat*)

The central idea in Hegel's political philosophy is the ethical state (*der sittliche Staat*) which seems to be an ideal constitutional monarchy. For Hegel this ethical state is not just an aggregation of individual wills but has an independent existence of its own. According to Hegel, the state must be an independent substantial unity and "the truth and essence of Right in and for itself - to which the will of its individual members ought to be conformed in order to be true, free Will [...]." ⁵⁰⁶ Thus for Hegel the state is not the general will of individuals as Rousseau argues in his *Social Contract* but has an independent ethical existence. ⁵⁰⁷

The crucial question for anyone who studies Hegel's political philosophy is whether for Hegel the ethical state can exist, outwardly exists, or ought to exist in the world. The answer to this question determines whether Hegel is a totalitarian or utopian thinker. It seems that, in Hegel's view, no modern state is the manifestation of the ethical state. In *Philosophy of History* he differentiates between the ethical (*sittlich*) and moral (*moralisch*) state and claims that only in antiquity did the ethical state exist whereas the contemporary state is merely moral. In general to be ethical is, according to Hegel, to carry out one's duty and obey the universal will while to be moral is to follow one's own convictions and interests. However, the notion of the ethical is by no means easily definable. It seems that the ethical for Hegel is a natural social condition of human beings in which individual customs and rules coincide with a universal legal system. For example, the principle of celibacy promoted by the Catholic Church is not ethical for it is against the natural human condition. Or, as Hegel himself puts it in his lectures on history, "it is not proper to say that Celibacy is

⁵⁰⁶ PH, p.445

⁵⁰⁷ A very thorough account of Nietzsche's criticism of Rousseau can be found in *Nietzsche contra Rousseau* (1991) by Keith Ansell-Pearson.

contrary to Nature, but that it is adverse to Social Morality [*Sittlichkeit*].”⁵⁰⁸ The notion of the ethical is very tightly linked to the notion of freedom. For example, to obey the authority of the Church blindly is also not ethical. The three main religious principles of the Catholic Church - chastity, poverty, obedience – are, in Hegel’s view, opposites of the ethical and in them social morality was degraded.

One needs to examine Hegel’s concept of the ethical state more closely in order to understand his political philosophy. I focus on Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*⁵⁰⁹ in order to reveal the inner dialectics of the relation between the individual, society and the state.⁵¹⁰ Many commentators often misunderstand the notion of the ethical state.⁵¹¹ However, some commentators have examined this notion and offer a well-balanced study of the relationship between an individual and the state. For example, Williams, in his book *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other*, points out that Ludwig Siep “distinguishes two levels of recognition, namely, interpersonal recognition, occurring between two individuals, and recognition as a relation between individuals and the spirit of a people (*Volkgeist*), that is expressed in social institutions.”⁵¹² Williams himself, in his book *Hegel’s Ethics of Recognition*, examines mainly the individual’s relations with other individuals within the state. My task is to examine the relationship between the individual and the state in Hegel’s

⁵⁰⁸ PH, p.380

⁵⁰⁹ The title under which Hegel published his lectures on the philosophy of right in 1821 is *Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse: Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*. As Hegel himself regarded it “this compendium is an enlarged and especially a more systematic exposition of the same fundamental concepts which in relation to this part of philosophy are already contained in a book of mine designed previously for my lectures - the *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*” (Heidelberg, 1817). (Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, p.1.)

⁵¹⁰ The translator of *Philosophy of Right* Knox notes in Hegel’s terminology family and civil society are both ‘states’ although immature kind of states. (PR, p.x.) Williams makes a distinction between the ‘external state’ and the ‘state’, Pelczynski the ‘state’ (*der Staat*) and a ‘strictly political state’. The characteristics of the modern state seem to match the characteristics of ‘civil society’ rather than the ‘state’. Hegel also differentiates between the state and the ‘concept of state’ or the ‘idea of the state’ although for a dialectical thinker this distinction cannot be an absolute one.

⁵¹¹ Bernstein, for example, in his study ‘From self-consciousness to community: act and recognition in the master slave relationship’ focuses also on the individual-individual relation because the state for him does not have a separate identity. See in *The State and Civil Society: Studies in Hegel’s Political Philosophy*, ed. Pelczynski (1984), pp. 14-40

⁵¹² Williams, *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other*, hereafter R, p.84

political philosophy. I ask whether those two sides, the individual and the state, are 'equal' and thus the relation between them is a symmetrical or reciprocal, as Williams for example suggests, or whether this relation is one-sided, non-reciprocal, and thus non-dialectical. In other words, the question is whether the individual is beyond the state and the state beyond the individual in Hegel's political philosophy. This question is fundamentally linked with the whole of Hegel's speculative project and thus I suggest one ought to analyse it in the light of Hegel's methodological work - *The Science of Logic*.⁵¹³ I argue that if one reads the *Philosophy of Right* in the light of the *Logic* Hegel does not belong either to the totalitarian or the individualist traditions because these are based on understanding not reason.

Many twentieth-century commentators accuse Hegel of being a totalitarian and authoritarian thinker. For example Karl Popper, in his well-known work *The Open Society and its Enemies*, insists that Hegel's political philosophy is totalitarian because for him "the state is everything, and the individual nothing."⁵¹⁴ This criticism was first brought against Hegel by Schopenhauer and later supported by Nietzsche. On the other hand Williams, in his book *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the other*, argues that the concept of recognition (*Anerkennung*) plays a fundamental part in Hegel's philosophy. Williams maintains that Hegel's concept of absolute knowing could be reinterpreted as a reciprocal recognition between the world and absolute spirit (*Geist*). In his *Hegel's ethics of recognition*, he elaborates this idea further and argues that Hegel's political project is also based on the notion of the reciprocal recognition between an individual and the state.

With this work I want to counter Popper's claim that Hegel's political philosophy "was inspired by ulterior motives, namely, by his interest in the restoration

⁵¹³ Ilting in his 'The dialectic of civil society' studied Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* in the light of the *Science of Logic* but his focus was on the dialectical transitions from the family through civil society to the state. See in *The State and Civil Society: Studies in Hegel's Political Philosophy*, ed. Pelczynski (1984), pp. 211-27

of the Prussian government of Frederick William III, and that it cannot therefore be taken seriously.”⁵¹⁵ As was said above, Popper’s accusations are not new, for already Schopenhauer had claimed that Hegel was “an illiterate charlatan and agent of the Prussian government who professes crazy mystifying nonsense”. My task is to take Hegel seriously and ask whether for him the relation between the state and individual could be described in Popper’s terms as an absolute subjugation of the individual or Williams’ terms as a reciprocal recognition between the state and individual. The question is whether Hegel’s idea of the state is intrinsically totalitarian. The answer to this question will help us to understand Nietzsche’s critique of Hegel and clarify Nietzsche’s own political project. It also allows us to call into question Nietzsche’s critique of Hegel’s political philosophy and reveal the reasons for Nietzsche’s possible misunderstanding of Hegel.

For that reason in the final part of this chapter I focus on Hegel’s *Science of Logic* which is often overlooked by commentators who write on Hegel’s political philosophy. In *The Science of Logic* Hegel puts forward his speculative method which he claims to follow in all his works. Based on this method I argue that Hegel’s idea of the state is not intrinsically totalitarian. However, I suggest that in some works, for example in the *Philosophy of History* and the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel in fact does not follow his own dialectical method as rigorously as one would expect from an author of the *Science of Logic* and therefore gave an opportunity and reason for criticism.

I argue that the concept of determination (*Bestimmung*) lets us understand the relationship between the state and individual and lets us overcome Hegel’s non-speculative bias towards the state. With the help of *The Science of Logic* I hope to reveal the speculative structure and the inner dialectic of the state-individual

⁵¹⁴ *The Open Society and its Enemies*, hereafter OS, p.31

relationship: the state transcends the individual and the individual transcends the state. But, according to *Science of Logic* both can be beyond each other not absolutely but dialectically. Only understanding makes us to set one absolutely above or beyond the other. On the level of reason this initial contradiction is resolved. It is important to remember that according to the speculative method of Hegel's *Science of Logic* neither the state nor the individual is superior. They both are determined by each other and therefore are in a reciprocal relationship. I hope that by examining the relationship between something and other and finite and infinity in the *Science of Logic* I can reveal the inner dialectic between the state and individual and pinpoint the non-speculative bias in Hegel's political thought.

In his major work on political and ethical theory, the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel offers a profound insight into the inner dialectic of society and structure of the state. In Hegel's view, in the modern state the unity of universal ends and particular interest of individuals concur. Hegel writes in §260 of the *Philosophy of Right*: "The principle of modern states has prodigious strength and depth because it allows the principle of subjectivity to progress to its culmination in the extreme of self-subsistent personal particularity, and yet at the same time brings it back to the substantive unity and so maintains this unity in the principle of subjectivity of itself." Thus in the modern state, according to Hegel, the relationship between the state and the individual is reciprocal, symmetrical and ethical (*Sittlich*). In §257 of *Philosophy of Right* Hegel maintains that "The state is the actuality of the ethical Idea (*Wirklichkeit der sittlichen Idee*) [...] The state exists immediately in custom (*Sitte*), mediately in individual (*Einzelnen*) self-consciousness (*Selbstbewußtsein*), knowledge (*Wissen*), and activity (*Tätigkeit*), while self-consciousness.... finds in the state, as its essence (*Wesen*) and

⁵¹⁵ OS, p.32

the end (*Zweck*) and product (*Produkte*) of its activity, its substantive freedom (*substantielle Freiheit*).”

World history, as discussed in the previous chapter, is understood by Hegel as the development of ethical life from the level of the family through civil society to the state. In his Introduction to *The Philosophy of History* Hegel openly and, as some argue, one-sidedly claims that “the State is thus the embodiment of rational freedom, realizing and recognizing itself in an objective form.”⁵¹⁶ Furthermore, Hegel’s non-speculative bias becomes more evident when he claims that “the State is the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth.”⁵¹⁷ To a commentator who is not very familiar with Hegel’s *Science of Logic* (as one can assume about Popper, Schopenhauer or Nietzsche) these statements will drive one to consider Hegel to be a totalitarian thinker. Only by understanding Hegel’s speculative method can one understand and overcome Hegel’s own bias towards the state over the individual.

Nietzsche in his *Schopenhauer as Educator* repudiates Hegelian dogma that the state is the highest aim of humanity. For Nietzsche, in contrast to Hegel, the state is not rational, free and just, and thus the highest goal for mankind. Quite the contrary, as Nietzsche contends in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: “The state is the coldest of all cold monsters. Coldly it lies, too; and this lie creeps from its mouth: ‘I, the state, am the people.’”⁵¹⁸ Therefore, Nietzsche’s political project points beyond society and beyond the state. Yet, he does not become an individualist as many commentators have suggested. I argue that although Nietzsche’s political project is against the state he is not an individualist thinker. Similarly to Hegel Nietzsche’s political projects lies beyond individualism yet differently from Hegel he does not seek to overcome this individualism by a certain high level of political organisation

⁵¹⁶ PH, p.47

⁵¹⁷ PH, p.39

⁵¹⁸ Z, p.75 and section “Of the New Idol”

but by the notion of culture. Nietzsche notes in *Schopenhauer as Educator* that he is concerned only with the type of men who are quite independent of the state and whose teleology points beyond the well-being of a state toward the world of culture. This shows where Nietzsche's sentiments differ radically from Hegel's philosophy of right. Hegel and Nietzsche, with their respective political projects, seek to overcome the conflict in modern society between the individual and the state – Hegel by introducing the notion of the ethical state, Nietzsche by introducing the notion of culture.

Hegel seeks to overcome the modern conflict within society between the interest of the particular and will of the universal. According to Hegel the main role of public authority (*Polizei*) within civil society is to provide and protect equality in the relationship between individual and society. Hegel writes about the main function of the public authority as follows:

Its primary purpose is to actualize and maintain the universal (*verwirklicht und erhält zunächst das Allgemeine*) contained within the particularity (*Besonderheit*) of civil society, and its control takes the form of an external system and organisation for the protection and security of particular ends and interests *en masse*, inasmuch as these interests subsist only in this universal. This universal (*Allgemeine*) is immanent in the interests of particularity (*Besonderheit*) itself and, in accordance with the idea, particularity makes it the end (*Zweck*) and object (*Gegenstand*) of its own willing (*Willens*) and activity (*Tätigkeit*). In this way ethical principles (*das Sittliche*) circle back and appear in civil society as a factor immanent in it (*Immanentes in die bürgerliche Gesellschaft*); this constitutes the specific character of the Corporation (*Bestimmung der Korporation*).

In other words the public authority ought to actualise “the unity of implicit universal with the subjective particular (*an sich seienden Allgemeinen mit der subjektiven Besonderheit*) (§229). However, this unity or equality is not fully achieved in civil society and therefore Hegel introduces the notion of the corporation – the second ethical root of the state (*sittliche Wurzel des Staats*) – which as a controlling organ unites producers and consumers. However, even on the level of the corporation the unity between universal and particular remains limited and one-sided. It is because of the unlimited nature of individual needs and desires that overproduction will follow

and create even more discord between individual, society and state. For Hegel only the power of universality, i.e. state, would be able to limit the *ad infinitum* production and overproduction. In §185 of *Philosophy of Right* Hegel writes about the necessity of subjugating particular desires to the universal will: “Particularity by itself, given free rein in every direction to satisfy its needs, accidental caprices, and subjective desires, destroys itself and its substantive concept in this process of gratification. At the same time, the satisfaction of need, necessary and accidental alike, is accidental because it breeds new desires without end, is in thoroughgoing dependence on caprice and external accident, and is held back by the power of universality.” On the level of the corporation, Hegel argues, particularity and universality are united, yet only in an “inward fashion”.

In civil society, Hegel writes, the *bourgeois* “has to try to gain recognition (*Anerkennung*) for himself by external proofs of success in his business, and to these proofs no limits can be set (*Darlegungen, welche unbegrenzt sind*).”⁵¹⁹ If one lives in the state of universal egoism where one treats everybody as a means rather than end one lives, according to Hegel, solely in civil society.

The corporation sets certain limits to this endless productive expansion. As a member of a corporation one needs, according to Hegel, “no external marks (*äußeren Bezeugungen*) beyond his own membership as evidence of his skill and his regular income and subsistence, i.e., as evidence that he is somebody (*es etwas ist*). It is also recognized (*anerkannt*) that he belongs to a whole (*Ganzen*) which is itself an organ of the entire society (*Glied der allgemeinen Gesellschaft*), and that he is actively concerned in promoting the comparatively disinterested end of this whole.” (§253) However, even the corporation provides only restricted unification of the particular and universal. Hegel suggests that only on the level of the ethical state is the genuine

⁵¹⁹ PR, notes to section 253

unity of the particular and universal will achieved and the relationship between individual and state made genuinely reciprocal.

Yet, the existence of poverty and unemployment in the modern society is evidence of the non-reciprocal relationship between individual and society and the state. The poor cannot wholly participate in the governing of the society and therefore they are beyond society. As Williams also points out that “the poor are not recognised by the external state.”⁵²⁰ Or as Avineri argues, for Hegel the rabble (*Pöbel*) is “a group within society which find itself totally outside it.”⁵²¹ In the next chapter I hope to demonstrate that not just the poor but also artists are not recognised by the external state and thus they are positively beyond society.

Because of poverty the relationship between individual and society or the state is not equal, symmetrical or reciprocal. For Hegel there is no reciprocity between the poor and the “mature civil society”. Political structures like the public authority and corporation, introduced by Hegel, do not overcome this opposition. As Hegel points out in §244 of the *Philosophy of Right* “the important question how poverty is to be abolished is one of the most disturbing problems which agitate modern society.” Avineri notes that “after thus discarding the various possible alternatives for the elimination of poverty, Hegel gloomily remarks that it remains inherent and endemic to modern society.”⁵²² “This is the only time in his system,” Avineri points out, “where Hegel raises a problem - and leaves it open.”⁵²³

The existence of poverty reveals that the relationship between an individual society or the state is not always that of reciprocal recognition. Because the poor are like artists beyond society, the problem of poverty in Hegel’s political philosophy needs to be addressed here. The relation between the poor and the state in Hegel’s

⁵²⁰ Williams, *Hegel’s Ethics of Recognition* hereafter HE, p.357

⁵²¹ Avineri, *Hegel’s Theory of the Modern State*, hereafter HT, p.150

⁵²² HT, p.153

⁵²³ HT, p.154

Philosophy of Right is not just an economic problem as it reveals the authoritarian structure of society. In Williams' view the existence of poverty is tragic since the relation between the individual and society is one-sided and non-reciprocal. Williams points out that within Hegel's political project "the rabble presents not merely an economic issue, but an ethical-social issue, arising from non-recognition and deprivation, while exhibiting moral degradation and corruption."⁵²⁴ Furthermore, as I argue, poverty is *the* ethical issue since as Hegel maintains in §244 of the *Philosophy of Right* it will lead "to the loss of sense of right and wrong (*Verluste des Gefühls des Rechts, der Rechtlichkeit und der Ehre*).

In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel describes two main ways the state seeks to overcome this conflict within society: first, subsistence from public sources (or wealthier classes) and, second, overproduction which is discussed in §246. As Hegel demonstrates, both methods in the end fail to overcome the problem of poverty and thus reconcile the individual and the state.

For Hegel, taking part in the process of production and holding private property constitute the essence of personality. Hegel maintains that "property is the *embodiment* of personality." (§51) As Avineri correctly points out for Hegel "through property man's existence is recognised by others,"⁵²⁵ or correspondingly, as in the case of poverty, it is not recognised by others. That is why Avineri claims that "poverty becomes for him not merely the fight of people deprived of their physical needs, but human beings deprived of their personality and humanity as well."⁵²⁶ Therefore, Hegel contends that if the poor receive state benefits and do not have an opportunity to earn their own income they will lose their individual self-respect, morality and sense of humanity. Hegel writes in §245 that if "the needy would receive

⁵²⁴ HE, p.357

⁵²⁵ HT, p.136

⁵²⁶ HT, p.136

subsistence directly, not by means of their work [...] this would violate the principle of civil society and the feeling of individual independence and self-respect (*Gefühls ihrer Individuen von ihrer Selbständigkeit und Ehre*).”

The second way to overcome poverty and the asymmetry in the state-individual relation is when the state lets the poor take part in the process of production, i.e. grants them a job. Hegel rejects this as a genuine solution of the problem. Hegel points out that “in this event the volume of production would be increased, but the evil consists precisely in an excess of production and in the lack of a proportionate number of consumers who are themselves also producers.” (§245) “It hence becomes apparent,” Hegel continues, “that despite an excess of wealth civil society is not rich enough, i.e. its own resources are insufficient to check excessive poverty and the creation of a penurious rabble (*Pöbel*).” (§245) In order to overcome this internal conflict the mature civil society or the state is forced outwards, to go beyond itself, to seek new markets by colonisation. In §246 Hegel calls this outward movement the “inner dialectic of civil society”. Mature civil society (*ausgebildete bürgerliche Gesellschaft*), Hegel argues in §248 is driven (*getrieben*) outwards since so it “supplies itself with new demand (*Bedarf*) and field for its industry (*Feld ihres Arbeitsfleißes*)”. In the modern era as Hegel points out in *The Philosophy of History* it is England’s ‘weighty responsibility’ to ‘colonize’ and ‘civilize’ the world: “For their commercial spirit urges them to traverse every sea and land, to form connections with barbarous peoples, to create wants and stimulate industry, and first and foremost to establish among them the conditions necessary to commerce, viz. the relinquishment of a life of lawless violence, respect for property, and civility to strangers.”⁵²⁷

⁵²⁷ PH, p.455

The state which, on the other hand, does not have within itself this principle towards outwards movement is destined to decline. For example, Hegel writes: “On the whole, the diffusion of Indian culture is only a dumb, deedless expansion; that is, it presents no political action. The people of India have achieved no foreign conquest, but have been on every occasion vanquished themselves.”⁵²⁸ On the other hand Mahometan religion and Arab conquests show that there is a “continual onward movement; nothing abides firm.”⁵²⁹ At the end of the Mediaeval World, the Crusades and discovery of America express the outwards movement i.e. “the desire on the part of man to become acquainted with *his* world.”⁵³⁰ The same drive outwards was present, in Hegel’s view, in the Roman World: “[...] the State directs its forces outwards -i.e., in the *second period* - and makes its *debut* on the theatre of general history; this is the noblest period of Rome - the Punic Wars and the contact with the antecedent World-Historical people.”⁵³¹ Yet, as in the case of civil society the movement outwards did not bring a long-term solution, for the Roman Empire’s world-conquering extension “paved the way for its fall.”⁵³²

It is important to note here that the reason for outward movement in the Greek world is the same as in the modern world, i.e. overcoming poverty. In *The Philosophy of History* Hegel argues that in Greece “a part of the poorer classes would not submit to the degradation of poverty, for everyone felt himself a free citizen. The only expedient, therefore, that remained, was colonisation.”⁵³³ During the second period, the period of “victory and prosperity,” Greeks expanded to Ionia, Italy, Sicily, the Black Sea and “colonisation thus became a means of maintaining some degree of equality among citizens; but,” as Hegel immediately adds, “this means is only a

⁵²⁸ PH, p.142

⁵²⁹ PH, p.358

⁵³⁰ PH, p.410

⁵³¹ PH, p.281

⁵³² PH, p.282

⁵³³ PH, p.233

palliative, and the original inequality, founded on the difference of property, immediately reappears.”⁵³⁴ The Greek World declined because as Hegel argues: “while the nation directs its energies outwards, it becomes unfaithful to its principles at home, and internal dissension follows upon the ceasing of the external excitement.”⁵³⁵

Not only are the poor beyond society for Hegel. Three aspects of Absolute Spirit, art, philosophy and religion are also beyond objective spirit, i.e. society and the state. Yet, similarly to poverty they are not absolutely beyond the state. “Art, religion and philosophy,” Avineri writes, are “spheres transcending the state yet functioning within its context.”⁵³⁶ Poets, saints, and philosophers are all beyond society - not negatively, but positively, as I try to demonstrate in the next chapter. Being beyond society is an important characteristic for an ‘ethical genius’ and belongs to the very nature of society and the structure of state. For example, as Pelczynski points out in *Hegel’s Political Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives* (1971), Socrates and Jesus Christ were beyond society because “only an ethical genius, such as Socrates or Jesus, can question all the basic values of a community and thus transcend its ethical life”.⁵³⁷

For Hegel there is the “world beyond” above and over the world of caprice and barbarous manners: “This realm it sets over against a world beyond (*jenseitigen Welt*), an intellectual realm (*intellektuellen Reiche*), whose content is indeed the truth of its (the principle’s) mind (*Wahrheit des Geistes*), but a truth not yet thought and so still veiled in barbarous imagery. This world beyond, as the power of mind (*geistige Macht*) over the mundane heart (*wirkliche Gemüt*), acts against the latter as a compulsive and frightful force.” (§359) Yet, as the final paragraph 360 of *Philosophy of Right* reveals, in the state, in Hegel’s view, those two worlds are reconciled: “The

⁵³⁴ PH, p.233

⁵³⁵ PH, p.244

⁵³⁶ HT, p.101

⁵³⁷ Pelczynski, *Hegel’s Political Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives*, hereafter HPP, p.28.

realm of the fact has discarded its barbarity and unrighteous caprice, while the realm of the truth has abandoned the world beyond and its arbitrary force, so that the true reconciliation which discloses the state as the image and actuality of reason has become objective.”

It is important to point out that for Hegel the state is an entity above the combined will of the individuals and that has an autonomous will and therefore is able to act and protect its own interests. Hegel regards the state not just as a promoter of the universal or the ethical but also protector of individualistic and non-ethical aims. In state-state relations the individuality of the state becomes clearly apparent. In §321 of *Philosophy of Right* Hegel points out that “the state has individuality, and individuality is in essence an individual, and in the sovereign an actual, immediate individual.”⁵³⁸

What Hegel means by individuality is “awareness of one’s existence as a unity in sharp distinction from others.” (§322) In state-state relationships states manifest this individuality. Hegel writes that this individuality “manifests itself here in the state as a relation to other states, each of which is autonomous *vis-à-vis* the other. This autonomy embodies the mind’s actual awareness of itself as a unity and hence it is the most fundamental freedom which a people possesses as well as its highest dignity.” (§322) In §331 Hegel writes: “The nation state is mind in its substantive rationality and immediate actuality and is therefore the absolute power on earth. It follows that every state is sovereign and autonomous against its neighbours.”

Thus it is clear that according to Hegel the state has its own ‘private’ interests, selfish ends, and passions, and thus acts as a particular person. In a sense the state has a ‘personality’ for it has its ‘private’ property. In international relations states as particular entities “enter into relations with one another. Hence their relations are on a

⁵³⁸ see also Paragraph 279

larger scale a maelstrom of external contingency and the inner particularity of passions, private interests and selfish ends, abilities and virtues, vices, force, and wrong. All these whirl together, and in their vortex the ethical whole itself, the autonomy of the state, is exposed to contingency.”

At the international level the state acts like a *bourgeois* within civil society, only concerned with self-interest and self-preservation. Thus one can claim, following Hegel’s thought, that the state-state relations correspond to the ‘civil society of states’. However, it is interesting that, in Hegel’s view, these ‘personal’, ‘selfish’ and ‘bourgeois’ aspects which are present in the state-state relationship vanish in the state-individual relationship. In the state and individual relationship, Hegel claims, this ‘private’ character of the state disappears and state loses somehow its ‘private’ interests and personality. Hegel seems to overlook the fact that the state always has property thus personality and therefore is bound to act as a *bourgeois* within civil society.

Hegel’s concept of the state is in a sense only ‘internally’ ethical. In its external affairs the state acts as a non-ethical entity. Only by absolute separation of the State’s internal and external affairs can Hegel succeed in keeping the notion of the ethical state. Therefore one can see that Hegel’s concept of the state, in fact, includes both the external ‘non-ethical state’ and internal ‘ethical state’ without the apparent contradiction.

As in the case of poverty, in the case of war there appears to be asymmetry in the relationship between the individual and the state. Hegel, in contradiction to his own speculative method, is in *Philosophy of History* and *Philosophy of Right* biased towards the state over the individual. As Williams in *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other* points out for Hegel in the case of war “the state is concerned not with

the individual as such but only with the preservation of the whole.”⁵³⁹ This is what Williams calls “tragic recognition”. By introducing the notion of heroism and patriotism at the end of *Philosophy of Right* Hegel emphasises the importance of the state over an individual. It is always the individual who ought to transcend himself and sacrifice himself for the state. A similar point is made by Avineri who argues that “war, to Hegel, is precisely the transcendence of material values - the ability of the individual to go beyond his own, narrow, civil society interests and coalesce with his fellow citizens for a common endeavour.”⁵⁴⁰

Hegel’s non-speculative bias towards the state makes the relationship between the state and individual not one of reciprocal recognition but rather analogous to the relationship between master and slave. The master-slave relationship is in detail elaborated by Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* in a chapter on self-consciousness.⁵⁴¹ There are many commentators, for example Kojève and Sartre, who regard the master-slave relationship as fundamental to Hegel’s political theory. Therefore, a brief overview of Hegel’s notion of the master-slave relationship seems necessary.⁵⁴²

The master-slave relationship is an example of an asymmetrical and one-sided recognition. The master imposes itself on the slave as a supreme value and the slave recognises this. The master-slave relation is a struggle of obedience and subjugation. This struggle is the origin of all states. “The origin of a state,” Hegel writes in *The Philosophy of History*, “involves imperious lordship on the one hand, instinctive

⁵³⁹ R, p.202

⁵⁴⁰ HT, p.196

⁵⁴¹ See *Phenomenology of Spirit*, especially chapter on ‘Independence and dependence of self-consciousness: Lordship and Bondage’ and ‘Stoicism, Scepticism and the Unhappy Consciousness’. (PS, pp.104-138)

⁵⁴² On this issue see also Bernstein’s article ‘From self-consciousness to community: act and recognition in the master-slave relationship’ in *The State and Civil Society: Studies in Hegel’s Political Philosophy*, ed. Pelczynski (1984), pp.14-40

submission on the other.”⁵⁴³ However, the irony of the master-slave relationship is that neither side is able absolutely to negate the other.⁵⁴⁴ They need to recognise each other for the sake of their own existence. This recognition is not reciprocal but asymmetrical (similar to Fichte’s *Aufforderung*). Neither stoic, sceptic or unhappy consciousness (*das unglückliche Bewußtsein*) is able to overcome, in Hegel’s view, the dichotomy of master-slave. It is a characteristic of unhappy consciousness to understand the individual absolutely beyond society and vice versa. Only on the level of Reason, Hegel argues, is the conflict overcome and can the relationship become reciprocal.

In response to the contemporary French reading of Hegel, Williams argues that the master-slave relation is only a ‘particular instance’ or ‘deficient mode’ of recognition, and not the only foundation of Hegel’s political philosophy. “It is important,” he points out, “not to identify or confuse the concept of recognition with one of its possible instances or examples, e.g., master slave... Such confusion leads many to the erroneous conclusion that master/slave exhausts Hegel’s theory of intersubjectivity.”⁵⁴⁵

The concept of recognition (*Anerkennen*) was first introduced into German Idealism by Fichte and later further elaborated by Hegel. In *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other* Williams argues that Hegel’s concept of absolute knowing is in a sense reciprocal recognition. Williams develops his argument further and claims that Hegel’s political and ethical philosophy is also based on the notion of reciprocal recognition. Houlgate writes: “Williams defends this interpretation by arguing that Hegel understands all forms of genuine human community and interaction - including

⁵⁴³ PH, p.46

⁵⁴⁴ See Hegel’s account of first and second negation in *The Science of Logic*.

⁵⁴⁵ R, p.16

not just civil society and the state, but also family relations and forgiveness - as modes of reciprocal recognition between individuals.”⁵⁴⁶

This reciprocal recognition is understood as “allowing the other to be what it is” or “letting the other go free”.⁵⁴⁷ Houlgate argues that “recognition thus does not involve the reduction of the other to a mere instrument of my wants and desires, but rather what Williams calls ‘membership or partnership with other’”.⁵⁴⁸ However, in the case of the state and individual this relationship seems not to be a reciprocal recognition. For example in the case of poverty the relationship between individual and the state is neither reciprocal nor ethical. In international affairs the relationship between the states is not, as Williams also points out, reciprocal or ethical. Williams argues that according to Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* “although states may and do reciprocally recognize each other, this reciprocal recognition does not issue or result in the formation of an international ‘We’ or binding supernatural law.”⁵⁴⁹ The reciprocal recognition can, according to Williams, be both ethical on the interpersonal level and non-ethical in international while it seems that for Hegel only the ethical relation could be a reciprocal recognition.

I believe this sharp distinction between two levels of recognition disappears and it is possible to overcome Hegel’s bias towards the state by turning to Hegel’s own work *The Science of Logic*. I suggest that one needs to understand the individual-state relation in the light of the concept of determination (*Bestimmung*). I hope to demonstrate through the *Logic* that “Hegel’s philosophy does not seek to swallow up individuality and difference in an all-embracing and all-consuming

⁵⁴⁶ Houlgate, ‘Hegel and Fichte: Recognition, Otherness, and Absolute Knowing,’ hereafter HFR, p.3

⁵⁴⁷ R, p.155

⁵⁴⁸ HFR, p.4

⁵⁴⁹ HE, p.496

absolute, but rather takes individuality and differentiation seriously as essential features of the society and the world in which we live.”⁵⁵⁰

In his Preface to the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel refers to the *Science of Logic* as setting out the “procedure and method” of this work. *The Philosophy of Right* is in Hegel own words only “an explanatory note” to the *Science of Logic*. Therefore, it seems necessary to examine Hegel’s *Logic* more closely for it might be beneficial to our understanding of the relationship between the individual and the state in Hegel’s political thought. It may also help us to understand the reasons for Nietzsche’s criticism of Hegel’s political project.

In his note to chapter ten of *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the other* Williams admits that the concept of recognition does not appear and bear any significance in Hegel’s *Logic*. “It should be pointed out,” he writes, “that Hegel does not use the term self-recognition in other in the logic... . The concept of recognition is more appropriate in Hegel’s *Philosophie des Geistes* and *Sittlichkeit*.”⁵⁵¹ The concept of determination, however, appears in all Hegel’s works and as I suggest it has a significant role to play in Hegel’s political philosophy.

Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* is the process of determination in the social, political and ethical sphere as the *Science of Logic* is in the speculative sphere. The *Philosophy of Right* starts with the “pure indeterminacy” of the will (§5) and then Hegel describes the transition from undifferentiated indeterminacy to differentiation and determination. “Through this positing itself as something determinate,” Hegel writes in §6, “the ego steps in principle into determinate existence. This is the absolute moment, the finitude or particularization of the ego.” Further in §7 Hegel continues: “The will is the unity of both these moments. It is particularity reflected into itself and so brought back to universality, i.e. it is individuality. It is the self-

⁵⁵⁰ HFR, p.3

determination of the ego, which means that at one and the same time the ego posits itself as its own negative, i.e. as restricted and determinate, and yet remains by itself, i.e. in its self-identity and universality.”

Hegel understands this process of determination in the social sphere as a transition from abstract right through morality to ethical life. I seek to understand the state-individual relation through the concept of determination. As Hegel wrote in §31 of *Philosophy of Right*: “The method whereby, in philosophic science, the concept develops itself out of itself is expounded in logic and is here likewise presupposed. Its development is a purely immanent progress, the engendering of its determinations.”

I argue that Hegel’s analysis of the relationship between something and other (or finitude and infinity) in *Science of Logic* provides us with a speculative clue as to how to understand the relationship between the state and individual in Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*. Hegel is the philosopher of the ‘other’ and ‘otherness’ as Williams notes in his Introduction to *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the problem of the other*.⁵⁵² Williams argues against Levinas’ interpretation of Hegel, maintaining that “a careful reading of Hegel’s concept of recognition will show that Hegel does not collapse the other into the same.”⁵⁵³ I argue that Hegel’s concept of determination demonstrates the dialectical difference and equality between the concept of something and other or the state and individual. As Hegel himself points out, “the determination, as such, is an open relationship to the other.”⁵⁵⁴

In the *Science of Logic* Hegel reveals the dialectical relationship between many concepts, among others something and other and finitude and infinity. He demonstrates that for a speculative thinker something and other are not radically

⁵⁵¹ R, pp. 279-80

⁵⁵² R, p.2

⁵⁵³ R, p.142

⁵⁵⁴ SL, p.124

beyond each other for they determine each other and therefore are implicated in each other. Hegel claims in the *Logic* that “something *through its own nature* relates itself to the other, because otherness is posited in it as its own moment; its being-within-itself includes the negation within it, by means of which alone it now has its affirmative determinate being. But the other is also qualitatively distinguished from this and is thus posited as outside the something.”⁵⁵⁵

If the state is the other of the individual and the individual is something other than the state, the individual by limiting the state is itself limited because “*through the limit something is what it is, and in the limit it has its quality.*”⁵⁵⁶ The individual then is not just the first negation of the state i.e. the limit of the state, but also the second negation, the other of the state, the negation of the negation. If one follows Hegel’s *Logic*, both the individual and the state must have “their determinate being *beyond* each other and *beyond* their limit; the limit as the non-being of each is the other of both.”⁵⁵⁷ And as in the case of unrest within civil society (see §246 of *Philosophy of Right*): “The other determination is the unrest of the something in its limits in which it is immanent, an unrest which is the *contradiction* which impels the something out beyond itself.”⁵⁵⁸ Civil society, as finite, has a contradiction within itself, the poor, i.e. individual, and because of this unrest is forced to colonisation, i.e. to go beyond itself.

Things understood as absolutely one-sided are, according to Hegel, finite things. “Finite things *are*,” Hegel writes, “but their relation to themselves is that they are *negatively* self-related and in this very self-relation send themselves away beyond themselves, beyond their being.”⁵⁵⁹ Thus an individual understood *absolutely* beyond society and the state is only negatively determined and finite. However, Hegel

⁵⁵⁵ SL, p.125

⁵⁵⁶ SL, p.126

⁵⁵⁷ SL, p.127

⁵⁵⁸ SL, p.128

continues, “it is not in the sublation of finitude in general that infinity in general comes to be; the truth is rather that the finite is only this, through its own nature to become itself the infinite.”⁵⁶⁰ Hegel maintains that “the infinite as thus posited over against the finite” ought to be called “the *spurious infinity*, the infinity of understanding.”⁵⁶¹ Similarly, the state which is posited over and against an individual ought to be called a spurious state or the state of understanding not reason. In the *Philosophy of Right* §183 Hegel maintains that the state in which the individual and the state are absolutely beyond each other is called “external state, the state based on need, the state as the Understanding envisages it.”

In this spurious state of understanding neither the individual nor the state can reach each other because, like spurious infinity, they have “the fixed determination of a *beyond (Jenseits)*, which cannot be reached, for the very reason that *it is not meant* to be reached, because the determinateness of the beyond, of the *affirmative* negation, is not let go (*nicht abgelassen wird*).”⁵⁶² Only if both, the individual and the state, do not fix themselves in the beyond, let each other go, does the relation between the state and individual become reciprocal and ethical.

According to the *Logic* the relationship between the state and individual ought to be understood not as “spurious infinity” but rather as an “infinite progress”. In the infinite progress, Hegel argues, “the finite is the sublation of itself, it includes within itself its negation, infinity - the *unity* of both. There is a movement away from the finite to the infinite, the beyond of the finite - the *separation* of both, but beyond the infinite is another finite - the beyond; the infinite contains finitude - the *unity* of both; but this finite, too, is a negative of the infinite - the *separation* of both; and so on.”⁵⁶³

I argue that, according to Hegel’s *Science of Logic*, the relationship between the

⁵⁵⁹ SL, p.129

⁵⁶⁰ SL, p.138

⁵⁶¹ SL, p.139

⁵⁶² SL, p.142

individual and the state or society ought to be understood as a self-closing and circular movement where both the individual and the state or society are only moments of the whole. By positing one over the other (for example state or society over the individual) one in fact remains in the realm of understanding and the relationship becomes similar to that of spurious infinity. Only by understanding the state or society as the negation of the individual and an individual as a sublation of the state or society does one remain within the framework of Hegel's speculative method. If one seeks to understand the state-individual relationship speculatively or with reason one needs to avoid bias towards either side of this relationship. Hegel himself, I argue, did not always succeed and this gave the grounds for Nietzsche's (and many other commentator's) criticism. However, if one examines Hegel's own speculative method more closely one can overcome this bias towards the state and society in general and avoid misunderstanding of Hegel's political philosophy.

Hegel and Nietzsche on the individual

For Hegel, individuals play an important part in world history. Spirit is manifested and its aim realised in individuals. Although people are limited in their interests and aims, the World Spirit uses individuals to realise itself. Hegel maintains: "In human knowledge and volition, as its material element, Reason attains positive existence."⁵⁶⁴ Or, in other words, without a subjective will and reason, the Absolute Reason would not be positively present in the World. Through human will and reason the aim, destiny and result of World History becomes real. Hegel writes in *Philosophy of History* : "Aims, principles, etc., have a place in our thoughts, in our

⁵⁶³ SL, p.151

⁵⁶⁴ PH, p.38

subjective design only; but not yet in the sphere of reality. That which exists for itself only, is a possibility, a potentiality; but has not yet emerged into Existence.”⁵⁶⁵

Therefore world history consists of two elements, first, spirit and second, human will. Hegel writes that this second element must be introduced “in order to produce actuality - viz., actuation, realization; and whose motive power is the Will - the activity of man in the widest sense.”⁵⁶⁶ In other words only through human will can the Idea realise and manifest itself. Hegel argues as follows : “It is only by this activity that that Idea as well as abstract characteristics generally, are realized, actualized; for of themselves they are powerless.”⁵⁶⁷ In other words according to Hegel only through human activity can world history move forward and progress towards its ultimate aim - absolute reason and freedom.

However, Hegel points out that only a few men in world history understood this universal principle fully. One of them was the Prussian king Frederick the Great (1712-86). Hegel admired Frederick’s achievements and writes that he had “the consciousness of Universality, which is the profoundest depth to which Spirit can attain, and is Thought conscious of its own inherent power.”⁵⁶⁸ For Hegel history is a process during which Spirit attains actuality through World Historic Individuals. In Hegel’s view Socrates and Jesus Christ both introduced a new self-consciousness on the part of Spirit.

In Nietzsche’s philosophy, too, the individual plays a crucial part. However, I argue, that Nietzsche’s political project is neither radical individualism nor proto-fascist as different commentators want it to be. It contains, in fact, quite an ‘egalitarian’ principle. Nietzsche firmly believes that every human being has the potentiality to become a genius. In *Schopenhauer as Educator* Nietzsche states this

⁵⁶⁵ PH, p.22

⁵⁶⁶ PH, p.22

⁵⁶⁷ PH, p.22

⁵⁶⁸ PH, p.348

quite clearly when he says: “each of us bears within himself a productive uniqueness as the kernel of his being.”⁵⁶⁹ For Nietzsche there is a creative potential in every human being but society often does not allow to actualise this potential. In addition, also because of laziness, in Nietzsche’s view, this uniqueness is not realised by many people. Every human being lives in a sense ‘beyond society’, in solitude, which is the source of human greatness. Nietzsche writes that “the fate of solitude is the gift he receives from his fellow human beings; regardless of where he lives, the desert and the cave are always with him.”⁵⁷⁰ This solitude might lead to greatness but also to slave morality if one lets himself to be subjugated by society or oppressed by one’s own melancholy.

There is a second danger for the people who seek to realise this potential in “pure science”, i.e., dialectical scholasticism. Such individuals “perish as a human being and merely live a ghostly existence in the realm of ‘pure knowledge’ and live “without courage and confidence, denying, doubting, rankling, dissatisfied, in half-hearted hopefulness, in anticipated disappointment.”⁵⁷¹

And the final obstacle to becoming a great individual is one’s own individuality or what Nietzsche calls “moral or intellectual hardening.” It is the case when an individual “tears the bond that links him with his ideal; he ceases to be fruitful in this or that field, to propagate, and he becomes feeble or useless where culture is concerned. The uniqueness of his being has become an unpartable, unimpartable atom, a cold stone.”⁵⁷² Because of this intellectual hardening an individual becomes culturally non-productive. For Nietzsche every human being has this uniqueness but everyone “can just as easily be ruined by this uniqueness as by the

⁵⁶⁹ SE, p.192

⁵⁷⁰ SE, p.192

⁵⁷¹ SE, p.192

⁵⁷² SE, p.192

fear of this uniqueness, by oneself as by abandoning one's self, by yearning as by hardening, and to live at all means to be in danger."⁵⁷³

In *Schopenhauer as Educator* Nietzsche points out that every human being knows his or her uniqueness and value, but at the same time "they all are fearful" and therefore "hide behind customs and opinions."⁵⁷⁴ People are fearful of their neighbour "who demands convention and who cloaks himself with it."⁵⁷⁵ Nietzsche asks after the origin of this fear and seeks to find reasons why potentially great human beings subjugate themselves to the customs of society. Nietzsche asks "what is it that forces the individual to fear his neighbour, to think and act like a part of a herd instead of taking pleasure in being himself?"⁵⁷⁶ Nietzsche thinks that the answer to that question is convenience and indolence, in short, "the tendency towards laziness". Nietzsche sees the task of educators in helping lazy and fearful human beings to overcome their fears and laziness and fulfil their creative potential. Schopenhauer, in Nietzsche's view was such a educator and one needs to read Schopenhauer's philosophy in order to free oneself from fear and laziness.

For Nietzsche only great artists, philosophers, and saints overcome all those dangers and general laziness and realise their own uniqueness. Nietzsche writes in *Schopenhauer as Educator* "artists alone despise this lethargic promenading draped in borrowed manners and appropriated opinions, and they expose the hidden secret, everyone's bad conscience, the principle that every human being is a one-of-a-kind miracle."⁵⁷⁷ Only artists, in Nietzsche's view, are courageous enough to show us "how every human being, down to each movement of his muscles, is himself and himself alone; moreover, they show us that in the strict consistency of his uniqueness he is beautiful and worthy of contemplation, as novel and incredible as every work of

⁵⁷³ SE, p.193

⁵⁷⁴ SE, p.171

⁵⁷⁵ SE, p.171

⁵⁷⁶ SE, p.171

nature, and anything but boring.”⁵⁷⁸ Therefore, the task of any political philosophy ought to be to fight with those dangers and general laziness and to encourage every human being to realise his unique potential.

Nietzsche admits that it is not easy to live beyond society in this way. He writes that “the human being who does not want to be a part of the masses need only cease to go easy on himself.”⁵⁷⁹ For Nietzsche true freedom is not within the state or society, but is liberation from public opinion, fear of the masses and laziness of oneself. Only a person who is above or beyond society is truly liberated. The person who has not realised his potential is the worst kind of human being. In Nietzsche’s words “there is no more desolate or repulsive creature in nature than the human being who has evaded his genius...”⁵⁸⁰

Hitherto history, according to Nietzsche, has been ruled by “publicly opinion pseudo-human beings.”⁵⁸¹ The true and free human beings, i.e., “living human beings” are above and beyond public opinion and opinionators. In contrast to Hegel, who insists that an individual must in the end obey the laws of the society, i.e., the universal, Nietzsche maintains that one needs to live according to one’s *own* standards and laws. In his view, an individual is not accountable to the state or society but only to himself for his own existence. Yet, at the same time Nietzsche is not against society as such. As long as society creates the right conditions for the production of great human beings, Nietzsche seems to be content with it. For example in *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche writes “the society should *not* exist for the sake of society but only as foundation and scaffolding upon which a select species of being is able to raise itself to its higher task and in general to a higher existence.”⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁷ SE, p.171

⁵⁷⁸ SE, p.172

⁵⁷⁹ SE, p.172

⁵⁸⁰ SE, p.172

⁵⁸¹ SE, p.172

⁵⁸² BGE, p.193

High above every human being there is, according to Nietzsche, a true human being and the task is to become this true self. In Nietzsche's words "your true being does not lie deeply hidden within you, but rather immeasurably high above you, or at least above what you commonly take to be your ego."⁵⁸³ Educators do not change you but only open you, reveal the greatness within or high above one's self. Nietzsche writes that "your true educators and cultivators reveal to you the true primordial sense and basic stuff of your being."⁵⁸⁴ Therefore, he calls those educators 'liberators': "Your educators can be nothing other than your liberators."⁵⁸⁵ Educators do not make you what you are not but reveal what you truly are. They liberate one's self from fear and laziness. Therefore for Nietzsche "education is liberation."⁵⁸⁶ In Nietzsche's words education is a removal of all weeds, rubble and vermin that seeks to harm the growth of great human beings. In order to reveal the true being, one ought to "reflect on one's own educators and cultivators."⁵⁸⁷

For the young Nietzsche Schopenhauer was this kind of educator and he often reflected on Schopenhauer's philosophy and life. It must be noted that the later Nietzsche became disillusioned with Schopenhauer and his philosophy. However, the general principle of education as liberation remained central to Nietzsche's philosophy. As Nietzsche points out in his meditation on Schopenhauer, he does not say that only Wagner or Schopenhauer are educators, for he was seeking among his own contemporaries to find "moral examples and people of distinction, visible embodiments of creative morality in this age."⁵⁸⁸

Nietzsche seeks an educator who "would teach me once again to be *simple* and *honest* in thought as in life - in short, to be unfashionable in the most profound sense

⁵⁸³ SE, p.174

⁵⁸⁴ SE, p.174

⁵⁸⁵ SE, p.174

⁵⁸⁶ SE, p.175

⁵⁸⁷ SE, p.175

⁵⁸⁸ SE, p.178

of the word. For human beings today have become dishonest the moment they want to speak at all, make assertions, and they act in accordance with them.”⁵⁸⁹ Nietzsche seeks out Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will as an alternative to Hegel’s dialectical philosophy. Schopenhauer, as a great educator, did not teach others only with his works but also with his own private life. In this, Schopenhauer remains a great antagonist to Hegel, for he did not let himself be “entangled in a web of conceptual scholasticisms, as is the fate of uncontrolled dialecticians.”⁵⁹⁰ Nietzsche sums up the kernel of Schopenhauer’s teaching as follows: “individuality, and by the individual for himself alone, in order to gain insight into his own misery and need, into his own limitations, in order to become acquainted with antidotes and consolations.”⁵⁹¹

Another educator for young Nietzsche was Richard Wagner who lived honestly, boldly and cheerfully beyond modern German society. Nietzsche writes that Wagner’s life “demonstrates that if genius wants to bring to light the higher order and truth that dwells within it, it must not be afraid to enter into the most hostile conflict with existing forms and systems.”⁵⁹² Germans must forget “pure knowledge” and overcome their fear and laziness through Schopenhauer’s philosophy and Wagner’s music.

In a quite humanistic way Nietzsche demands that the notion of personal greatness should be “planted and cultivated in every young person.”⁵⁹³ In sharp contrast to Hegel, who claims that the highest goal for an individual is to serve the universal, Nietzsche argues that the universal must subjugate itself to the unique and rarest individual. Nietzsche maintains that “surely only by living for the benefit of the rarest and most valuable specimens, not for the benefit of the majority, that is, for the

⁵⁸⁹ SE, p.179

⁵⁹⁰ SE, p.189

⁵⁹¹ SE, p.189

⁵⁹² SE, p.184

benefit of those who, taken as individuals, are the least valuable specimens.”⁵⁹⁴ Those true, unique, and great human beings are according to Nietzsche the philosophers, artist and saints.

Nietzsche promotes great individuals but one cannot claim that he is a radical individualist. Nietzsche’s political project is based on a supra-individual goal, i.e., culture. Nietzsche does believe that the radical break with modern values is possible within modern society. He does not believe that a solitary individual is able to fulfil his political projects. He talks about a powerful community “one that, to be sure, is not held together by external forms and laws, but by a fundamental idea. This is the fundamental idea of *culture*, insofar as it is capable of charging each of us with one single task: *to foster the production of philosophers, artist, and saints within us and around us, and thereby to work toward the perfection of nature.*”⁵⁹⁵ And once again Nietzsche, contrary to anyone who claims him to be a proto-Nazi philosopher without a trace of liberal ideals, claims quite unambiguously *in Schopenhauer as Educator* that “there can be no doubt that all of us are related and connected to this saint, just as we are related to the philosopher and the artist.”⁵⁹⁶ Although he admits that some are taken only after death “into that most sublime order of philosophers, artists, and saints.”⁵⁹⁷

Those individuals have overcome their own individuality and their ego has melted away and their “life of suffering is no longer - or almost no longer - felt individually, but only as the deepest feeling of equality, communion, and oneness with all living things.”⁵⁹⁸ Thus, for Nietzsche, the overcoming of individuality (and individualism as such) is an important task for great politics. Therefore, as I argue

⁵⁹³ SE, p.216

⁵⁹⁴ SE, p.216

⁵⁹⁵ SE, p.213

⁵⁹⁶ SE, p.214

⁵⁹⁷ SE, p.214

⁵⁹⁸ SE, pp.213-14

above, it is misleading as for example Leslie Paul Thiele suggests in his book *Friederich Nietzsche and the Politics of Soul: A Study of Heroic Individualism*, to consider him a philosopher of ‘radical individualism’. Hegel seeks to overcome individualism by the concept of the ethical (*Sittlichkeit*), Nietzsche by the notion of culture (*Bildung*).

One can note that often Hegel does not specify which kind of state he has in mind when he claims, for example that the state is a divine idea on earth. This offers to his readers (including Nietzsche) ground for criticism. At the same time Nietzsche’s own political philosophy is not written to defy any political organisation in principle. Many commentators seem to overlook the fact that Nietzsche is not, in principle, against any political organisation as long as it can “search out and produce those favourable conditions in which those great, redeeming human beings can come into being.”⁵⁹⁹ In other words, the task of Nietzsche’s state is not only to protect its citizens but also to promote culture and thus create an environment and favourable conditions for the production of genius. Therefore, Nietzsche is not a totalitarian or authoritarian thinker either, for his political project points beyond the well-being of the state – to the world of culture. For Nietzsche, the development of the creative potential is much more important than the specific economic or welfare policy of any political party. As Nietzsche himself says in *Schopenhauer as Educator*, “the emergence of a philosopher on earth is infinitely more important than the continued existence of a state or a university.”

In the next chapter I try to formulate Nietzsche’s political project and demonstrate possible links with Hegel’s philosophy. The ultimate political aim for both, Hegel and Nietzsche, I shall argue, is to promote culture. Therefore, I suggest, their respective political projects point beyond society – to culture.

⁵⁹⁹ SE, p.215

IV. The Politics of culture

*Raise yourselves on daring wings
High above the course of your age!
May your mirror catch the distant glow
Of the new century's dawning!*

Schiller

In this chapter, I argue, that for both Hegel and Nietzsche, the question of culture is central to their political projects. Hitherto, Nietzsche points out, politics was based on herd morality and was a synonym for the egoism of peoples. With his 'grand politics' of culture Nietzsche wants to overcome both herd morality and modern individualism. Hegel, with his attack on civil society and morality, seems to agree with the general thrust of Nietzsche's argument. By introducing the notion of absolute spirit, i.e. art, religion and philosophy, Hegel's political philosophy points beyond the realm of objective spirit, i.e. the political sphere, and similarly to Nietzsche's political project, seems to promote culture. However, it is important to note that Hegel's understanding of culture differs radically from Nietzsche's. Hegel sees culture as the work of Spirit whereas Nietzsche does not. For Nietzsche culture is rather a unity of style of people. Although, as Blondel points out, Nietzsche adopts Hegel's idea that the ultimate aim in history is culture, he, influenced by Schopenhauer, develops this idea further by claiming that the production of genius should be made a conscious task for humankind. Blondel argues that Nietzsche "assigns to culture the production of great works through genius – an extra-rational goal for history – it is because he borrows from Hegel the idea that culture is the goal and reason for history, but combines this with the Schopenhauerian idea of an extra-rational goal: genius."⁶⁰⁰ However, I suggest, Nietzsche's understanding of culture differs from Hegel's in one important aspect: Hegel thinks that culture forms one *whole* with the state, whereas

⁶⁰⁰ Blondel, *Nietzsche: The Body and Culture*, hereafter B, p.61

Nietzsche thinks that culture is always *at odds with* the state, even if it has social and political conditions of its own.

One cannot overlook the fact that Hegel and Nietzsche lived in different historical, political and cultural circumstances. Michael Inwood points out in his Introduction to Hegel's *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* that during Hegel's lifetime (1770-1831) German culture in general and German arts in particular were at their highest peak. During this relatively short period of time around the turn of the century many great German (including Austrian) artists and thinkers laid the magnificent foundations on which German culture stands today. In German literature and philosophy it was the time of Goethe, Herder, Schiller, Hölderlin, the brothers Schlegels, Novalis, Tieck, Kleist, Schleiermacher, Schelling, and Fichte, to name but a few. In German music it was the time of Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Schubert, and Weber. This period in German history is not comparable with Nietzsche's lifetime, i.e. Bismarck's Germany, when, as it is generally recognised, German cultural life was in decline and German arts were 'stagnating'. During this period of German history the *Reich* promoted industrial development and introduced political and military reforms which, however, did not translate into cultural and artistic advancement. It is generally recognised that because of the relative political backwardness of German states during the second half of the nineteenth century, German artists did not go beyond the quite 'philistine' world of Biedermeier. Therefore, it is not surprising that Nietzsche in his works focuses on the problem of culture in general and German culture in particular and seeks to overcome modern indifference or even hostility towards culture by his great politics of culture.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Nietzsche suggests, artists not just in Germany but also in Europe became 'cultural philistines' for they did not create anything original or unique. "We moderns," Nietzsche writes in his meditation

on history, “in point of fact, possess nothing which is truly ours.”⁶⁰¹ And Nietzsche continues: “all modern culture is essentially inward; on the cover the binder has stamped some title like ‘Handbook of Inward Culture for Outward Barbarians’.”⁶⁰² Nietzsche is even more critical of German culture, which contains a mix of artistic styles without any underlying unity between form and content. Nietzsche notes about German people that “more than the people of any other nation we suffer from this weakness of personality, from this dissonance between form and content.”⁶⁰³ At the same time Nietzsche admires the French, whom the Germans are able only to ‘ape’. Nietzsche writes about the Germans: “we live, as compared with earlier times, by a solvent and incorrect French convention, as revealed in our mode of walking, standing, speaking, dressing, and dwelling.”⁶⁰⁴ The Germans lack, in Nietzsche’s view, the unity of artistic style which is the sign of a genuine culture. Therefore, for Nietzsche, nineteenth-century Germany was not at the pinnacle of world history, as Hegel’s philosophy of history seems to suggest, but rather at the very bottom of it. Although, during the second half of the nineteenth century Germany (dominated by Prussia) became a politically and militarily significant force in Europe, the Second Reich’s culture, in Nietzsche’s view, was in decline and the arts were becoming degraded. German culture, Nietzsche claims, was infected with herd morality and ‘theoretical optimism’ like that advocated by Hegel which in the end leads to the destruction of values and total nihilism. In addition to Hegel Nietzsche also attacks Socrates who, in his view, introduced ‘theoretical optimism’ into Greece and Europe in general and thus caused the death of Greek tragedy. However, just as he admired

⁶⁰¹ HS, p.105

⁶⁰² HS, p.105

⁶⁰³ HS, p.106

⁶⁰⁴ HS, p.106

Socrates he regards Hegel as one of the greatest German philosophers, equal to Leibniz, Kant, and Schopenhauer.⁶⁰⁵

Nietzsche was deeply concerned about the state of culture in Germany and in modern society in general. He believed that no political programme addressed this issue and no political party tried to prevent this imminent barbarism. Nietzsche points out that “everything stands in the service of approaching barbarism.”⁶⁰⁶ In Nietzsche’s view, German politicians and modern society in general sought to create a society of ‘money-makers’ and ‘scholars’ and thus to promote not true but philistine culture. ‘Money-makers’ are, in Nietzsche’s view, in power in Germany and Europe: “now they are the dominant power in the soul of modern humanity, the group most coveted.”⁶⁰⁷ Nietzsche exposes the essence of the modern age: “today almost everything on earth is determined only by the crudest and most evil forces, by the egoism of the money-makers and by military despots.”⁶⁰⁸ ‘Money-makers’ and ‘scholars’, Nietzsche suggests, are not interested in promoting genuine culture or any culture which is not (directly or indirectly) profitable for them. Furthermore, they act against creativeness when it endangers their profits and thus threatens their petite bourgeois existence. Thus their actions and values are based not on noble but on herd morality which is also, in Nietzsche’s view, the morality of utility.

Nietzsche’s own political project, as I argue, is directed against the *Gründerzeit* values of Bismarckian Germany in particular and against the philistinism of modern society in general. As the historian Jefferies suggests “Nietzsche was a

⁶⁰⁵ Nietzsche’s criticism of Hegel is related to his criticism of Socrates who, according to Nietzsche, introduced ‘theoretical optimism’ into Western thought. Fundamentally, the problem of ‘theoretical optimism’ is over the determination of the nature of man. Throughout his works Nietzsche maintains (in opposition to Socrates and Hegel) that man is determined not by thinking or reason but by instincts (*Instinkte*) and drives (*Triebe*). Because, in Nietzsche’s view, human creativity is based not on reason but on instinct and drives he regards ‘theoretical optimism’ as antithetic to genuine culture. The problem of Socrates in Nietzsche’s philosophy is closely examined by Dannhauser in his book *Nietzsche’s view of Socrates* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974). On my interpretation of Nietzsche’s views of Socrates see also Appendix.

⁶⁰⁶ SE, p.198

⁶⁰⁷ WB, p.287

fierce critic of almost every aspect of Imperial Germany and its culture.”⁶⁰⁹ Radical reform and restructuring based on the values of the *Gründerzeit* years resulted in a highly organised, industrialised, and militarised Prussia (Germany). Yet, at the same time it did not lead to the cultural Renaissance of Germany; quite the contrary, as Nietzsche himself points out. I believe that is why Nietzsche became a fierce critic of modern values and their foundation – herd morality. Christianity, ‘theoretical optimism’, ‘money-makers’, ‘scholars’ are all manifestations of herd morality and are symptoms of philistine culture.

For Nietzsche value is a synonym for power because it is ultimately power to evaluate, differentiate and discriminate that makes up the very essence of power and has its effect on the world. In *The Will to Power* Nietzsche insists: “value is the highest quantum of power that a man is able to incorporate.”⁶¹⁰ Value is, according to Nietzsche, a power to preserve and enhance certain perspectives or interpretations as well as to discriminate and annihilate others. As Nietzsche himself puts it: “The standpoint of “value” is the standpoint of conditions of preservation (*Erhaltungs-*) and enhancement (*Steigerungs-Bedingungen*) for complex forms of relative life-duration within the flux of becoming (*Werden*).”⁶¹¹ In opposition to Hegel’s pursuit of ‘objectivism’ Nietzsche claims that one cannot be ‘objective’, i.e. valueless for “all evaluation is made from a definite perspective: that of the preservation of the individual, a community, a race, a state, a church, a faith, a culture.”⁶¹² Later Nietzsche calls this condition of self-preservation and self-enhancement the will to power and claims this is the very nature of man and the essence of his existence. In his *Nachlass* Nietzsche writes that it is the will to power that interprets, defines limits and determines degrees and thus creates a table of values and an order of rank. By

⁶⁰⁸ SE, p.200

⁶⁰⁹ GH, p.187

⁶¹⁰ WP, p.380

⁶¹¹ WP, p.380

transvaluing all values Nietzsche asks his contemporaries to re-value the notion of value itself which hitherto has been identified with morality and not the will to power.

In Nietzsche's view, those political parties whose aim is generally speaking happiness (religious, economic, political) for everybody (or at least the majority), advocate not master but herd morality. The educated classes in Germany, Nietzsche asserts, are in the service of philistine culture for they lie about the stagnant state of culture in Germany and they repress artistic creativity. They have turned into apologists of accumulation and power and their sole task is not to radically change or reform culture but to defend and excuse the present culturelessness. As Nietzsche puts it in his meditation on Schopenhauer: "the cultivated person has degenerated into the greatest enemy of cultivation, for he employs lies to deny the general malaise, and he thereby interferes with the work of the physicians."⁶¹³ It is the lack of genuine culture in Germany in particular and in modern society in general that makes Nietzsche re-value old values and propose a radical break with the past – the revaluation of all values (*Umwertung aller Werte*). I will come back to Nietzsche's notion of 'genuine culture' later in this chapter but first I need to discuss its opposite – herd morality.

Nietzsche blames Christianity, the Enlightenment, Romanticism and 'theoretical optimism' for the "darkening and uglification" of European culture and malaise of modern society. Hitherto, Nietzsche points out, truth has been the foremost and the highest value in Europe. The *value* of this value, i.e. truth itself, however, remains unchallenged and unquestioned. In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche asks his contemporary philosophers to follow the "noble exemplar of Kant and Hegel" in their evaluation and identification of dominant values, which are called 'truths'. As Nietzsche puts it: "The problem of the value of truth stepped before us – or was it we

⁶¹² WP, p.149

⁶¹³ SE, p.198

who stepped before this problem?”⁶¹⁴ Nietzsche himself renounces truth as the highest value and fights against this passion for knowledge which is the foundation and consequence of theoretical optimism. In *Beyond Good and Evil* he questions the very foundations of theoretical optimism: “Why not rather untruth? And uncertainty? Even ignorance?”⁶¹⁵ Nietzsche says that today “one manifestly *knows* in Europe what Socrates thought he did not know [...] – one ‘knows’ today what is good and what is evil.”⁶¹⁶ The whole European history is the fight for the truth, for the truth of good and evil. As Nietzsche puts it in *Genealogy of Morals*: “Two sets of valuation, good/bad and good/evil, have waged terrible battle on this earth, lasting many millennia; and just as surely as the second set has for a long time now been in the ascendant, so surely are there still places where the battle goes on and the issue remains in suspension.”⁶¹⁷

In Nietzsche’s view, theoretical optimism is dangerous because it can infect creative minds with conceptual lies and use them as ‘tools’ for certain political advantage. Thus theoretical optimism is not fundamentally different from Christian dogma which has been also appropriated for selfish interests. In *Schopenhauer as Educator* Nietzsche refutes religious dogmas as well as the ‘dogmas’ of theoretical optimism such as ‘progress,’ ‘general education,’ ‘nationalism,’ ‘modern state,’ ‘cultural struggle.’ In his view both sets of dogmas will not lead to the emergence of free creativity but seek to install more compliance and obedience to the utilitarian aims of their promoters – priests and scholars. In his meditation on history Nietzsche points out that in modern society “solid mediocrity becomes ever more mediocre; scientific scholarship is becoming, in an economic sense, ever more profitable.”⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁴ BGE, p.33

⁶¹⁵ BGE, p.33

⁶¹⁶ BGE, p.124

⁶¹⁷ *The Genealogy of Morals*, hereafter GM, p.185

⁶¹⁸ HS, p.122

Christianity, according to Nietzsche, has taken part in this battle for the truth of good and evil. It was the metaphysical faith of Plato in god as truth and truth as god that Christianity made the centre of its own doctrine. The Church has been one of the agents and initiators of this extended fight between different tables of values (*Gütertafeln*). Christianity, because of faith in a transcendent God, has shifted “the centre of gravity of life *out* of life into the ‘Beyond’ – into *nothingness* – one has deprived life as such of its centre of gravity.”⁶¹⁹ As a consequence of this battle for values existence (*Dasein*) had lost all previous values; the world remains “valueless” (*wertlos*): “The feeling of valuelessness (*Das Gefühl der Wertlosigkeit*) [...] . Existence (*Dasein*) has no goal or end; any comprehensive unity in the plurality of events is lacking (*es fehlt die übergreifende Einheit in der Vielheit des Geschehens*): the character of existence is not ‘true,’ is *false*.”⁶²⁰ Because of this Christian ‘fabrication’ of a transcendent god the reality has lost its value and meaning.

The Church was at the forefront of this battle “permitting no alternative interpretation or goal.”⁶²¹ By the commandment to follow one “true” God Christianity rejects other values and degrades life and this constitutes, in Nietzsche’s view, its biggest crime. By rejecting other values Christianity, in Nietzsche’s view, seeks to make everything equal (*gleich machen*), which has been the greatest misfortune for mankind. The equality of men is the grounding principle of Christian doctrine and a metaphysical foundation of the herd morality. This makes Christian values, in Nietzsche’s view, especially appealing to the slave, the weak, the sick and the herd. Because of the same principle of equality Nietzsche later discards democracy and socialism which both ultimately, in his view, are based on herd morality. Nietzsche

⁶¹⁹ AC, p.167

⁶²⁰ WP, p.13

⁶²¹ GM, p.284

rejects the idea of universal suffrage and with his political project seeks to re-establish the order of rank in Germany and Europe.

The perfect herd animal, i.e. the man, Nietzsche maintains, has been bred and inhabits Europe today: “*Morality is in Europe today herd-animal morality.*”⁶²² Christian man is related to the herd man for both oppose difference and the different. The herd animal is against everything different, opposes what it itself is not. Thus he opposes everything which is “rare, strange, privileged, the higher man, the higher soul, the higher duty, the higher responsibility.”⁶²³ The herd preserves and enhances the ability to be the same. On the other hand, to be noble is, according to Nietzsche, to have the ability to be different. Therefore, there is nothing productive in the herd: “The tendency of the herd is directed toward standstill and preservation, there is nothing creative in it.”⁶²⁴ That is why the herd is hostile to free artistic creativity which with its multiplicity and diversity threatens its very existence.

In every society, according to Nietzsche, there are two types of morality or two types of man: master morality and its negation herd morality. Nietzsche insists that Christianity is founded on herd morality; it is “a denaturalisation of herd-animal morality: accompanied by absolute misunderstanding and self-deception.”⁶²⁵ Yet, the herd or slave morality is wider than just that. In general, Nietzsche maintains: “Slave morality is essentially the morality of utility.”⁶²⁶ For herd animals utility is the highest value. As Nietzsche points out, what is “useful to the herd” is “good” and what is not useful to the herd is “evil”. That is the source of the ‘antithesis ‘good’ and ‘evil’.”⁶²⁷ Nietzsche argues in *Beyond Good and Evil* that the slave morality (*Sklaven-Moral*) originates in the Jewish revolt, i.e. resentment, against Roman rule

⁶²² BGE, p.125

⁶²³ BGE, p.144

⁶²⁴ WP, p.162

⁶²⁵ WP, p.126

⁶²⁶ BGE, p.197

⁶²⁷ BGE, p.197

and oppression. It was the revolt against ‘noble’ values and thus the negation of the master morality (*Herren-Moral*). Because the Jews suffered greatly under Roman rule they promoted values like pity, the kind and helping hand, the warm heart, patience, industriousness, humility, friendliness, obedience because, as Nietzsche suggests “these are the most useful qualities to endure and lighten their life and the burden of existence.”⁶²⁸ Eventually these values became Christian values and morality and everything that opposes them is called ‘sinful’ and ‘evil’.

Herd morality seeks to annihilate noble or ‘strong’ values and individuals that promote them. If one lives not beyond but within society and obeys its rules, norms and values absolutely, one is in danger of becoming sick, weak and mediocre. For the slave the ‘good’ man is not the strongest man but the weakest or the sickest man who cannot harm him. Therefore, for the slave morality the sick and the weak became synonymous with good. Nietzsche claims that “the herd-man in Europe today makes himself out to be the only permissible kind of man and glorifies the qualities through which he is tame, peaceable and useful to the herd as the real human virtues: namely public spirit, benevolence, consideration, industriousness, moderation, modesty, forbearance, pity.”⁶²⁹ The core of herd morality, Nietzsche argues, is the claim that “We are all equal (*gleich*)”.⁶³⁰ Therefore, Nietzsche alleges, herd morality is “against privilege; [...] free spirits, sceptics; – against philosophy.”⁶³¹

Nietzsche interprets the world from the perspective of values, i.e. will to power. As it was pointed out earlier the will to power is an ability or instinct to evaluate and differentiate. In the herd there is an instinct to make everything equal, in the master there is an instinct to be different. Nietzsche describes three kinds of powers that have been hitherto determining the course of human history as follows:

⁶²⁸ BGE, p.197

⁶²⁹ BGE, p.121

⁶³⁰ WP, p.161

⁶³¹ WP, p.161

- (1) the instinct of the herd against the strong and independent;
- (2) the instinct of the suffering and underprivileged against the fortunate;
- (3) the instinct of the mediocre (*Mittelmässigen*) against the exceptional (*Ausnahme*).⁶³²

Nietzsche contends that the herd is always against the higher (*höheren*), rarer (*seltneren*). In short against everything that distinguishes (*auszeichnet*).⁶³³ In *The Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche maintains that the herd morality originates in *ressentiment*, i.e. saying no to everything that is ‘outside’, ‘other’, ‘non-self’, whereas the noble morality grows out of *affirmation*, i.e. a triumphant saying ‘yes’ to itself. “The instinct of the herd,” Nietzsche explains this idea in his *Nachlass*, “considers the middle (*die Mitte*) and the mean (*das Mittlere*) as the highest and most valuable (*Wertvollste*): the place where the majority finds itself.”⁶³⁴

It is Nietzsche’s contention that European values are grounded on herd morality: “*Morality is in Europe today herd-animal morality.*”⁶³⁵ Furthermore, for Nietzsche world history could be interpreted as the progression of herd morality and the highest values of mankind have been hitherto decadent and nihilistic. Nietzsche maintains that world history is “the continuing development of mankind into the similar, ordinary, average, herdlike - into the *common!*”⁶³⁶ Yet, at the same time throughout his works he also asks whether a different kind of morality and a different table of values is possible in Europe today.

Nietzsche is forced to admit that there are no virtues left in modern society apart from the “virtues” of the money-makers: “We are tempted to believe that there is also only one virtue left to contemporary human beings: the virtue of presence of mind. Unfortunately, it is in truth more like the omnipresence of a filthy, insatiable

⁶³² WP, p.156

⁶³³ see WP, p.157

⁶³⁴ WP, p.159

⁶³⁵ BGE, p.125

⁶³⁶ BGE, p.206

greed and an all-intrusive curiosity that has taken possession of everyone.”⁶³⁷ Theoretical optimism with its dogmas of ‘truth’, ‘progress’ and ‘one nation’ provide justification for the modern state and its money-makers. Scholars labour for the state and money-makers and they in return reward scholars. Christianity, which was once a radical and positive force within society has, in Nietzsche’s view, degenerated into hypocrisy and half-truths and lets itself be used as “a bulwark against common people, as a means to protect this society and its possessions [...]”⁶³⁸ Similarly, the triumph of theoretical optimism has transformed the common people who had myths and traditions into subservient, obedient, and ‘faceless’ ‘workers’, i.e. the herd, not free and creative individuals. Nietzsche argues that the state founded on theoretical optimism has “stripped the common people of their greatest and purest possessions, of their myths, their song making, their dances, their distinctive language, of those things that they produced for themselves out of their deepest need and in which they, the only true artists, mild-heartedly communicated their souls.”⁶³⁹ Therefore, Nietzsche argues, modern society is based on the principle of evil not good.

Nietzsche often talks about modern culture and society in general in medical terms and sees himself as a ‘cultural physician’. He understands that he himself is at risk of contamination by this modern disease for he says “Those times when doctors are most needed, in instances of great epidemics, are the very times in which doctors are most at risk” Yet, he does not seek a cure for this general malaise in the faith in transcendental being or belief in absolute reason. Nietzsche believes that humanity must overcome this malaise by and in itself. The task for Nietzsche’s philosophy is to transvalue old values and the goal of Nietzsche’s political programme is to promote genuine culture which is a positive environment for great human beings to emerge and

⁶³⁷ WB, p.287

⁶³⁸ WB, p.300

⁶³⁹ WB, p.300

to flourish. Nietzsche writes in his meditation on Schopenhauer: “because humanity is capable of attaining consciousness of its aim, it must search out and produce those favourable conditions in which those great, redeeming human beings can come into being.”⁶⁴⁰ Nietzsche seems to be ready to sacrifice the freedom of majority in order to produce his higher type of human being.

In order to establish this new positive cultural environment one needs to devalue the old values, deconstruct ‘vulgar’ culture, and demolish institutions which promote this philistine culture. Furthermore, Nietzsche suggests, one needs to annihilate universal suffrage, mediocrity, morality – all causes of the modern malady. Only then can, in his view, the great men emerge and create grand works of art. Here I disagree with Nietzsche’s claim that the universal suffrage is to be blamed for the degradation of culture. I suggest that the great men can emerge within a democratic framework. I believe, unlike Nietzsche, that the democratic element in Greek *polis* and not the slavery was the primary source of the greatness of Greek culture. I return to this idea later when I discuss Nietzsche’s views on modern slavery.

In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche suggests that this is the condition of human greatness: “Every superior human being will instinctively aspire after a secret citadel where he is set free from the crowd, the many, the majority, where, as its exception, he may forget the rule of ‘man’.”⁶⁴¹ Only by being beyond society, overcoming herd morality, and cutting out the philistine element in culture is it possible, in Nietzsche’s view, to cure modern society and establish genuine culture. The old values ought to be overthrown because they were grounded on the old notion of value (they did not put under the question the value of value itself). Nietzsche’s political project, i.e. the great politics, seeks to establish on the ruins of old values a new set of values on which to create a genuine culture. It seems that Nietzsche

⁶⁴⁰ SE, p.215

anticipates the gradual decline of Christian values and looks forward to the actualisation of his own political project. “Christianity,” Nietzsche claims, “as dogma perished by its own ethics, and in the same way Christianity as ethics must perish; we are standing on the threshold of this event.”⁶⁴² Nietzsche points out, “great politics, rule over the earth, are at hand; complete *lack* of the *principles* (*vollständiger Mangel an Prinzipien dafür*) that are needed.”⁶⁴³

At the same time Nietzsche also argues that legislators, i.e. philosophers, must establish a new set of values. Nietzsche contends that we require *new values* because “Man would sooner have the void for his purpose than be void of purpose.”⁶⁴⁴ Nietzsche stresses the significance of the creation of new values when he writes in his *Nachlass*: “fundamental thought (*Grundgedanke*): the new values (*die neuen Werte*) must be created – we shall not be *spared* this task! For us the philosopher must be legislator.”⁶⁴⁵ I believe Nietzsche’s political project is written for the legislators of the future who are strong and original enough to re-value the old values despite the ideal of today.

It is important to point out that Nietzsche is quite sceptical about humanity’s ability to establish a society in accordance with great politics. In his meditation on Wagner he says that “may good sense preserve us from the belief that someday or other humanity will discover an ultimate, ideal order and that then happiness will shine down with constant intensity upon the people ordered in this way, like the sun in the tropics.”⁶⁴⁶ For Nietzsche there is no golden age for humanity in the future but despite this he demands that one should work ceaselessly towards establishing genuine culture and the production of genius. Genuine culture requires constant

⁶⁴¹ BGE, p.57

⁶⁴² GM, p.297

⁶⁴³ WP, p.512

⁶⁴⁴ GM, p.299

⁶⁴⁵ WP, p.512

⁶⁴⁶ WB, p.237

innovation, creativity and ingenuity which are all the characteristics of the true genius. In society where artistic creativity, innovation, and freedom are deliberately promoted, i.e. genuine culture, one can expect many great individuals to emerge. Consequently, the works of those individuals will elevate the previous culture to a new height, which in turn will result in the emergence of new geniuses. Thus one can argue that genius is at the same time the product but more importantly the producer of culture. Therefore, I also argue that Nietzsche's political philosophy is not strictly speaking individualistic for it seeks to promote a supra-individual goal, i.e. culture. Although in his meditation on Schopenhauer, Nietzsche says that the life of the individual must "obtain the highest value, the deepest significance,"⁶⁴⁷ I suggest, he does not promote individualism but grounds his political project on "the *belief in the metaphysical significance of culture*."⁶⁴⁸ With his project, I argue, he seeks to overcome the values of assimilation (*Anähnlichung*) and equalisation (*Ausgleichung*) which are prevalent in modern society. Nietzsche advocates individualisation that aims to free the individual from the predominant state, church or society in general. Yet, at the same time he points out that "*Individualism* is a modest and still unconscious form (*Art*) of the "will to power."⁶⁴⁹ Nietzsche rejects individualism because the individual, although against the totality of society or state, by regarding others as "equals" to oneself falls back into the trap of egalitarianism which is a manifestation of herd morality. Nietzsche describes the modern individualist as follows: "He does not oppose them (i.e. other individuals, K.K.) as a person but only as an individual; he represents all individuals against totality. That means: he instinctively posits himself as equal to all other individuals; what he gains in this

⁶⁴⁷ SE, p.216

⁶⁴⁸ SE, p.231

⁶⁴⁹ WP, p.411

struggle he gains for himself not as a person but as a representative of individuals against the totality.”⁶⁵⁰

The new set of values on which Nietzsche’s political project is based ought to point beyond both totalitarianism and individualism. It ought to be amoral or non-moral since only then can the radical new culture emerge. Nietzsche states: “Moral values have hitherto been the highest: would anybody call this in question? – If we remove these values from this position, we alter *all* values: the principle of their order of rank hitherto is thus overthrown.”⁶⁵¹ The new values of the “higher beings” ought to be beyond old values, “beyond those values which cannot deny their origin in the sphere of suffering, the herd, and the majority.”⁶⁵² They ought to be thus “beyond good and evil” as the title of Nietzsche’s well-known book heralds. Not just any philosopher but also Nietzsche himself “betrays something of his ideal when he asserts: ‘He shall be the greatest who can be the most solitary, the most concealed, the most divergent (*Abweichendste*), the man beyond good and evil, the master of his virtues, the superabundant of will; this shall be called greatness,” and doubts immediately thereafter: “is greatness - *possible* today?”⁶⁵³

“Modern human beings,” Nietzsche writes *in Schopenhauer as Educator*, “live in this vacillation between Christianity and antiquity, between an intimidated and hypocritical Christian morality and an equally cowardly and inhibited turn to antiquity, and they suffer from it.”⁶⁵⁴ They lack will to power and therefore there is the decline and degradation of culture. Yet, modern man also has the desire to find a foundation in his life, gain new values and strengthen his will to power. This foundation, Nietzsche suggests, is provided by educators who promote true culture

⁶⁵⁰ WP, p.411

⁶⁵¹ WP, p.521

⁶⁵² WP, p.537

⁶⁵³ BGE, p.144

⁶⁵⁴ SE, pp.178-79

and seek to establish favourable conditions for great human beings (artists, philosophers and saints) to emerge.

Despite his fierce criticism of the *Reich*, its culture and people, the young Nietzsche is a German patriot for he seeks to establish a genuine cultural unity of German people. In his meditation on Schopenhauer Nietzsche openly promotes this idea by saying: “I hereby explicitly declare that it is *German unity* in its highest sense to which we aspire, and we aspire to it more passionately than to political unity - *the unity of German spirit and life, after we have annihilated the gulf between form and content, between inwardness and convention.*”⁶⁵⁵ Nietzsche was concerned about the state of German culture throughout his life and addressed this problem in nearly all his works. For example in *Twilight of the Idols* (written in 1888 and published in 1889) in the chapter on ‘What the Germans Lack’ Nietzsche still maintains, in line with his early *Meditations*, that the Germans after nearly 20 years of the *Reich* still lack high or genuine culture. Therefore one can argue the core of his political philosophy – genuine culture and production of genius – remained relatively unchanged.

Now one needs to ask what Nietzsche’s means by a ‘genuine culture’? Nietzsche rejects a spurious and contaminated concept of culture and proposes to return to the notions of culture as understood by the pre-Socratics. The Greeks, in opposition to Christians and cultural philistines (*Kulturphilistiner*) had “the concept of culture as a new and improved physis, unified, without the gulf between interior and exterior, without dissimulation and convention; of culture as a harmony of life, thought, appearance, and will.”⁶⁵⁶ For Nietzsche true culture is hunger for art. Or in other words it is “a unity of artistic style that maintains itself throughout all the vital

⁶⁵⁵ HS, p.108

⁶⁵⁶ HS, p.145

self-expressions of a people.”⁶⁵⁷ In his meditation on Strauss Nietzsche also points out contrary to general opinion that “vast knowledge and pedantic learning are neither a requisite means to, nor a symptom of, culture; indeed, these generally prove themselves most compatible with the opposite of culture, with barbarism – that is, with absence of style, or with the chaotic hodgepodge of all styles.”⁶⁵⁸ German people of the 1870s lacked this ‘stylistic unity’ and thus they did not have a genuine culture. Hollingdale suggests that throughout his life Nietzsche disliked Bismarck’s policies and thought that Bismarck was partly to be blamed for this cultural ‘stagnation’: “its political ambitions, misunderstood as cultural, were in reality inimical to culture, and to German culture in particular. It was diverting and impoverishing Germany in the only sphere that counted.”⁶⁵⁹ Hollingdale continues his argument by claiming that “this is a point of view from which he never afterwards deviated: on the contrary, he came increasingly to think that the warnings uttered in *David Strauss* had been all too justified, and the fears which inspired it very comprehensively realised.”⁶⁶⁰ As the result of Bismarck’s radical military, industrial and government reforms the new *Reich* became in a relatively short period of time a new super-power in Europe. For Nietzsche, as Hollingdale quite rightly points out, “the main question, here as everywhere in his writings on the subject is whether a nation has a high culture, not whether it is a ‘great power’.”⁶⁶¹ It is clear that for Nietzsche to be a ‘great power’ is to be not a great military power (like Prussia) but great cultural power (like France). Likewise, in Nietzsche’s view, it is not the military or political leaders who have the greatest will to power (a widely held but inaccurate understanding of Nietzsche’s political thought) but the cultural leaders of a nation – artists, saints and philosophers. In this point Nietzsche’s sentiments differ radically from Hegel’s who, as was

⁶⁵⁷ DS, p.9

⁶⁵⁸ DS, p.9

⁶⁵⁹ N, p.19

⁶⁶⁰ N, p.20

discussed above, seems to equal nation's power and success in world history with its cultural superiority. Earlier I suggested that Hegel's understanding of freedom (within the state) clarifies why, for him, a culturally superior state will also be politically and historically superior.

In the first part I suggested that the two wars against Austria and France and their consequences prompted Nietzsche to set forward his own political project – the promotion of culture. The worst consequences of the war were not its casualties but a delusive opinion that German culture was victorious in this war. Nietzsche realised that the success in world history is not a proof (as Hegelian understanding of world history seems to suggest) of a nation's superiority. Nietzsche's insights might be helpful in our understanding of the great wars of the twentieth century. In retrospect one can only wish that the victorious parties of the First World War, the Second World War and the Cold War had taken the young Nietzsche's meditations more seriously. Then they might have avoided these 'delirious consequences' Nietzsche is talking about in his meditations.

Hegel's philosophy of the absolute spirit

Hegel focused on political issues and formulated his own political philosophy in his lectures on the philosophy of right given every year from 1817 until 1825 (the last time a month before his death in 1831) which were published for the first time in 1821 under the title *Natural Law and Political Science in Outline: Elements of the Philosophy of Right (Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse: Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts)*. However, one cannot overlook Hegel's other works while seeking to understand his political project. When Hegel was in his thirties, after critically examining the works of Fichte and Schelling, he started to develop his own

⁶⁶¹ N, p.20

philosophical system and published an introduction to his system as the *Phenomenology of Spirit (Phänomenologie des Geistes)* in 1807. Later he critically re-examines his own system and publishes a concise version of it as the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline (Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse)*, first in 1817 and then revised and expanded in 1827 and 1830. I will argue that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Philosophy of Mind (Philosophie des Geistes)*, the third part of his *Encyclopaedia*, are crucial to understanding the place of culture within his political thought.

According to Hegel history is the manifestation of Spirit. There are three stages of development of that Spirit: subjective, objective and absolute. Subjective spirit is the individual and psychological level in which the idea in the form of self-relation is self-contained and abstractly free. The philosophy of right, morality and politics belong to the realm of objective spirit in which the idea is actualised as political organisation and freedom is understood as necessity. However, according to Hegel, only on the level of absolute spirit, i.e. in the cultural and religious sphere, is the unity of actuality and concept attained and absolute freedom finally achieved.⁶⁶² In a sense absolute spirit is the union of objectivity (finitude) and ideality (infinity). In world history absolute spirit is embodied in culture and in particular in art, religion and philosophy.

Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is a study of objective spirit. Many commentators (from Schopenhauer to Popper) consider this to be his most important political work, written to promote the idea of absolute subservience to the state. However, one must note that according to Hegel objective spirit (thus civil society and the state) is only an intermediary stage towards the higher goal – absolute spirit. According to Hegel, full realisation of freedom is not achieved on the level of subjective spirit or on the level

of objective spirit (both are in the sphere of finitude) but only on the level of absolute spirit (infinity). Hegel writes that “the full realisation of that freedom which in property is still incomplete, still [only] formal, the consummation of the realisation of the Notion of objective spirit, is achieved only in the State, in which spirit develops its freedom into a world posited by spirit itself, into the ethical (*sittlich*) world.” “Yet,” Hegel continues, “spirit must pass beyond this level too. The defect of this objectivity of spirit consists in its being only posited. Spirit must again freely let go the world, what spirit has posited must at the same time be grasped as having an immediate being. This happens on the third level of spirit, the standpoint of absolute spirit, i.e. of art, religion, and philosophy.”⁶⁶³ In other words, according to Hegel, although the subjective and objective spirits are manifestations of the absolute, i.e. the idea, they are only an intermediary stage or moment through which spirit becomes self-conscious and free. In *Philosophy of Mind* Hegel questions the rationality of the objective spirit and maintains that “its actual rationality retains the aspect of external appearance.”⁶⁶⁴ He goes even further by claiming that subjective and objective spirit (finite) are only steps to the true being: “finite *is not*, i.e. is not the truth, but merely a transition and an emergence to something higher.”⁶⁶⁵ Hegel explains his concepts of finitude and infinity in detail in his *Logic* and uses his speculative method to describe the relationship between subjective and objective spirit from one side and absolute spirit from the other side in his *Philosophy of Mind*. Subjective and objective spirit are finite but not absolutely for this makes finitude something absolute, i.e. its opposite. According to Hegel spirit is the manifestation of the idea, thus the negation of the

⁶⁶² PM, p.20. I have altered Wallace and Miller’s translation of the *Philosophy of Mind*. In order to agree with other translations *Geist* is translated not as ‘Mind’ but as ‘Spirit’.

⁶⁶³ PM, p.22

⁶⁶⁴ PM, p.241

⁶⁶⁵ PM, p.23

finite which can be understood as “a reality that is not adequate to its Notion.”⁶⁶⁶ Thus by determination spirit contains both moments infinity and finitude within it.

Thus, I would argue, Hegel’s political project points beyond objective spirit, i.e. society and the state, towards Absolute Spirit, i.e. the world of culture. “The Absolute Spirit,” Hegel writes, “this is the supreme definition of the Absolute. To find this definition and to grasp its meaning and burden was, we may say, the ultimate purpose of all education and all philosophy: it was the point to which turned the impulse of all religion and science: and it is this impulse that must explain the history of the world.”⁶⁶⁷ The ultimate goal of Hegel’s philosophical and political project is not objective spirit but absolute spirit, i.e. art, religion and philosophy. In this, I argue, Hegel’s political project is not much different from Nietzsche’s project who in *Schopenhauer as Educator* declares that the highest goal for mankind lies not in the state or society but beyond it, in the realm of culture, i.e. art, religion and philosophy. Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s political projects are similar in their promotion of culture and in the significance of art, religion and philosophy play in it. However, one must not overlook the fundamental differences between the ideas of these two German thinkers. As it was said earlier for Hegel cultural superiority proves to be historically successful, whereas this is not the case for Nietzsche. Although they both promote culture and place art, religion and philosophy above other human activities into the very centre of their respective political projects their understanding of culture in general and art, religion and philosophy in particular is radically different. Therefore, now I propose to examine more closely what Hegel and Nietzsche mean by culture in order to understand their respective interpretations of art, religion and philosophy.

⁶⁶⁶ PM, p.23

⁶⁶⁷ PM, p.18

Hegel's and Nietzsche's interpretations of culture

Hegel's and Nietzsche's concepts of culture are radically different. For Hegel culture is the realisation of the Idea in the form of Spirit in world history. For Nietzsche there is no idea and no spirit in world history and therefore culture is rather a 'style' of people. In fact Hegel seems to have two concepts of culture, one in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the other in the *Philosophy of Mind*. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel suggests that culture is an expression of the alienation between actuality and spirit as self-consciousness. He points out that "although this world has come into being through individuality, it is for self-consciousness immediately an alienated world which has the form of a fixed solid reality over against it."⁶⁶⁸ Only by overcoming this opposition can Spirit overcome this alienation and an individual become himself and thus truly free. Spirit as self-consciousness transforms this world and "makes it his own". Culture, correspondingly, transforms the nature of man and lets him become genuinely human. According to Hegel, culture is the process in which self-consciousness conforms to reality beyond itself. Yet, at the same time it makes its own self, i.e. self-consciousness, its own substance which has an objective existence.

Hegel maintains in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* that the individual can realise or actualise himself only through culture. Through culture the individual alienates himself from his natural being and becomes what he is in his original nature – a spiritual being. This process of overcoming or transition of one's own natural being is, according to Hegel, the sole purpose of the individual. It is in the very existence of the individual to act as a means through which the mere thought becomes actual. At the same time the individual with his rational capacities is able to lift himself into essentiality. In this point Hegel's understanding of culture in his *Phenomenology of*

Spirit is not unlike Nietzsche's philosophy of educators. For example Hegel writes in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that individuality "moulds itself by culture into what it intrinsically is, and only by doing so is it an intrinsic being that has an actual existence; the measure of its culture is the measure of its actuality and power."⁶⁶⁹ One can see that for Hegel the notion of power and culture are intrinsically related through the notion of the individual. From this passage it is also clear that for Hegel culture is the process through which the individual discloses or reveals his true human nature which is spiritual. What is implicit in the individual acquires real existence only through culture; conversely culture is only a result of the development or transitory process of the individual. Hegel points out that "the process in which the individuality moulds itself by culture is, therefore, at the same time the development of it as the universal, objective essence, i.e. the development of the actual world."⁶⁷⁰ Through culture the alienation of the self and essence is overcome and the unity achieved. In this divided and self-opposed world two realms of the self, the self as a person and the universal self, are reconciled in 'pure intellectual insight'.

Culture transforms and is itself transformed by this process of externalisation. Thus culture is, for Hegel, the self-realisation and actualisation of spirit which is the substance of the world. As was pointed out above, the individual has an important position in Hegel's philosophy of culture because the individual is both the product and creator of culture: "For the power of the individual consists in conforming itself to that substance, i.e. in externalising its own self and thus establishing itself as substance that has an objective existence. Its culture and its own actuality are, therefore, the actualisation of the substance itself."⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁸ *Phenomenology of Spirit*, hereafter PS, p.299

⁶⁶⁹ PS, p.298

⁶⁷⁰ PS, p.299

⁶⁷¹ PS, p.299

Hegel understands culture as the manifestation of Spirit in the world. Both nature and spirit are, according to Hegel, manifestations of the Idea, but only on the level of Spirit are the subject and object of the idea the same. Spirit is the substance of the world which becomes self-conscious through its realisation in world history. In this process of self-recognition spirit becomes ‘other’ to itself and becomes immediate existence, i.e. realises itself as the world. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel maintains: “Spirit is thus self-supporting, absolute, real being.”⁶⁷² Spirit posits itself and in the process becomes self-conscious and free. History, according to Hegel, is this self-mediating process of spirit – from sense-certainty through consciousness and self-consciousness to reason. Spirit is the unity of our sensuous, imaginative and conceptual apprehension of the world. In Hegel’s view, conceptual thought is the highest apprehension of the world. Only on the level of reason are the subject and object of knowing the same. Or as Hegel himself puts it: “Reason is Spirit when its certainty of being all reality has been raised to truth, and it is conscious of itself as its own world, and of the world as itself.”⁶⁷³ For Hegel only the absolute is true and only truth is absolute. Therefore Hegel claims that “the *living ethical* world is Spirit in its *truth*.”⁶⁷⁴ Later, in his *Philosophy of Mind* Hegel determines culture in relation to the objective and absolute Spirit, i.e. art, religion and philosophy. Culture becomes for Hegel a manifestation of the absolute and an embodiment of the spirit.

Nietzsche urges us to be critical of Hegelian concepts like “absolute knowing”, “absolute reason”, and “objectivity” which are the founding principles of Hegel’s philosophical system. For him all human knowledge is only an interpretation from a certain perspective: both seeing and knowing are essentially perspectives. In order to refute those Hegelian (and Kantian) concept Nietzsche reminds us in *The Genealogy*

⁶⁷² PS, p.264

⁶⁷³ PS, p.263

⁶⁷⁴ PS, p.265

of Morals: “Let us, from now on, be on guard, against the hallowed philosophers’ myth of a ‘pure, will-less, painless, timeless knower’; let us beware of the tentacles of such contradictory notions as ‘pure reason,’ ‘absolute knowledge,’ ‘absolute intelligence.’ All these concepts presuppose an eye such as no living being can imagine, an eye required to have no direction, to abrogate its activity and interpretative powers – precisely those powers that alone make seeing, seeing *something*.”⁶⁷⁵

As Blondel points out in *Nietzsche: The Body and Culture*, the notion of culture is central to Nietzsche’s philosophy.⁶⁷⁶ Blondel also points out that “the problem of culture in Nietzsche has been underestimated, and yet it forms the origin and centre of his thought.”⁶⁷⁷ The problem of culture (*Kultur*) in Nietzsche’s philosophy as it was in Hegel’s is related to the problem of education (*Bildung*) and civilisation (*Zivilisation*). Blondel suggests that *Kultur* and *Zivilisation* are two opposite concepts in Nietzsche’s works: *Kultur* is the expression of master values whereas *Zivilisation* is linked only with the material manifestation of those values. The moment Greece became a political power it became *Zivilisation* and lost its culture (*Kultur*).⁶⁷⁸ Because, as Nietzsche writes in *Twilight of the Idols*, “Culture and the state – one should not deceive oneself over this – are antagonists: the ‘cultural state’ is merely a modern idea. The one lives off the other, the one thrives at the expense of the other. All great cultural epochs are epochs of political decline: that which is great in the cultural sense has been unpolitical, even *anti-political*.”⁶⁷⁹ This is where Nietzsche’s views differ radically from Hegel’s philosophy of history. In

⁶⁷⁵ GM, p.255

⁶⁷⁶ Blondel explains in detail Nietzsche’s concept of culture in the third chapter, “The Problem of Culture in Nietzsche’s thought”, of his book.

⁶⁷⁷ B, p.51

⁶⁷⁸ This antithesis of *Kultur* and *Zivilisation* was later popularised by Oswald Spengler (1880-1936) in his well-known book *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918-1922). In this study Spengler argues that *Zivilisation* is the inevitable destiny of a *Kultur*. According to Spengler imperialism (expansionism) is the main characteristic of *Zivilisation* and signifies the decline of *Kultur*

Nietzsche's view this transition happened with Greek culture and the same will happen with German culture as he suggests in *The Twilight of the Idols*: the moment Germany rises as a great power, France gains new importance as a cultural power. However, I suggest that in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel is in fact quite close to Nietzsche's understanding of culture as self-overcoming. However, Nietzsche claims that both natural and true human nature is culture, therefore there is no contradiction between nature (*Natur*) and culture (*Bildung*). Genius is the individual who overcame fear and laziness and realised (with the help of educators) his true human nature – creativity. Therefore, when one talks about Nietzsche's philosophy of culture one can talk about it as a dual process: naturalisation of culture and culturalisation of nature.

In *Schopenhauer as Educator* Nietzsche explains what he means by culture: "Culture is the child of every individual's [my italics, K.K.] self-knowledge and of dissatisfaction with himself."⁶⁸⁰ Thus, broadly speaking, culture (*Bildung*) is overcoming one's own limits. Thus one is different from one's self and becomes what one actually is – a cultural being. The ultimate aim of Nietzsche's project is to overcome the laziness, apathy, and indifference of nihilistic culture (*Kultur*) and to free qualities which are genuinely human and belong to genuine culture (*Bildung*) – self-overcoming and desire for difference. True artistic creativity is based on those qualities because it requires courage to overcome one's own limits and the will to be different from oneself. As Nietzsche himself explains: "When the great thinker disdains human beings it is their laziness he disdains, for it is laziness that makes them appear to be mass-produced commodities, to be indifferent, unworthy of human interchange and instruction."⁶⁸¹ Therefore, one must overcome laziness and seek to become a genuine human being – a genius.

⁶⁷⁹ TI, p.74

⁶⁸⁰ SE, p.216

⁶⁸¹ SE, p.172

Nevertheless there is a fundamental difference between Hegel's and Nietzsche's concepts of culture. For Hegel culture involves life *in* the state whereas for Nietzsche culture always involves setting oneself *apart from* the state. For Nietzsche, culture is not an actualisation of world spirit or manifestation of the absolute, i.e. the idea, but it is the norms, the values and the style of creating, thinking and living of a single person. As Blondel points out "culture, for Nietzsche, is the more or less unified totality of values that a society, age or civilization – as vital typological totalities – offers itself in response to the question: why do we live? 'Warum lebe ich? 'Wozu lebst du?'"⁶⁸² The problem of culture becomes for Nietzsche an *existential* question and his political project becomes a prescribable path of *culture* (*vorzuschreibende Wege der Kultur*) for solitary individuals. Nietzsche believes that geniuses help us to find answers to those questions and with their works make finding no answers bearable.

Nietzsche suggests that by promoting culture and going beyond one's self one makes life bearable and thus alleviates suffering. One finds answers to those existential questions and in a process becomes united with one's true self. *In Schopenhauer as Educator* Nietzsche explains this as follows:

Everyone who professes his faith in culture in effect says: 'I see something beyond myself that is loftier and more human than I am; help me, all of you, to achieve it, just as I will help each of you who makes the same recognition and suffers from it, so that finally that human being might once again come into being who senses himself to be full and infinite in knowledge and love, in perception and ability, and who in his entire being is bound to and bound up with nature, as judge and measure of all things.'⁶⁸³

It seems that for Nietzsche culture is a collective effort of every single individual and every one can overcome this not-so-human condition. It is laziness and fear which prevents this overcoming happening. Nietzsche writes that despite fear one must have

⁶⁸² B, p.54

⁶⁸³ SE, p.216

the desire “to look beyond itself and to search with all its might for a higher self that lies hidden somewhere. Thus, only he who has his heart set on a great human being thereby receives the *first sacrament of culture*.”⁶⁸⁴

For Nietzsche there are three main types of human beings which correspond roughly to three main political ideologies: Rousseau’s human being, Goethe’s human being, and Schopenhauer’s human being. Rousseau’s human being is the most popular for his political project will please masses. This type of human being “despises himself and yearns to transcend himself.”⁶⁸⁵ He has, in Nietzsche’s view, the most frightful but also the most noble and rare powers. This type will lead to revolutions and social upheavals in order to overcome the power of higher classes and their wealth by violence. Goethe’s type, on the other hand, avoids violence and his project is only for a very few “contemplative thinkers in the grand style, and it is misunderstood by masses.”⁶⁸⁶ As Nietzsche points out, Goethe’s type lacks the will to action. “Goethe’s human being,” Nietzsche writes, “diverges from Rousseau’s human being, for he hates all violence, every sudden heap – but that means: every action.”⁶⁸⁷ Ultimately it is the way of the weak human being, the one whose will might become philistine. The last type is the Schopenhauerian type who understands that one cannot overcome suffering in life. Nietzsche writes: “*The Schopenhauerian human being voluntarily takes upon himself the suffering inherent in truthfulness.*”⁶⁸⁸ By doing this the Schopenhauerian type seeks to go beyond society. This in turn leads to pessimism and the loss of meaning in life. Nietzsche points out about the Schopenhauerian type that “his loftiness and dignity are only able to transport us beyond ourselves, thereby

⁶⁸⁴ SE, p.216

⁶⁸⁵ SE, p.201

⁶⁸⁶ SE, p.201

⁶⁸⁷ SE, p.202

⁶⁸⁸ SE, p.203

transporting us once again outside any community of captive people; the coherence of duties, the stream of life vanish.”⁶⁸⁹

Nietzsche’s own type, the great human being, is not a violent nor a merely contemplating type for he is both active and contemplative. Nietzsche’s own project is the search for “human beings who would be capable of fervent self-immersion and pure devotion to genius, human beings who possessed enough courage and strength to invoke demons who have fled the present age!”⁶⁹⁰ Nietzsche characterises the task of the great human being as follows: “Culture demands of him not only those inner experiences, not only the assessment of the external world that surrounds him, but ultimately and primarily action; that is, it demands that he fight for culture and opposes those influences, habits, laws, and institutions in which he does not recognize his goal: the production of genius.”⁶⁹¹ From this passage it is clear why one is justified to call Nietzsche’s project a political one. It is also clear that Nietzsche calls for radical changes in society through the active participation of great individuals. Nietzsche hopes that in the future everyone will promote culture and this will result in the ultimate aim of his political project – *the production of genius*.

Nietzsche realises that in modern society very few recognise the importance of his goal although many use and misuse culture in general. He recognises that in the past great human beings appeared despite the negative influence of the majority and the repressive methods of society. He asks in his meditation on Schopenhauer “Does nature achieve its goal even if the majority of people misconceive the aim of their own exertions?”⁶⁹² Nietzsche’s answer to that question is that great human beings might appear even in hostile conditions such as modernity and theoretical optimism. However, this happens very rarely and only by chance. Nietzsche makes the breeding

⁶⁸⁹ SE, p.208

⁶⁹⁰ DS, p.48

⁶⁹¹ SE, p.217

⁶⁹² SE, p.218

of great human beings his ultimate task and formulates it as a project for the whole people. Nietzsche believes that great human beings must emerge not just by rare chance of nature as hitherto but must be produced intentionally and consciously by society. Instead of the unconscious and rare happening in history, the supreme goal, the production of genius must become the conscious act of individuals and of society as a whole. Nietzsche suggests that “anyone who is truly convinced that the goal of culture is nothing other than to promote the emergence of true *human beings*, and who recognizes that even today, despite the pomp and circumstance of culture, the emergence of those human beings is hardly distinguishable from an incessant cruelty to animals – such a person will believe it very necessary that a conscious intention finally take the place of that ‘dark drive’”.⁶⁹³ Although at this point culture seems to be the means rather than the end in itself, it is clear from Nietzsche’s writings, that the works of geniuses create a genuine culture, like that of Ancient Greece.

It seems that Nietzsche is not against any social institution or political organisation as such as long as this organisation or institution produces a climate of creativity for great individuals to emerge. It is clear that Nietzsche is not a democratic thinker, for his political project is not aimed at the greatest satisfaction of the majority. It is generally recognised that Nietzsche’s political philosophy is not egalitarian, for he does not believe in the equality of people. He differentiates between master and slave morality. At the same time he is not a totalitarian thinker either, for his political project points, with strong bias towards individualism, beyond the well-being of the state. Yet, individualism itself is, in his view, only the modest and unconscious form of will to power which ought to be overcome. To overcome individualism means to transcend one’s egoistic desires and to produce great works of art for humankind. As I will discuss earlier Nietzsche believes that every human

⁶⁹³ SE, p.218

being can become a creative individual, thus his notion of genius is not the privilege of the few.

If one seeks to understand Nietzsche's antagonism towards democracy one needs to look at his interpretation of art. Nietzsche's political philosophy centres around art but in art more than anywhere else democratic principles do not work. One cannot determine what is a great work of art by majority decision. For Nietzsche rather the opposite is true. If an artist is admired and recognised by the majority his art is in danger of turning into philistine art. Later in his book *The Case of Wagner* Nietzsche claims that this happened with Wagner's music. First, Christian elements (i.e. salvation) found their way into Wagner's music and then Wagner himself became overpowered by anti-Semitism and the *Reich's* patriotism. Furthermore, in *Joyful Wisdom* Nietzsche contends that ultimately Hegel is to be blamed for Wagner's downfall: "Richard Wagner allowed himself to be misled by Hegel's influence till the middle of his life."⁶⁹⁴

Nietzsche explains why democratic principle cannot be applied to art and thus to his political philosophy as follows: "But if the practice of referenda and majority rule is transferred to the world of art, and the artist forced to defend himself before a council of dilettantes, as it were, then we could solemnly swear in advance that he will be found guilty – and this is not although, but because, his judges have solemnly proclaimed the canon of exemplary art."⁶⁹⁵ The majority, in Nietzsche's view, cannot tolerate originality for they follow herd morality and base their evaluation of the new work of art on past works. Thus they prevent great art happening in the present. Nietzsche writes about people of herd morality who "cannot tolerate a rebirth of the

⁶⁹⁴ JW, p.135

⁶⁹⁵ HS, p.98

exemplary, and, to ensure that none will take place, they employ precisely that past which has long been canonized as monumental.”⁶⁹⁶

Now one must ask why Nietzsche is so concerned about the state of culture in modern society in general and in Germany in particular? What is so special about culture and human creativity? In order to answer those questions one needs to look at the relation between life and art in Nietzsche’s philosophy. Culture is the gulf between knowledge and life. Nietzsche believes that art is the essence and purest form of life. Life’s creativity and eternity is expressed in art in its highest form. As Nietzsche suggests, music is life, and if it is true and fruitful life it is the very essence of life.⁶⁹⁷

Nietzsche’s concept of life

Nietzsche, following Schopenhauer who himself was influenced by Buddhist philosophy, thinks that there is inevitably suffering in life.⁶⁹⁸ An Indian prince Siddhartha Gautama (born 563 BC) known as Buddha, ‘the awakened one’, taught two thousand five hundred years before Schopenhauer that life is suffering. For Buddha there are four noble truths: life is suffering, suffering involves a chain of causes, suffering can cease and there is a path to such cessation. For Buddha suffering is caused by our selfishness, ignorance, and desires and it is eternal because of the cycle of rebirth. Overcome suffering and achieving ‘*nirvana*’ (liberation from the cycle of rebirth) is possible only by overcoming one’s ignorance and desires by the eightfold path: the ethically correct view, right resolutions, right speech, right action,

⁶⁹⁶ HS, p.99

⁶⁹⁷ WB, p.285

⁶⁹⁸ It is important to note here that Nietzsche was familiar with Buddhist philosophy not just through reading Schopenhauer but also via the works of H. Oldenburg, *Buddha: Sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde* (Berlin 1881) and P. Deussen, *Das System der Vedânta* (Leipzig, 1883) and *Die Sutras des Vedânta aus dem Sanskrit übersetzt* (Leipzig, 1887).

right livelihood, right effort, proper mindfulness, and regular practice of concentration.⁶⁹⁹

For Nietzsche suffering is caused by an inability to find answers to the questions: “Why and to what purpose? Whither am I going? Whence do I come?”⁷⁰⁰ and “Why am I alive? What lesson is life supposed to teach me? How did I become what I am, and why do I suffer from being what I am?”⁷⁰¹ It was the meaningless suffering that forced human beings to seek answers in the ascetic ideal – the transcendent god. But it is not Christianity but art and philosophy which, in Nietzsche’s view, can make intelligible the suffering in life. Nietzsche suggests that every man seeks the truth: “a world that is not self-contradictory (*sich widerspricht*), not deceptive (*täuscht*), does not change, a *true* world – a world in which one does not suffer; contradiction (*Widerspruch*), deception (*Täuschung*), change (*Wechsel*) – causes of suffering!”⁷⁰² Nietzsche points out that in modern society there are many who believe that “*to become* a good citizen, or scholar, or statesman”⁷⁰³ is the answer to all those existential questions. Christianity, romanticism, theoretical optimism and herd morality, all offer ways to overcome suffering but in the end they all fail. In opposition to these four ways, Nietzsche believes that art lets us overcome suffering by providing answers to existential questions and thus giving meaning and a goal to our lives. Without art mankind cannot overcome the abyss of nihilism created by the death of god. Art makes our tragic nature intelligible and thus enables us to carry on evaluating, creating and living. In fact for Nietzsche life itself is essentially creative and thus art not just let us overcome suffering but also fulfils life. In his *Nachlass* Nietzsche writes that “only the sublime beauty of the great tragedies can engender a

⁶⁹⁹ See ‘Buddhist philosophy’ in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (1995).

⁷⁰⁰ DS, p.46

⁷⁰¹ SE, p.205

⁷⁰² WP, p.316

⁷⁰³ SE, p.206

‘Dionysian joy [...] sufficient to save man.’⁷⁰⁴ Art lets human beings accept with serenity and love (*amor fati*) the terror and absurdity of existence. Genius “is alone, the age seems meaningless to him [...]. He sees suffering in the nature of things [...], he accepts his share of suffering with more serenity.”⁷⁰⁵ Genius has transformed his will to power from will to political power into will to creative power. In dithyrambic genius, Nietzsche writes, “the desire for supreme power, an inheritance from former circumstances, is now channelled completely into artistic creation; he speaks only through his art and only with himself, no longer with a public or a common people [...].”⁷⁰⁶

Hegel and Nietzsche on art, philosophy and religion

As was said above, Hegel and Nietzsche both promote culture but their understanding of culture differs radically. For Hegel’s culture is a manifestation of spirit (*Geist*) and Spirit itself is actualisation of the absolute, i.e. the Idea in the world. It is important to note that the idea to Hegel is the unity of reality and concept and therefore spirit is not beyond the world but the unity of the world and the idea. Spirit has three stages and only on the highest stage, on the level of absolute spirit, i.e. art, religion and philosophy, does the idea find its absolute truth.

Both Hegel and Nietzsche set certain human activities above others. Within the cultural world art, religion and philosophy are regarded by both thinkers as the highest and the ‘noblest’ of human activities. Hegel from his early Jena lectures on the philosophy of spirit (1805-1806), via *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) to his later works such as *The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817) and *The*

⁷⁰⁴ WP, § 1027

⁷⁰⁵ WB, p.302

⁷⁰⁶ WB, pp.302-303

Philosophy of Right (1821) retains this idea. Similarly, Nietzsche regards artists, saints (with some reservations) and philosophers as the highest and the noblest human beings.⁷⁰⁷ In their regard for art, religion and philosophy both thinkers seem to follow Vico who in his *Principles of a New Science of the Common Nature of Peoples* (1725) set these three spheres of human activity above others.⁷⁰⁸ However, despite this similarity Hegel and Nietzsche differ radically in their interpretations and exact hierarchy of art, religion and philosophy.

For Hegel art, religion and philosophy are all essentially modes of the manifestation and actualisation of the absolute, i.e. the Idea. Each activity is based on a different faculty and uses different forms to express this absolute. Art is based on sensuous intuition, religion is based on feeling and representation, and philosophy on reason. Correspondingly they use sensuous, imaginary and contemplative forms to express the same content, i.e. the absolute. In Nietzsche's view, there is no spirit, no idea and no absolute reason and thus art, religion and philosophy are manifestations of human life and suffering. Art, religion and philosophy, according to Nietzsche, express not the absolute but the tragic nature of the human condition and allow us to overcome suffering in life.

According to Hegel, Spirit progresses towards self-consciousness until it becomes an object of contemplation to itself. National Spirits are steps in its development. Through art, philosophy and religion Spirit realises the idea in its truth. On the level of Absolute Spirit there is a genuine unity of individuality, ethical life, art, religion and philosophy. In *Philosophy of Mind* Hegel argues that "all these elements of a nation's actuality constitute one systematic totality."⁷⁰⁹ This passage

⁷⁰⁷ One must note here that there was a period at the end of the 1870s in Nietzsche's intellectual life when he praises (not unlike Hegel) science over art and religion.

⁷⁰⁸ However unlike Hegel and Nietzsche, Vico argues that art, religion and philosophy are separate stages of the development of humankind.

⁷⁰⁹ PM, p.296

shows that for Hegel the state is an integral element in culture, whereas for Nietzsche culture is always at odds with the state.

For Hegel philosophy is superior to religion and religion is superior to art. For Nietzsche religion and philosophy are both inferior to art. Furthermore, Hegel and Nietzsche also differ in their opinion of different forms of art. Hegel, following the early Romantics, regards literature and especially poetry as the highest form of art. Nietzsche, following Schopenhauer, regards music as higher than any other art form.

According to Hegel, art, religion and philosophy all have the same content, i.e. the absolute. Yet, they express this absolute or God in different ways: art (based on sensuous intuition) reveals the absolute through sensuousness, religion (based on feeling and representation) through imagination (*Vorstellung*) and philosophy (based on contemplation) through concepts. In his *Philosophy of History* Hegel writes “it is thus One Individuality which, presented in its essence as God, is honoured and enjoyed in *Religion*; which is exhibited as an object of sensuous contemplation in *Art*; and is apprehended as an intellectual conception, in *Philosophy*.”⁷¹⁰

Religion is higher than art for it expresses the process of self-consciousness of the spirit. For Hegel there are three different types of religion: natural religion, religion of art and revealed religion. In natural religion the spirit knows itself only as immediate. In the religion of art (Greek religion) spirit is mediated through different art forms. In a sense it is not true religion for its content manifests itself not through itself but through something other than itself, i.e. artistic forms. Only on the level of revealed religion is the unity of consciousness and self-consciousness achieved. Revealed religion is at the same time immediate and mediated being-in-and-for-itself. Revealed religion becomes absolute religion in which, Hegel writes, “the divine Being is known as Spirit, or this religion is the consciousness of the divine Being that it is

⁷¹⁰ PH, p.53

Spirit. For Spirit is the knowledge of oneself in the externalization of oneself; the being that is the movement of retaining its self-identity in its otherness.”⁷¹¹

Hegel argues that the absolute can be most adequately expressed not in sensuous form nor by imagination but in conceptual form. The idea (*Idee*) is the essence of the world and it is the universal content that art, philosophy and religion seek to express. Hegel uses the analogy of the soul (content) and body (form) in order to express the unity of the concept and actuality in the Idea.

Art, religion and philosophy all point beyond the temporal, secular, and political existence of individuals towards the Absolute Spirit. Art, religion and philosophy constitute a union between the absolute, objective and subjective aspects of human existence. At the end of his lectures on the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel recalls what he says about art, philosophy and religion in his *Philosophy of History*. In §341 of the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel writes “The element in which the universal mind (*Geist*) exists in art is intuition and imagery, in religion feeling and representative thinking, in philosophy pure freedom of thought.”⁷¹²

In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel regards the absolute spirit, i.e. infinity, as beyond subjective and objective spirit, i.e. finitude. For Hegel the actual realm, the realm of individual caprice and barbarous manners, is set “over against a world of beyond, an intellectual realm, whose content is indeed the truth of its (the principle’s) mind (*Geist*), but truth not yet thought and so still veiled in barbarous imagery.”⁷¹³ And this world of beyond “as the power of mind over mundane heart, acts against the latter as a compulsive and frightful force.”⁷¹⁴

However, in §360 of the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel also points out that these two realms, the realm of spirit or truth and the realm of the mundane or fact “stand

⁷¹¹ PS, p.459

⁷¹² PR, p.216

⁷¹³ PR, p.222

⁷¹⁴ PR, p.222

distinguished from one another though at the same time they are rooted in a single unity and Idea.”⁷¹⁵ The final reconciliation is achieved, according to Hegel, in the state: “In the state, self-consciousness finds in an organic development the actuality of its substantive knowing and willing.”⁷¹⁶ Furthermore, Hegel argues the union of these three stages of spirit is achieved in the state. In his lectures on the *Philosophy of History* he points out that the state is “the basis and centre of the other concrete elements of the life of a people – of Art, of Law, of Morals, of Religion, of Science.”⁷¹⁷ Therefore, for Hegel, although culture points beyond society, it remains firmly rooted within that very society. It is clear that the realm of culture is, in Hegel’s view, beyond society as infinity is beyond finitude, not absolutely but only dialectically. Both realms are necessary aspects or moments of the actualisation of the idea.

For Hegel religion, art and philosophy are manifestations of the union between the subjective (particular), objective (idea) and absolute sides of human existence and the Idea. These three stages of the absolute spirit are manifested as a single unifying principle of the people within the state and thus make up the culture of that nation. Thus one can argue that Hegel, unlike Nietzsche, defines culture in relation to political institutions, i.e. the state. Hegel writes: “The general principle which manifests itself and becomes an object of consciousness in the State – the form under which all that the State includes is brought – is the whole of that cycle of phenomena which constitutes the *culture* of a nation.”⁷¹⁸ Although, this claim seems to be in contradiction with Hegel’s early claim that the absolute spirit lies beyond the state one needs to note that Hegel understands “beyond” not absolutely but speculatively.

⁷¹⁵ PR, p.222

⁷¹⁶ PR, pp.222-23

⁷¹⁷ PH, p.49

⁷¹⁸ PH, p.50

For Nietzsche art, religion and philosophy are not manifestations of the absolute because according to him God is dead. For Hegel the idea of the death of God is a sign of an unhappy consciousness. In order to understand Hegel's concept of the unhappy consciousness one needs to study his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. On the level of sense-certainty consciousness confronts an object as immediately given in its individuality without any further determination. Next, on the level of perception, consciousness starts to determine properties of the object but as belonging to separate entities in the phenomenal world. Beyond perception there is understanding in which consciousness determines objects even further as mutually linked but separated from the noumenal world beyond phenomena. For understanding, the actual world of vanishing and the eternal world "beyond" are absolutely separated. On this level Hegel introduces the notion of the unhappy consciousness which yearns towards the absolute but does not recognise the absolute as itself. Only on the highest level, the level of reason, is this self-recognition finally achieved.

Nietzsche's madman announced the death of God in *Thus spoke Zarathustra* and proclaims that God's successor is the Superman. For Hegel this death is the sign of unhappy consciousness. As Hegel himself writes in *Phenomenology of Spirit* "that death is the painful feeling of the Unhappy Consciousness that *God Himself is dead.*"⁷¹⁹ Unhappy consciousness has nothing outside or beyond itself; therefore it believes that God is dead. In Hegel's view, unhappy consciousness is a pathological form of the spiritual in which "consciousness, unable to disengage itself from irrational particularity, simply identifies itself with the latter, and is then led to extrude the rational universality which is its true self into a mystical, unattainable Beyond."⁷²⁰ This form of self-consciousness cannot reach out for objectivity because its own essence remains beyond its reach. Or as Hegel puts it: "the unity of the *individual* self-

⁷¹⁹ PS, p.476

consciousness and its changeless *essence*, to which the former attains, remains therefore, a *beyond* for self-consciousness.”⁷²¹

The unhappy consciousness develops out of the master and slave dialectic. The self-consciousness of the master exists in and for itself only so far as it is acknowledged by the other – the slave. Thus it becomes dependent on the other and loses its own identity. The self-consciousness of the master, in order to affirm itself, must negate the other, i.e. the slave, but by doing so it negates itself. This dual negation brings us back to the self of the master on the higher level because by negating the other, the slave, in its own being it affirms the other by setting it free from its own self. Hegel points out in his *Phenomenology* that both sides, master and slave, carry out this negation and affirmation at the same time but lack the understanding of the unity between themselves. For the unhappy consciousness, master and slave are always absolutely beyond each other, for it does not reach the level of reason on which this inner dialectical unity is understood. Hegel argues that unhappy consciousness is contradictory because there is no unity between the ‘changeable’ and ‘unchangeable’. Unhappy consciousness is aware that there is a duality of self-consciousness but it is not aware that there is also a underlying unity. The unhappy consciousness, Hegel suggests, is aware of the contradiction but makes not the changeable but the unchangeable the essence of its being. This makes unhappy consciousness self-contradictory because for unhappy consciousness the in-itself is constantly beyond itself. Only on the level of reason, Hegel argues, can the absolute negation of the other become not just a negation but also an affirmation. For sense-certainty, one might recall, there is sense-certainty and there is an object of its apprehension which is separate from it. On the level of reason the object and the subject of the reflection, i.e. consciousness, coincide.

⁷²⁰ PS, p.xviii

The death of God is, according to Hegel, a sign of unhappy consciousness which is absolutely separated from the other, i.e. God. In its self-loss the languishing self of the unhappy consciousness announces the death of God. For Hegel the unhappy consciousness is “the tragic fate of the certainty of the self that aims to be absolute. It is the consciousness of the loss of all *essential* being in this *certainty of itself*, and of the loss even of this knowledge about itself – the loss of substance as well as of the Self, it is the grief which expresses itself in the hard saying that ‘God is dead’.”⁷²²

Hegel points out that one of the consequences of the unhappy consciousness is the loss of values. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* he writes that with the ascent of the unhappy consciousness “trust in the eternal laws of the gods has vanished, and the Oracles, which pronounced on particular questions, are dumb.”⁷²³ Unhappy consciousness is the knowledge of this total loss of values and norms and thus leads to the nihilism which expresses itself in the hard saying ‘God is dead’.⁷²⁴

In his *Philosophy of Mind* Hegel re-examines his own earlier work *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and discusses the place of art, religion and philosophy within the context of the development of consciousness. Art is the first result of the consciousness of the absolute. Art is, Hegel writes, the “concrete *contemplation* and mental picture of implicitly absolute spirit as the *Ideal*.”⁷²⁵ Art is, in Hegel’s view, the lowest mode of consciousness – sensuous apprehension. Although art belongs to the realm of the sensuous it allows us, at the same time, to overcome this sensuous realm and seek beyond it. As Hegel writes “art, by means of its representation, while remaining within the sensuous sphere, delivers man at the same time from the power

⁷²¹ PS, p.410

⁷²² PS, p.455

⁷²³ PS, p.455

⁷²⁴ PS, p.455

⁷²⁵ PM, p.293

of sensuousness.”⁷²⁶ The idea, which is the content of art actualises itself through art and therefore art is able to point beyond sensuousness.

In his lectures on aesthetics Hegel differentiates three types of art: classical, symbolic and romantic.⁷²⁷ Broadly speaking, in classical art there is no conflict between the form of expression and content, i.e. the Idea. In symbolic art there is a constant conflict and reconciliation between the form and the content, i.e. the Idea. In romantic art the absolute is manifested only indirectly or reflectively for this artistic form is no longer able to express the content wholly.

Hegel defines each of them in accordance to its mode of expression of the Idea. First, there is symbolic art in which the idea is expressed as indistinct and undetermined and thus without the notion of individuality. Symbolic art is a one-sided representation of the idea for “the idea has not yet found the true form even within itself, and therefore continues to be merely the struggle and aspiration thereafter.”⁷²⁸ In symbolic art the content, i.e. idea, is determined abstractly or symbolically and thus is external to the form. Because there is an underlying correspondence between content and form, the latter in symbolic art becomes also abstract or undetermined. Architecture, in Hegel’s view, is the most adequate representation of the symbolic art.

According to Hegel, classical art “is the free and adequate embodiment of the Idea in the shape that, according to its conception, is peculiarly appropriate to the Idea itself.”⁷²⁹ In other words, in classical art the content, i.e. idea, is in a genuine unity with the form and therefore it is the highest art form. In Hegel’s view, in ancient Greece content and form wholly coincided. Sculpture as an art of expression of the individuality of gods is the essential form of classical art.

⁷²⁶ *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, hereafter ILA, p.54

⁷²⁷ As the Chair of Philosophy in Berlin, Hegel lectured on art and aesthetics during several academic years (winter 1820-21, summer 1823 and 1826, and last time winter 1828-29). His lecture notes and students’ transcripts were posthumously edited and published by H.G. Hotho in 1835 and in 1842.

⁷²⁸ ILA, p.82

⁷²⁹ ILA, p.84

In romantic art there is a discord between content and form, and such art therefore is in a sense a return to the one-sidedness of symbolic art. In the romantic period content, i.e. the idea, is more developed and determined than in the classical period and therefore it cannot any more be adequately expressed in a sensuous form. Although, romantic art is closer to the genuine embodiment of the spirit (*Geist*) for it becomes reflective, it is not the highest form of art. In Hegel's view painting, music and poetry are all romantic forms of arts but in addition poetry is a universal art.

Hegel suggests that art reveals the absolute and at the same time the absolute actualises itself through art. According to Hegel, art's task is neither to imitate nature nor to create harmony between our feelings and knowledge, or desire and experience. For him the ultimate task of art is not to arouse and animate "the slumbering emotions, inclinations, and passions."⁷³⁰ Although art makes "men realize the inmost nature of all that is shocking and horrible, as also of all pleasure and delight"⁷³¹ its ultimate aim is not moral or ethical. Art, according to Hegel, in contrast to religion and philosophy, does not have a moral purpose beyond or superior to itself because morality involves reflection but genuine art, by definition, lacks it. Romantic art starts using the form of philosophy and religion which is reflection in order to express the absolute.

Thus the aim of art, in Hegel's view, is not a moral perfection of man or ethical improvement of mankind in general but art itself. In Hegel's view, although art is an expression of human feelings, knowledge and passion, it is a manifestation of the absolute as an idea in the sensuous form in the world. In his lectures on art Hegel claims that the ultimate purpose of art is "the sensuous representation of the absolute itself."⁷³²

⁷³⁰ ILA, p.51

⁷³¹ ILA, p.51

⁷³² ILA, p.76

At the same time art allows us to overcome the opposition of universality and particularity, the discord between concept and reality, the conflict between understanding and sensuality, and the disharmony between content and form. Genuine art is, in Hegel's view, a full and total unity of the Idea and the sensuous. Hegel writes: "Only in the highest art are the Idea and the representation genuinely adequate to one another, in the sense that the outward shape given to the Idea is in itself essentially and actually the true shape, because the content of the Idea, which that shape expresses, is itself the true and real content."⁷³³ Hegel, influenced by Winckelmann, thinks that in ancient Greece artists achieved this genuine unity of the idea and sensuous for at that time the form was adequate to the content.

However, for Hegel, art is not the highest form of human activity, for through it one apprehends and represents the absolute, i.e. the Idea, not in thought but by means of sensuous forms. According to Hegel, thinking is the highest mode of apprehension of the absolute and therefore religion and philosophy which are based on it are superior to art.

For Hegel Spirit (*Geist*) is not opposed to sensuous apprehension but is the unity of all three forms of apprehension: sensuous, imaginative and conceptual. As was pointed out above, art uses sensory (*sinnlich*) forms in order to express the absolute. Or, in other words, the absolute manifested in sensory forms can be called art. Religion on the other hand uses imagination (*Vorstellung*) to express this absolute, i.e. the idea. However, for Hegel the highest apprehension of the spirit (*Geist*) and the most adequate manifestation of the absolute is conceptual thought. Therefore, art and religion remain inferior to philosophy. Hegel insists that "even fine art is only a grade of liberation, not the supreme liberation itself. – The genuine objectivity, which is only in the medium of thought – the medium in which alone the

⁷³³ ILA, p.81

pure spirit is for the spirit, and where the liberation is accompanied with reverence – is still absent in the sensuous beauty of the works of art, still more in that external, unbeautiful sensuousness.”⁷³⁴

Philosophy (which Hegel sometimes calls Science) is the intelligible unity of art and religion. Philosophy, Hegel writes in the *Philosophy of Mind*, is “the liberation from the one-sidedness of the forms, elevation of them into the absolute form, which determines itself to content, remains identical with it, and is in that the cognition of that essential and actual necessity.”⁷³⁵ Through philosophy which is based on reason and conceptual thought spirit becomes self-conscious and thus embodies the idea wholly.

In sharp contrast to Hegel, for Nietzsche art is not an embodiment of the absolute spirit or manifestation of the idea but the revelation of tragic human nature. Art also enables human beings to communicate and express their genuine nature, i.e. creativity. Art is the way to the tragic disposition. The young Nietzsche thought that Wagner was “the discoverer of the place of the arts in a true human society, the poetic elucidator of past views of life, the philosopher, the historian, the aesthician and critic.”⁷³⁶ Bayreuth, i.e. the whole work of art, is the example of Wagner’s genius. Here, it must be pointed out that later in his life Nietzsche changed his views about Wagner but not about the importance of art and genius in human society. It is interesting to note that Nietzsche blames Hegel (and Schelling) for Wagner’s later downfall. In *The Case of Wagner* written in Turin in 1888 Nietzsche asks us not to forget that in Wagner’s youth Hegel (and Schelling) “were misleading the minds of Germany.”⁷³⁷ It was the concept of the “idea” which misled Wagner and other

⁷³⁴ PM, p.297

⁷³⁵ PM, p.302

⁷³⁶ WB, p.269

⁷³⁷ CW, p.31

Germans. Wagner became for Nietzsche “Hegel’s heir” who applied Hegel’s philosophy to music by understanding music as the manifestation of “the idea”.

Nietzsche rejects the passive, contemplative attitude toward society which he identifies with Romanticism. For him “art is activity of the human being in response.”⁷³⁸ Wagner’s life might serve here as an example of an active artist. Art reveals the violence, injustice, deceit of the modern society and the state and allows us to overcome the sickness of society and degradation of culture. Furthermore, Ansell-Pearson points out “for Nietzsche, therefore, the Greek experience of art can instruct us in how it is possible to overcome nihilism, not through a utopian politics or an eschatological religion, but through the cultivation of an affirmation of the tragic character of existence.”⁷³⁹ Later Nietzsche expresses this idea by saying that genuine culture requires total affirmation of life, *Ja-sagen*, because life is the only source out of which a great culture can emerge. Because of negating the primary instincts of life (for example, selfishness or sexuality) Christianity, in Nietzsche’s view, becomes a debasing force in society which destroys the meaning of life and thus degrades and annihilates culture.

It is generally recognised that Nietzsche was influenced by Schopenhauer’s philosophy in general and his philosophy of art in particular. Thus, in order to understand Nietzsche’s philosophy of art one needs to look at Schopenhauer’s philosophy of art. Schopenhauer developed his philosophical system in response to Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. In his major work, *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer argues that the world is a manifestation of the *principium individuationis* rather than the self-realisation of the spirit or an actualisation of absolute reason. Schopenhauer borrows Kant’s concept of the thing-in-itself and claims that the will not reason is the thing-in-itself of the world.

⁷³⁸ WB, p.278

Schopenhauer maintains that art and philosophy reveal the thing-in-itself of the world using different forms: philosophy uses concepts, art uses ideas.

Influenced by Hindu and Buddhist philosophy Schopenhauer maintains that life is full of suffering. However, unlike Buddhist philosophy Schopenhauer claims that it is possible to overcome this suffering not only by correct meditation but also by artistic creativity. In other words, in Schopenhauer's view, art (and asceticism) allows one to overcome suffering in life by turning the artist into a pure will-less, timeless and painless subject. For Schopenhauer the aim is a suffering-free world which means will-less objectivity attained through aesthetic perception. Only through aesthetic experience can one, in Schopenhauer's view, discover the true nature of the world. According to Schopenhauer, art allows an individual to overcome his limits and points beyond the *principium individuationis* of the world to reveal the basic principles of the world which Schopenhauer calls the ideas (*Ideen*).

For Nietzsche, as for Schopenhauer, life is full of suffering. Suffering is caused by various reasons but the greatest anguish is caused by lack of answers to existential questions. Art, in Nietzsche's view, allows us to overcome this suffering not by turning individuals into will-less objects but by revealing and enhancing the very nature of human beings, i.e. the will to power. Nietzsche, in his meditation on Wagner, points out that "the greatest suffering that exists for the individual, the lack of a knowledge shared by all human beings, the lack of certainty in ultimate insights, and the disparity in abilities: all this makes him need art."⁷⁴⁰ Art is not limited by narrow individualism despite the fact that many great artists have been known for their egoism. Geniuses create new works of art and thus produce and promote culture. Art and culture in general, according to Nietzsche, belong to the supra-personal or communal level and that is why, I argue, it is misleading to claim that Nietzsche's

⁷³⁹ IN, p.66

political philosophy represents pure individualism. In his meditation on Wagner Nietzsche explicitly declares that: “The individual should be consecrated to something suprapersonal - that is what tragedy seeks; the individual is supposed to forget the terrible anxiety that death and time cause him, for even in the briefest moments, in the tiniest atom of his lifetime he can encounter something sacred that abundantly compensates him for all his fighting and need – this is what it means *to have a tragic disposition*.”⁷⁴¹

Nietzsche is quite pessimistic about the future of humankind. He seems to think that humankind might not survive for much longer. He does not believe that solitary individuals are able to face their fate with a tragic disposition and therefore in *The Birth of Tragedy* he calls us to overcome individualism via the primordial “oneness” and “commonality” of every individual. This idea is present in his first book on Greek tragedy where Nietzsche interprets this ‘oneness’ as a Dionysian intoxicating unity. Later, in his meditation on Wagner, Nietzsche contemplates the possible future of humankind as follows: “And even if all of humanity should have to perish - who would doubt this! - it has been charged, as its supreme task for all future generations, with the goal of growing together into oneness and commonality so that it can confront its impending doom *as a whole* and with a tragic *disposition*.”⁷⁴² The primary task for Nietzsche’s political philosophy is the rejection of modern human being and the ennoblement of genuine human being. Nietzsche contends that “there is only one hope and one guarantee for the future of what is human: it consists in *preventing the tragic disposition from dying out*.”⁷⁴³ Art is, in Nietzsche’s view, a response to tragic insight and therefore theoretical optimism is in principle hostile to culture.

⁷⁴⁰ WB, p.278

⁷⁴¹ WB, p.279

⁷⁴² WB, p.219

⁷⁴³ WB, p.280

In Nietzsche's view, it is impossible to change and reform modern human being without radical changes to and reforms of social and political institutions. In Nietzsche's view, modern society judges individuals only by their usefulness to society and not according their creativity and ingenuity. Nietzsche recognises that in modern society everything is interconnected, therefore the success of his political programme depends on the reform and dismantling of the present social institutions and mentality. Nietzsche points out to anyone who tries to avoid this radical break-up of the old system: "It is absolutely impossible to produce the highest and purest effect of performing art without at the same time introducing innovation everywhere, in mores and government, in education and commerce."⁷⁴⁴ In this point Nietzsche seems to agree with Hegel's understanding of culture: not unlike Hegel he recognises that there is an intrinsic link between culture and society.

For Nietzsche art is the essence of the world, which is full of harmony and discord, justice and injustice, truth and untruth. One can say that for Nietzsche in the early part of his career art in general but Wagner's music in particular is the "most powerful expression of life."⁷⁴⁵ According to Nietzsche it is a "symphonic intellect", not an absolute reason, "that constantly produces concord out of this conflict; Wagner's music taken as a whole is a likeness of the world in the sense in which it was conceived by the great Ephesian philosopher, as a harmony that discord produces out of itself, as the union of justice and strife."⁷⁴⁶ Art is not just a game of talent or technicality, it is *necessity*. It is a necessity for the artist constantly to overcome himself and thus to force society to go beyond its old values and norms. At the same time, throughout his works Nietzsche stresses the importance of promoting genuine culture from which the great artists can emerge. Thus it seems this process of

⁷⁴⁴ WB, p.275

⁷⁴⁵ WB, p.291

⁷⁴⁶ WB, p.316

producing genius is not linear but circular in its very nature. The more great artists the culture has, the more genuine it is; the more genuine the culture is, the more great artist it has and will have. Therefore, it is impossible to say which part of this process is primary and which secondary.

Nietzsche's political philosophy is about art but he is against what he calls the "aesthetic fanaticism of masses".⁷⁴⁷ For the young Nietzsche Wagner is an artist who was above the fanaticism of masses. In his meditation Nietzsche calls Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* "the true *opus metaphysicum* of all art."⁷⁴⁸ Later he famously changes his views and claimed that Wagner let his art be determined by Christianity, Hegelianism, anti-Semitism, and the Reich's patriotism; in short by public opinion and philistine culture.

Great artists, in Nietzsche's view, have the power to *interpret the past*; only such artists would understand the greatness of the past because they themselves belong to the rank of great human beings. Nietzsche points out that "only by the most vigorous exertion of your noblest qualities will you sense what in the past is great and worth knowing and preserving. Like for like!"⁷⁴⁹ Great artists are often disregarded by society; they often live a tormented and tragic life *beyond society*. Yet, at the same time, Nietzsche believes that an artist must speak to his own age and make demands on his contemporaries. The skills and knowledge of artists cannot be passed to the next generations just by textbooks or records. This passing can happen only between two human beings. Therefore, artists need talented and open-minded disciples in order to pass on skills, knowledge and experience. Here it is important to point out that in Nietzsche's view, the public institutions can and must guarantee that there are always talented and open-minded human beings in the future. Nietzsche maintains that the

⁷⁴⁷ WB, p.306

⁷⁴⁸ WB, p.303

⁷⁴⁹ HS, p.118

artist “needs human souls as the mediators to the future, public institutions as guarantors of this future, as bridges between the present and the times to come. His art cannot be transported in the ship of written records, as the work of the philosopher can; art requires *skilled people* as its transmitters, not letters and notations.”⁷⁵⁰

Young, in his recent study *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, claims that there are four main periods in Nietzsche's interpretation of art. Nietzsche's final interpretation is, Young argues, in fact a return to the initial interpretation of art. Therefore, one can talk about the continuity of Nietzsche's philosophy of art, which is the foundation for his political philosophy. Young also points out that Nietzsche's philosophy of art is interconnected with other notions in his philosophy like the 'overman' (*Übermensch*), the death of God and the eternal recurrence. However, Young dismisses (on the ground that it stems from works not published by Nietzsche) the relevance of the notion of 'will to power' for Nietzsche's philosophy of art. Contrary to this claim, I argue that the notion of the will to power is related to Nietzsche's philosophy of art: for him 'will to power' means a will to creative or artistic power not so much political, historical or military power. Nietzsche's will to power is not the Schopenhauerian thing-in-itself or absolute beyond this world but rather an essential characteristic of the one world, the actual world.

Nietzsche follows Schopenhauer in his understanding of human existence. Similar to Schopenhauer, he maintains that human existence in the world is full of suffering, pain, absurdity and tragedy. Nietzsche thinks that one can overcome suffering by artistic creativity. In his first book on *The Birth of Tragedy* he calls for a return to ancient Greek art as a means to overcome suffering in life. In his call for the rebirth of Greek culture Nietzsche was not much different from other nineteenth-century German thinkers, including Hegel. As he himself points out in his *Nachlass*,

⁷⁵⁰ WB, p.322

every German thinker is longing for return to Greek culture and art. In his *Nachlass* Nietzsche takes this to be a symptom of homesickness and romanticism by saying: “German philosophy as a whole – Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer to name the greatest – is the most fundamental form of *romanticism* and homesickness there has ever been: the longing for the best that has never existed. One is no longer at home anywhere; at last one longs back for that place in which alone one can be at home, because it is the only place in which one would want to be at home: the Greek world.”⁷⁵¹

Both Hegel and Nietzsche admired ancient Greek culture and art. Their regard for Greek culture, like that of many German intellectuals during the nineteenth century, was inspired by the works of Winckelmann, and especially his book *History of Ancient Art* (1776). In this popular and influential work Winckelmann maintains that ancient Greek culture and art (especially sculpture) represents the highest cultural peak for humankind, remaining unsurpassed by later epochs. Hegel himself recognises the significance of Winckelmann’s work on ancient Greek art, despite also being critical of Winckelmann’s theory of art, pointing out in his lectures on aesthetics that “Winckelmann should be regarded as one of the men who have succeeded in furnishing the mind with a new organ and new methods of study in the field of art.”⁷⁵²

However, differently from Hegel and Schopenhauer, Nietzsche does not have a unified concept of Greek art and culture. He divides Greek art into Dionysian and Apollonian art. In Apollonian art, Nietzsche writes in *The Birth of Tragedy* “beauty triumphs over the suffering inherent in life”⁷⁵³ Nietzsche borrows the idea of the

⁷⁵¹ WP, p.419

⁷⁵² ILA, p.69

⁷⁵³ BT, p.16

principium individuationis from Schopenhauer and he claims that only Apollonian art is created according to this principle.⁷⁵⁴

It is important to point out in regard to his political project that Nietzsche seeks to overcome this principle of individuation – the underlying principle of the world according to which individuals in their aims and interests are separated from each other without unified goal or principle. Nietzsche, by introducing the notion of Dionysian art, hopes to seek higher unity beyond individuation. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche draws a sharp line between Apollonian and Dionysian art, wisdom, and world: “They represent to me, most vividly and concretely, two radically dissimilar realms of art. Apollo embodies the transcendent genius of the *principium individuationis*. [...] The mystical jubilation of Dionysos, on the other hand, breaks the spell of individuation and opens a path to the maternal womb of being.”⁷⁵⁵

Dionysian art, Nietzsche suggests, is art born out of “intoxication”, “frenzy” and “ecstasy” which in the form of Bacchic festivals created a primordial unity of Greek peoples. Nietzsche associates the Dionysian with “Affirmation of life even in its strangest and sternest problems.”⁷⁵⁶ It is a Dionysian artist, i.e. a tragic poet, who addresses and affirms everything transitory and destructive.

Similarly to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche suggests that suffering in the world is caused by the *principium individuationis*. He introduces the notion of Dionysian art which as Young points out could be interpreted as Schopenhauer’s “universal will”. According to Schopenhauer, only an ‘altruist’ overcomes the principle of individuation. For Nietzsche Apollonian art protects us from the suffering of the world but does not overcome it. Only Dionysian art allows us to overcome our limited existence full of suffering and seek something beyond and higher than our narrow

⁷⁵⁴ Young argues that Nietzsche’s notion of Apollonian consciousness is related to Schopenhauer’s concept of “Platonic ideas” or “archetypes”. See *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Art*, p.33

⁷⁵⁵ BT, p.97

⁷⁵⁶ EH, p.80

individualistic goal and desires – the world of culture. The Dionysian artist who has a tragic disposition achieves the primordial unity. In Nietzsche's view, only through this higher cultural unity beyond narrow individuals can one give meaning to life and justify human existence. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche points out that "it is only as aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world are eternally justified."⁷⁵⁷ Therefore, by reviving Greek art and culture (Apollinian but more importantly Dionysian art) Nietzsche seeks to overcome the suffering in life and cure the sickness of modern society. Apollonian art allows us to overcome suffering by glorifying the principle of individuation. In the *Will to Power* Nietzsche explains what he means by the Apollonian: "The word 'Apollonian' means: the urge to perfect self-sufficiency, to the typical 'individual,' to all that simplifies, distinguishes, makes strong, clear, unambiguous, typical: freedom under the law."⁷⁵⁸ Dionysian art, on the other hand, allows us to overcome this suffering by transcending the principle of individuation and establishing a higher unity between individuals. In *The Will to Power* one can find Nietzsche's explanation of the Dionysian: "The word '*Dionysian*' means: an urge to unity, a reaching out beyond personality, the everyday, society, reality, across the abyss of transitoriness: a passionate-painful overflowing into darker, fuller, more floating states; an ecstatic affirmation of the total character of life as that which remains the same [...]."⁷⁵⁹

Apollonian man feels one with the actual or phenomenal world which is the manifestation of the principle of individuation. Dionysian man, on the other hand, is in a primordial unity with the will and the world. For Nietzsche, the Dionysian becomes the highest expression of the will to power which seeks unity with the real world. However, these two spheres are not, according to Nietzsche, separated from

⁷⁵⁷ BT, p.24

⁷⁵⁸ WP, §1050

⁷⁵⁹ WP, § 1050

each other. For Nietzsche there are not two worlds – the apparent world and the true world. As he points out “the antithesis of a real and apparent world is lacking ... there is only one world and it is false, cruel, contradictory, seductive without meaning – A world thus constituted is the real world. We have need of lies in order to conquer this reality ... Art and nothing but art! It is the great means of making life possible, the great seduction to life, the great stimulant of life. Art as the only superior counterforce to all will to denial of life, as that which is anti-Christian, anti-Buddhist, *antinihilist par excellence*.”⁷⁶⁰ Art gives meaning to the lives of the man of knowledge, man of action and man of suffering by overcoming and transforming the “terrifying and questionable character of existence.” Furthermore, art gives ultimate meaning to life and provides the highest justification of existence.

Both Hegel and Nietzsche, introduce a hierarchy of different types of art. For Hegel architecture is the lowest and the poetic arts are the highest forms of art because architecture is furthest from the idea and the poetic arts closest to the idea and thus to the true essence the world. Nietzsche, following Schopenhauer, regards music as the highest form of art. For Schopenhauer music has a special status among other types of art. Whereas other art forms reveal the essence of the world indirectly, music, in Schopenhauer’s view, reveals the nature of existence directly. Music, Schopenhauer claims, is the immediate manifestation of the ‘thing-in-itself’, i.e. the will of the world and therefore must be regarded as the highest art form.

Hegel points out that music “treats the sensuous as ideal, and does so by negating and idealising it into the individual isolation of a single point.”⁷⁶¹ Music, differently from painting, does so by using sound and temporality rather than colour and space. Hegel claims that “music forms the centre of the romantic arts, just as sculpture represents the central point between architecture and the arts of romantic

⁷⁶⁰ WP, §853 (II)

subjectivity.”⁷⁶² Music, according to Hegel, is the best sensuous representation of the absolute and through music the absolute manifests itself in sensuous form most adequately. However, the most spiritual and thus the highest type of art, according to Hegel, is not music but poetry. Music does not require high reflectivity of the mind and therefore cannot provide a conceptual apprehension of the absolute. That is why, Hegel suggests musical talents can be expressed in very early youth. Whereas poetry requires a highly reflective mind and uses semi-conceptual form to express the absolute. Thus poetry is closest not just to the sensuous but also to the conceptual essence of the spirit (*Geist*). For Spirit, according to Hegel, is the unity of sensory and conceptual expression of the idea which itself is the unity of concept (*Begriff*) and actuality.

In world history spirit becomes self-conscious and therefore sensuous forms of expressing it become insufficient and inadequate. In Hegel’s view, poetry is the highest form of art because it uses not just sensuous but also conceptual forms in order to express the absolute, i.e. the Idea. Hegel points out that “this sensuous element, which in music was still immediately one with inward feeling, is in poetry separated from the content of consciousness. In poetry the mind determines this content for its own sake, and apart from all else, into the shape of ideas, and though it employs sound to express them, yet treats it solely as a symbol without value or import.”⁷⁶³ Poetry is the genuine medium for the artistic imagination which allows the idea of beauty to self-unfold. Hegel writes that “poetry is the universal art of the mind (*Geist*) which has become free in its own nature, and which is not tied to find its realization in external sensuous matter, but expatiates exclusively in the inner space and inner time of the ideas and feelings.”⁷⁶⁴ If the sensuous in poetry is utterly

⁷⁶¹ ILA, p.94

⁷⁶² ILA, p.95

⁷⁶³ ILA, p.96

⁷⁶⁴ ILA, p.96

transgressed in favour of conceptual form, poetry becomes philosophy. Hegel points out, however, that “just in this its highest phase art ends by transcending itself, inasmuch as it abandons the medium of a harmonious embodiment of mind (*Geist*) in sensuous form, and passes from the poetry of imagination into the prose of thought.”⁷⁶⁵ Thus poetry becomes for Hegel the highest form of art for it uses all three forms – sensory, imagination and conceptual – to express the absolute.

For Nietzsche, as opposed to Hegel, music is the purest and the highest form of art because it is closest to nature and expresses most lucidly the tragic disposition of existence: “Music set apart from all the other arts, the inherently independent art, not providing reflections of the phenomenal world like the other arts, but instead, speaking the language of *the will* itself straight out of the ‘abyss’, as the latter’s most unique, original, direct revelation.”⁷⁶⁶ Music manifests and reveals the tragic nature of life and thus helps us to give meaning to life. Music, is the highest form of Dionysian art, which allows us to overcome suffering and justify life. Nietzsche believes that the tragic nature of human existence is expressed most authentically in music. Furthermore, music represents the immediate link between the world and human existence. Throughout his life Nietzsche maintains that fruitful life is music and music is a stimulus to life. Nietzsche writes that “music is the return to nature, while at the same time it is purification and transformation of nature, for the need for such a return emerged in the soul of the most loving human beings, and *what rings out in their art is nature transformed into love.*”⁷⁶⁷ For him music is “the most enigmatic thing under the sun, an abyss in which strength and goodness are united, a bridge between self and nonself.”⁷⁶⁸ Through music lesser human beings can overcome their alienation and become genuine human beings. Music reveals and enables one to

⁷⁶⁵ ILA, p.96

⁷⁶⁶ GM, p.77

⁷⁶⁷ WB, p.282

⁷⁶⁸ WB, p.290

overcome the passion and suffering of life. In music the battle between pathos and ethos, morality and immorality is expressed and life's tragic contradictions solved. Wagner's music, Nietzsche writes, is the purest expression of personal will. For Nietzsche every person's life is like Greek tragedy, full of unbearable choices, unavoidable actions and sorrowful consequences. Therefore, the dithyrambic dramatist is most authentic in his depiction of the life of the human being.

V. The production of genius

Les philosophes ne sont pas faits pour s'aimer. Les aigles ne volent point en compagnie. Il faut laisser cela aux perdrix, aux étourneaux ... Planer au-dessus et avoir des griffes, voilà le lot des grands génies.

*Will To Power*⁷⁶⁹

Nietzsche is certain that any society that does not recognise the importance of culture and development of creativity is destined for degradation and degeneration. Despite this the ultimate aim of political parties and modern society in general is according to Nietzsche not the promotion of culture and the production of genius but the cultivation and the production of 'current' human beings. Nietzsche writes that "this cultivation would have the goal of creating as many 'current' human beings as possible, [...] the more such 'current' human beings a people possesses, the happier it will be."⁷⁷⁰ Thus 'current' society is busy with the production of scholars, money-makers, cultural philistines and not innovative and creative human beings. Nietzsche writes that in modern society "the human being is granted only as much culture as is in the interest of universal moneymaking and world commerce, but this much is also required of him."⁷⁷¹ As was pointed out earlier, even this society can produce geniuses like Schopenhauer and Wagner but this happens only by rare accident. Nietzsche seeks to establish a new set of values, which would be the foundation for his political project – the production of genius.

In a sense culture is the means not the aim of Nietzsche's political philosophy, for, as he points out, it is impossible to promote culture without the production of genius. In his meditation on Schopenhauer he reminds us that "I have not yet enumerated all those powers that promote culture without, however, being able to

⁷⁶⁹ "Philosophers are not made to love one another. Eagles do not fly in company. One must leave that to partridges and starlings ... Soaring on high and having talons, that is the lot of great geniuses." WP, § 989

⁷⁷⁰ SE, p.219

⁷⁷¹ SE, p.219

realize its goal, the production of genius.”⁷⁷² In *We Philologists* written in 1874 Nietzsche talks about his hopes for training and breeding superior men. A few years later, in *Human, All Too Human*, he is afraid that humankind might become too feeble in the future to be able to produce geniuses.

Nietzsche believes that culture itself might be exploited, degraded and weakened by society. For example in the *Reich* this misuse and degrading happens, making German culture sick and decadent. Nietzsche writes: “For there is a kind of misused and exploited culture – just take a look around you!”⁷⁷³ Nietzsche is aware that without a revaluation of old values and a transfiguration of the old culture within modern society the supreme goal of culture, i.e. the production of genius, might never be accomplished.

Nietzsche suggests that in order to produce geniuses modern human beings need to be changed and reformed. In *Beyond Good and Evil* he talks about the genius who is ready for his own law-giving, self-preservation, self-enhancement and self-redemption. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* he asserts that “Man is something that should be overcome.”⁷⁷⁴ However, he admits that this is impossible without radical reforms within society and the transvaluation of all values. Nietzsche points out that “it is absolutely impossible to produce the highest and purest effect of performing art without at the same time introducing innovation everywhere, in mores and government, in education and commerce.”⁷⁷⁵ Thus, it is clear that Nietzsche’s cultural project becomes more political. He is convinced that artists must assume the ‘hegemony’ and be the leaders of this change: “art is precisely the activity of the human being in repose.”⁷⁷⁶ Nietzsche calls his contemporaries to create a land in

⁷⁷² SE, p.224

⁷⁷³ SE, p.218

⁷⁷⁴ Z, p.41

⁷⁷⁵ WB, p.275

⁷⁷⁶ WB, p.279

which “later we will find good harbours and help others who come after us to put in to shore.”⁷⁷⁷

Nietzsche points out that in the *Reich* culture has become a part of capitalist production. He believes that in Germany culture is promoted not in order to produce geniuses but because of the selfishness of *money-makers*. Money-makers do not overcome the Apollonian principle of individuation and thus hinder the emerging of the Dionysian man and culture. The money-makers promote their own culture and their values are promoted by this culture in return. Money-makers “like to dictate the goal and standards of culture.”⁷⁷⁸ Thus culture becomes subordinated to the selfishness of the state, money-makers and scholarship and such a society would be governed by these principles. Nietzsche defines the grounding principle of this ‘consumer’ society as follows: “a maximum knowledge and education; hence a maximum demand; hence maximum production; hence maximum profit and pleasure – so runs the seductive formula.”⁷⁷⁹ Nietzsche believes that “this comfortable life would destroy the soil out of which great intellect and the powerful individual in general grows [...].”⁷⁸⁰

Within this society great human beings can only infrequently emerge and the end result is not the production of genius but the production and reproduction of the ‘current’, the ‘fashionable’, the ‘sick animal’ man. For Nietzsche, because of modern values mankind develops into similar, ordinary, average, mediocre and herdlike people. In opposition to modern moral dogmas, Nietzsche suggests, there is no correlation between “intelligence and property” or “wealth and culture.”⁷⁸¹ Nietzsche understands why his philosophical and political stance is despised in modern society for he sees that “any kind of education that makes people lonely, that sets goals that go beyond money and acquisition, that takes a great amount of time, is despised; one

⁷⁷⁷ HS, p.138

⁷⁷⁸ SE, p.218

⁷⁷⁹ SE, p.218

⁷⁸⁰ HAH, p.112

is accustomed to disparaging such forms of education as ‘refined egoism’, as ‘immoral cultural Epicureanism.’⁷⁸²

Nietzsche suggests that reform should start with social institutions and especially with the present educational system. He claims that even within the educational system, which is a part of high culture, people are “for the most part incapable of understanding and valuing what is rare, great, and uncommon, that is, what is important and essential.”⁷⁸³ This modern educational system produces scholars, bureaucrats, capitalists and philistines not geniuses as Nietzsche’s political project would do. Nietzsche writes critically about the German educational system saying: “the efforts of present-day higher education produce either scholars, or state officials, or moneymakers, or cultivated philistines, or finally, as is usually the case, a combination of all four.”⁷⁸⁴ That is why Nietzsche’s genius is opposed to the pursuit of social and economic goals although he has social preconditions himself, namely, a reformed educational system.

Nietzsche does not want to establish more or new universities but to change the general philosophy of education. German universities produce non-creative scholars not genuine creative philosophers. Nietzsche writes that the “scholar is by nature unfruitful – a consequence of the process that produces him!”⁷⁸⁵ Furthermore, scholars negate great human beings and thus destroy the culture which might give rise to them. Nietzsche writes that “all those who look to higher, more distant goals - are banished.”⁷⁸⁶ Scholars do not understand the ultimate goal of culture – the production of genius. Nietzsche is convinced that only sick and nihilistic ages have a need for scholars and only in such ages are they valued “as the supreme and most dignified

⁷⁸¹ SE, p.219

⁷⁸² SE, p.219

⁷⁸³ SE, p.227

⁷⁸⁴ SE, p.231

⁷⁸⁵ SE, p.230

⁷⁸⁶ SE, p.232

human being and assigned him the highest rank.” This high esteem for scholars harms and might prevent, in Nietzsche’s view, the “emerging of genius.”

Nietzsche is optimistic that new institutions would create favourable conditions and provide protection for genuine human beings against the hatred of scholars. With those radical reforms Nietzsche believes one can “pave the way in themselves and around themselves for the birth of genius and the maturation of his work.”⁷⁸⁷ Nietzsche suggests that everybody within society must subordinate his private selfish interests to this supreme goal. Only then can one hope to overcome suffering and find answers to existential questions. Nietzsche’s undemocratic sentiments are expressed in the following passage: “Many people, even those with only second and third-rate talent, are destined to assist in this task; and only by subordinating themselves to such a destiny do they arrive at the feeling that they are living for a duty and for a goal, living a life that has significance.”⁷⁸⁸ In line with this passage Zarathustra says that he loves those who sacrifice themselves “so that one day the Superman can live, one who works and invents and prepares earth for the Superman.”⁷⁸⁹

For Nietzsche genius is not (or more correctly, should not be) just the product of nature but has social and political preconditions. In modern society many talented human beings become alienated and seduced by the fashionable ‘education’ and thus they never become geniuses. In one’s struggle to become a genius one is constantly constrained and damaged by the selfishness of the state, money-makers, scholars, and cultural philistines.

In modern society even when culture is promoted culture’s ultimate purpose is not understood and “remains unknown.” Nietzsche is very sceptical about the

⁷⁸⁷ SE, p.233

⁷⁸⁸ SE, p.233

⁷⁸⁹ Z, p.75

possibility that the state might promote genuine culture in a way Hegel describes it in his *Philosophy of Right*. In Nietzsche's view the state's interests will always come first when there is a choice between culture and the state. Furthermore, the state will always prevent the anti-state culture happening and sets its own existence and security high above any other aim or purpose. The same is true of great capitalists or money-makers as Nietzsche calls them. For example Nietzsche writes in his meditation on Schopenhauer: "No matter how loudly the state proclaims all that is done for culture, it promotes culture only in order to promote itself and is incapable of comprehending any goal that stands higher than its own welfare and existence. What the money-makers want when they incessantly clamour for education and cultivation is ultimately nothing but money."⁷⁹⁰ Superfluous people who desire money turn culture into sickness and corrupt the soil out of which the great human beings can emerge. That is the reason, according to Nietzsche, why in modern society there are very few great human beings "and that is why the conditions for the emergence of genius have *not improved*, in modern times, and the aversion to originality has increased to such extent that Socrates would not have been able to live among us and, in any case, would not have reached the age of seventy."⁷⁹¹ In modern society people follow the new idols of the state, moneymaking or scholarship so that they are in danger of losing their own soul, i.e. creativity. Nietzsche points out "how we hasten to sell our soul to the state, to moneymaking, to social life, or to scholarship just so that we will no longer possess it."⁷⁹² In this haste an individual flees from himself which is the only true purpose of life. People are afraid to set goals for themselves and they are afraid to be alone. They seek to overcome this fear, in Nietzsche's view, with the herd instinct, i.e. sociability: "When we are quiet and alone we are afraid that something

⁷⁹⁰ SE, p.231

⁷⁹¹ SE, p.231

⁷⁹² SE, p.210

will be whispered into our ear, and hence we despise quiet and drug ourselves with sociability.”⁷⁹³

In *Zarathustra* Nietzsche urges us to look beyond the state because “only there, where the state ceases, does the man who is not superfluous begin.”⁷⁹⁴ Only there can one find a genius, the Superman. With his own political project Nietzsche seeks to counter the state’s and the money-makers’ selfish mentality and claims that society as such and individuals should seek the higher purpose beyond the state and money – culture.

One needs to overcome one’s selfish and limited aims and seek beyond the narrow individualism and egoism of the modern times. One needs to have a “tragic disposition” which is the precondition of every great culture. Nietzsche opposes individualism by introducing the notion of culture and art. Nietzsche writes: “the individual should be consecrated to something suprapersonal - that is what tragedy seeks; the individual is supposed to forget the terrible anxiety that death and time cause him, for even in the briefest moments, in the tiniest atom of his lifetime he can encounter something sacred that abundantly compensates him for all his fighting and need - this is what it means *to have a tragic disposition*.”⁷⁹⁵

This tragic disposition is the overcoming of individualism and seeking to reach a primordial oneness, commonality with others through tragic disposition. Genius through his works achieves this primordial unity and allows others to gain an insight into this unity. Nietzsche points out that “even if all of humanity should have to perish - who would doubt this! - it has been charged, as its supreme task for all future generations, with the goal of growing together into oneness and commonality so that it can confront its impending doom *as a whole* and with a tragic

⁷⁹³ SE, p.211

⁷⁹⁴ Z, p.77

⁷⁹⁵ WB, p.279

*disposition.*⁷⁹⁶ The task for his political project then becomes the promotion and protection of this tragic disposition. Nietzsche writes: “There is only one hope and one guarantee for the future of what is human: it consists in *preventing the tragic disposition from dying out.*”⁷⁹⁷

Who will prevent this tragic disposition from dying out and subsequently execute Nietzsche’s political project? Nietzsche does not think that any modern political party is able or willing to take his political manifesto seriously. He points out that only “few men, in truth, serve the truth, because only a few men possess the pure will to be just; and even among these only a very few men possess the strength to be capable of justice.”⁷⁹⁸ Nietzsche claims that all he needs is one hundred “educated” men who believe in themselves as they believe in the great heroes of the past. Hitherto, Nietzsche claims in *Human, all too Human*, the pupils of Hegel were “the actual educators of the Germans of this century.”⁷⁹⁹ He, on the other hand, needs one hundred “unfashionably” educated men to “reduce the whole noisy sham of modern culture to eternal silence.”⁸⁰⁰ He needs unmodern ‘educated men’ who unlike Hegel’s pupils believe in art and healing power of music; men who think that the “egoism of individuals, groups, or masses” is the predominant force in world history but who at the same time “are not alarmed by this discovery”.⁸⁰¹ In one of his last works *Ecce Homo* he hopes, despite the current unpopularity of his works that “One day or other institutions will be needed in which people live and teach as I understand living and teaching: perhaps even chairs for the interpretation of Zarathustra will be established.”⁸⁰² Furthermore, he hopes that in the future there will be a ‘party of life’ “which takes in hand the greatest of all tasks, the higher breeding of humanity,

⁷⁹⁶ WB, p.279

⁷⁹⁷ WB, p.280

⁷⁹⁸ HS, p.113

⁷⁹⁹ HAH, p.252

⁸⁰⁰ HS, p.119

⁸⁰¹ HS, p.137

together with the remorseless destruction of all degenerate and parasitic elements, will again make possible on earth that *superfluity of life* out of which the dionysian condition must again proceed.”⁸⁰³

Nietzsche reacts against Hartmann’s picture of the modern man who is concerned with “a practical, comfortable accommodation of his earthly home.”⁸⁰⁴ Nietzsche is also against the cynical (Hegelian?) demand that one should “completely surrender his personality to the ‘world-process’ in order to achieve his goal, which, as the scoundrel Hartmann assures us, is the redemption of the world.”⁸⁰⁵ Nietzsche claims that the ultimate purpose should be the opposite: no surrender of personality but highest affirmation of individuality which is possible only in genuine culture.

Nietzsche’s political project is then creating conditions for creativity and innovation, establishing an environment for great art and promoting genuine culture. True art has no home in modern society, thus Nietzsche’s aim is to rescue this homeless art for our future. In short, Nietzsche’s ultimate aim is the production of artistic, religious or philosophical genius, in sharp contrast to the modern state, which aims to prevent this production. One can take Nietzsche’s political project, his “ultimate insight” quite literally, for in his meditation on Wagner he talks about the emergence of many Wagners, many Schopenhauers, and Goethes as the ultimate goal of his project. For Nietzsche, the existence of great artist like Goethe or Wagner and philosophers like Schopenhauer is the supreme justification of human existence and the ultimate goal for mankind. In his *Nachlass* Nietzsche sums up his teaching as follows: “I teach: that there are higher and lower men, and that a single individual can under certain circumstances justify the existence of whole millennia – that is, a full,

⁸⁰² EH, p.69

⁸⁰³ EH, pp.81-82

⁸⁰⁴ HS, p.137

⁸⁰⁵ HS, p.138

rich, great, whole human being in relation to countless incomplete fragmentary men.”⁸⁰⁶

It seems that for Nietzsche, unlike for Hegel, great human beings are first of all artists whereas for Hegel they could be also great political or military leaders like Alexander ‘the Great’ or Napoleon. Although Nietzsche recognises the impact Napoleon had on European and world history he considers in his *Genealogy of Morals* Napoleon to be a synthesis of ‘overman’ (*Übermensch*) and ‘underman’ (*Untermensch*), thus not a true genius.

Because for Nietzsche the genius or higher type man is “something which in relation to collective mankind is a sort of superman”⁸⁰⁷ this idea of the production of genius is also present in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. I believe that this is the core of Zarathustra’s teaching when after the death of God he proclaims: “The Superman is the meaning of the earth”; or even more correctly, “the Superman shall be the meaning of the earth”.⁸⁰⁸ I suggest that for the late Nietzsche the notion of the Superman signifies an embodiment and actualisation of genius.

Philosophers are for Nietzsche commanders and law-givers, i.e. legislators, who by using the past and looking towards the future establish new tables of values. With his revaluation of all tables of values Nietzsche seeks to establish preconditions for the greatness in man (*die Vorbedingung für die Grösse des Menschen*) which he calls multiplicity (*Vielfachheit*).⁸⁰⁹ “The highest man,” Nietzsche points out, “would have the greatest multiplicity of drives (*Vielheit der Triebe*), in the relatively greatest strength that can be endured.”⁸¹⁰ He describes “the new man” as one who follows five requirements and avoids five dangers:

⁸⁰⁶ WP, § 997

⁸⁰⁷ TI, p.128

⁸⁰⁸ Z, p.42

⁸⁰⁹ WP, p.470

⁸¹⁰ WP, p.507

1. a tremendous multiplicity of qualities (*eine ungeheure Vielheit von Eigenschaften*) ; [...] danger from antitheses, also from disgust at himself;
2. he must be inquisitive in the most various directions (*er muss neugierig nach den verschiedensten Seiten sein*): danger of going to pieces (*Gefahr der Zersplitterung*);
3. he must be just and fair in the higher sense, but profound in love, hate (and injustice), too;
4. he must be not only a spectator, but also a legislator: judge and judged (to the extent that he is a brief abstract of the world);
5. extremely multifarious (*äusserst vielartig*), yet firm and hard. Supple.⁸¹¹

These requirements of the “new man”, i.e. legislator/philosopher, reveal the values on which Nietzsche seeks to establish his own political project. The genius or the highest man (*höchste Mensch*) as Nietzsche sometimes calls him “*determines values and directs the will of millennia.*”⁸¹² In Zarathustra Nietzsche says that “the world revolves around the inventors of new values.”⁸¹³ Nietzsche locates the greatness of man in his free creativeness. Creativeness, on the other hand, is understood as evaluation or creating a new table of values. Genius lives beyond the herd and beyond the values of the herd and thus destroys old values. Nietzsche declares unambiguously: “The highest men live beyond the rulers, freed from all bonds; and in the rulers they have their instruments (*Jenseits der Herrschenden, losgelöst von allen Banden, leben die höchsten Menschen: und in den Herrschenden haben sie ihre Werkzeuge*).”⁸¹⁴ It is a characteristic of the genius “to live with a tremendous and proud self-possession; always beyond.”⁸¹⁵ In *The Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche expresses a similar thought by suggesting that his aim is the supra-ethical individual who has freed himself from the morality of custom because ‘autonomous’ and ‘ethical’ are mutually exclusive. Artists and philosophers need to distance themselves from the politics of today for it is the reason for the decline and destruction of genuine culture. Therefore, one can

⁸¹¹ WP, pp. 511-512

⁸¹² WP, p.519

⁸¹³ Z, p.78

⁸¹⁴ WP, p.519

⁸¹⁵ BGE, p.214

say, Nietzsche's political project points beyond good and evil, beyond morality and beyond society. Yet, when Nietzsche talks about the production of genius, it is clear that genius is at the same time the product and producer of genuine culture. Therefore, similarly to Hegel, for Nietzsche genius is beyond society only relatively not absolutely.

Nietzsche's political philosophy is not pro-Nazi as some commentators seem to think. He claims unambiguously in the *Genealogy of Morality* that he dislikes "the newest speculators in idealism called the anti-Semites".⁸¹⁶ Nietzsche is against narrow-minded agitators singing *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. Yet, at the same time throughout his life Nietzsche is deeply concerned about the state of German culture and blames Christianity, Hegelianism and the *Reich* for its decline. It seems clear to me that Nietzsche's politics of culture goes beyond the narrow boundaries of nation and promotes culture as such. For Nietzsche, a true genius cannot be bound by the limits of one nation, for it expresses the greatest in all humanity. Nietzsche writes that "in general the generous impulse of the creative artist is too great, the horizon of his love of humanity too expansive for his gaze to be enclosed within the boundaries of any one nation. Like every good and great German, his thoughts are *supra-German*, and the language of his art does not speak to nations, but rather human beings. But to *human beings of the future*."⁸¹⁷

From this passage it is clear that although Nietzsche is preoccupied with the declining state of German culture his political project goes beyond narrow nationalistic interests and aims to create conditions for the emergence of great culture. His political philosophy is written to the "human beings of the future". For Nietzsche genius, the "marvellous, creative human being", the "supreme fruit of life" is the ultimate justification of life. Nietzsche does not talk about justice for all but he seeks

⁸¹⁶ GM, p.294

to justify life for everybody. The ultimate duty of humankind is not “preservation of insufficiencies and lies”⁸¹⁸ but to create conditions for creative human beings to emerge.

Nietzsche is sceptical about the programme of any political party because as he points out in *Twilight of the Idols* “all our political theories *and* state constitutions, the ‘German *Reich*’ certainly not excluded, are consequences, necessary effects of decline.”⁸¹⁹ Despite his anti-political sentiments, I think, Nietzsche’s political philosophy can have practical implications and I believe it is possible to implement Nietzsche’s political project. However, I also admit that there are dangers (for example, in his notion of modern ‘slavery’) in implementing Nietzsche’s project fully. For Nietzsche, political philosophy must be active not just contemplative and it must enhance culture and bring real changes in society. Nietzsche in his meditation on Wagner gives one example of how his political project might be realised. Wagner’s grand project, Bayreuth’s opera house, is for Nietzsche firstly a whole work of art but also it is a symbol of the struggle of individuals “against power, rule of law, tradition, convention, and the whole order of things.”⁸²⁰ The Bayreuth Opera House was not built by the state or any public institution (as Hegel would have liked), but by the efforts of Wagner, common people, and the financial support of many wealthy individuals. Furthermore, in this voluntary act the state and “the evil reason and power that it embodies”⁸²¹ seems to be negated. That is why Nietzsche hopes that in future the ‘musical’ people “will condemn the state just as unconditionally as most people already condemn the church.”⁸²²

⁸¹⁷ WB, p.326

⁸¹⁸ SE, p.203

⁸¹⁹ TI, p.103

⁸²⁰ WB, p.278

⁸²¹ WB, p.294

⁸²² WB, p.284

Nietzsche's political project is based on voluntary actions of common people and great individuals rather than prescriptions of the state or selfish ambitions of politicians or bureaucrats. Bayreuth's opera house was built not just by a selected few but by the German people. As Nietzsche acknowledges, this was a "working class project, common people project". At the same time it was a project in which the 'common people' overcame their modern conditions and revealed their potential as people of the future. Nietzsche suggests that in Bayreuth "it was by no means the 'common people' that moved here and announced itself, but perhaps the kernel and the first life-giving source of a true human society to be realized in a distant future."⁸²³

I suggest that the construction of the Opera House in Bayreuth by the voluntary contribution of German people and personal support of Wagner had a great impact on Nietzsche personally and in particular on his political philosophy. Later in *Ecce Homo* he writes that his early mediation on Wagner was a vision of his future. Therefore, Nietzsche calls others to protect and follow Wagner's legacy. German culture can be saved not by the destruction of Austrian or French troops but by the construction of temples of German culture. In *Ecce Homo* he recalls his early meditations and points out again that "there is no more vicious misunderstanding than to believe that the Germans' great success in arms could demonstrate anything in favour of this culture – not to speak of *its* victory over France."⁸²⁴

In general, the 'idea of Bayreuth' demonstrates that Nietzsche's political philosophy can have a real impact on culture and society. Wagner established "an example for all ages: thus he conceived the *idea of Bayreuth*."⁸²⁵ Wagner's "idea", like Nietzsche's political project, is not aimed at everyday and present benefits of society. Nietzsche points out that for modern humans this idea is difficult to comprehend. He

⁸²³ WB, p.304

⁸²⁴ EH, p.84

⁸²⁵ WB, p.307

admits that his political project is “designed for the benefit of a distant, merely possible, but not demonstrable future, to the contemporary age and those human beings who are nothing but contemporary it is little more than an enigma or an abomination; for the few who were able to contribute to it, it is a for-taste, a for-experiencing, of joy and life of the highest sort through which they are made aware that they are happy and will bestow happiness and fruitfulness well beyond their span of years.”⁸²⁶

Hegel, like Nietzsche, has a concept of human genius whom he calls the ‘world historic individual’, who plays a central part in his philosophy of history. Although Hegel, unlike Nietzsche, does not have a clearly expressed agenda for the production of genius, he recognises the importance of genius for the progress of humanity and the advancement of world spirit. Hegel regarded the eighteenth century as the *epoch of genius*. Although there are some similarities between Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s interpretations of human genius, there are also important differences. In order to understand Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s political projects one needs to look at the concepts of genius in both philosophies.

For Hegel genius, i.e. the world historic individual, repudiates old dogmas and transgresses old norms. In Hegel’s view, geniuses like Goethe and Schiller overcame rules and values imposed by their age and thus they stand beyond society. In a sense they live in a god-like state of genius beyond human suffering and tragedy. For Hegel genius is the expression of individual creativity and talent but at the same time and more importantly genius expresses the unity of universal and individual will. Genius is the actual embodiment of the Idea in the world. In this sense Hegel’s genius has no real autonomy or self-mastery for it remains an agent of the absolute. Although,

⁸²⁶ WB, pp.307-308

according to Hegel, one cannot become a genius through one's own self-conscious activity one needs to cultivate his talents and abilities.

In Hegel's view, art, religion and philosophy are the most important media for genius. They are not just expressions of individualistic tendencies of man but they are manifestations of absolute universality and the genuine community of humankind. In a sense, art, religion and philosophy satisfy higher non-transient needs of man (*das Bedürfnis des Menschen*) - the need for the universal and absolute. Art, religion and philosophy embody the infinite, i.e. the absolute in this finite and transient world. For Hegel man is a medium through which the absolute in the form of Spirit actualises and realises itself. As Hegel himself says "God is a Spirit, and it is only in man that the medium through which the divine element passes has the form of conscious spirit, that actively realizes itself."⁸²⁷ In his lectures on *Philosophy of History* Hegel makes a similar point by stressing that "in human knowledge and volition, as its material element, Reason attains positive existence."⁸²⁸ In other words, for Hegel, reason and thus the absolute would not exist without a subjective will of man. World history consists of two elements, first, the objective will of the spirit and second, the subjective will of man. Throughout his works Hegel maintains the importance of subjective will for the actualisation of the absolute, i.e. the Idea. He writes that this second element must be introduced into world history "in order to produce actuality - viz., actuation, realization; and whose motive power is the Will - the activity of man in the widest sense."⁸²⁹ In other words, according to Hegel, only through human will can the World Spirit achieve self-consciousness and the idea find its full manifestation. Hegel refers to human will when he writes: "It is only by this activity

⁸²⁷ ILA, p.34

⁸²⁸ PH, p.38

⁸²⁹ PH, p.22

that that Idea as well as abstract characteristics generally, are realized, actualized; for of themselves they are powerless.”⁸³⁰

However, as Hegel also points out, only very few men in human history embody this universal principle fully and were genuine agents of the absolute. Hegel writes that in world history there are great historical men “whose own particular aims involve those large issues which are the will of the World-Spirit.”⁸³¹ In those men, Hegel calls them also ‘heroes’, the subjective will of the individual and universal will of the spirit coincide. For Hegel through world historic individuals like Goethe or Frederick the Great (1712-86) spirit finds its true expression and lets the Idea actualise itself. For example, Hegel writes of Frederick that he has “the consciousness of Universality, which is the profoundest depth to which Spirit can attain, and is Thought conscious of its own inherent power.”⁸³² Thus, genius is, for Hegel, the topmost agent of the world spirit through which spirit achieves its self-consciousness, and through which humankind can attain a sense of universality and recognition of the absolute. Although the aim of Hegel’s political project is, as discussed in his *Philosophy of Right*, the ethical state, in his lectures on the philosophy of history Hegel himself points out, there are a few men in history whose goals point beyond the ethical towards supra-ethical – the world-historical individuals. In his introduction to *The Philosophy of History* Hegel maintains that in world history there is always a conflict between the ethical and the non-ethical or supra-ethical. On every stage of world history there is a conflict in human society “between existing, acknowledged duties, laws, and rights, and those contingencies which are adverse to this fixed system; which assail and even destroy its foundations and existence.”⁸³³ This collision is often caused by world historic men or ‘heroes’ who introduce radically new principles,

⁸³⁰ PH, p.22

⁸³¹ PH, p.30

⁸³² PH, p.438

⁸³³ PH, p.29

norms and values into their age. These individuals express novel general principles which are not yet recognised by the society as the whole. As Hegel himself puts it, “historical men – *World-Historical Individuals* – are those in whose aims such a general principle lies.”⁸³⁴ This general principle can be, according to Hegel, in conflict with the idea of “the permanence of a people or a State.”⁸³⁵ It is important to point out that this collision of the ethical and supra-ethical is an essential part of the process of the self-realisation of the Spirit. It occurs every time a new principle or norm is established. As Hegel puts it “this principle is an essential phase in the development of the creating *Idea*, of Truth striving and urging towards [consciousness] of itself.”⁸³⁶

In Hegel’s view there are very few supra-ethical men in history. World-historic ‘heroes’ for Hegel are for example Socrates, Alexander the Great, Jesus Christ, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Goethe and Schiller. However, unlike for Nietzsche, for Hegel those heroes are not autonomous but they are rather agents or even instruments of the world spirit. In addition Hegel includes among them past military and political leaders whom Nietzsche would not consider to be true geniuses. In the *Philosophy of Right* §348 Hegel points out that spirit actualises what is substantial in the world through heroes. Hegel writes that heroes are “the living instruments of what is in substance the deed of the world mind (*Geist*) and they are therefore directly at one with that deed though it is concealed from them and is not their aim and object.”⁸³⁷ Hegel points out in his lectures on the *Philosophy of History* that, although world-historic individuals like Caesar, Alexander or Napoleon follow their own interests and desires, they at the same time realise what is ‘ripe’ for the time and thus unconsciously fulfil the goals of the world spirit. Hegel writes in the *Philosophy of History*: “such are all great historical men – whose own particular aims involve those

⁸³⁴ PH, p.29

⁸³⁵ PH, p.29

⁸³⁶ PH, p.29

⁸³⁷ PR, p.218

large issues which are the will of the World-Spirit.”⁸³⁸ For Hegel, as was discussed in the previous chapter, world history is a process of self-realisation and emancipation of the world spirit. This universal goal can be achieved only through individual self-consciousness. In few men, i.e. world-historic individuals, this universal will and subjective will partly coincide. Although the genius expresses through his life and works his own private experiences, feelings and desires he is first and foremost an agent of the world spirit and thus an embodiment of the Idea. Geniuses, in Hegel’s view, have “no consciousness of the general Idea they were unfolding, while prosecuting those aims of theirs.”⁸³⁹ However, unconsciously they grasp the truth of their age and what is ripe for development. Hegel calls this principle the *cunning of reason*. The cunning of reason uses the subjective will of the individuals to actualise a general principle and thus to manifest the idea. In world history this conflict between the ethical and supra-ethical is overcome by geniuses who often pay for it with their lives. “The particular,” Hegel writes, “is for the most part of too trifling value as compared with the general; individuals are sacrificed and abandoned. The Idea pays the penalty of determinate existence and of corruptibility, not from itself, but from the passions of individuals.”⁸⁴⁰ Often great historical men are in conflict with their contemporaries for they do not live according to the ethics of their time but establish a new set of values for themselves and for an age to come. Hegel calls those men heroes because they “have derived their purpose and their vocation, not from the calm, regular course of things, sanctioned by the existing order; but from a concealed fount – one which has not attained to phenomenal, present existence – from that inner Spirit, still hidden beneath the surface ...”⁸⁴¹ That is why the life of great men is often full of suffering and tragedy. Genuinely free men, Hegel suggests, must recognise the

⁸³⁸ PH, p.30

⁸³⁹ PH, p.30

⁸⁴⁰ PH, p.33

⁸⁴¹ PH, p.30

greatness of geniuses without envy and hatred. He writes “the Free Man, we may observe, is not envious, but gladly recognizes what is great and exalted, and rejoices that it exists.”⁸⁴² Hegel admits that although heroes are supra-ethical and live in a sense beyond society “*their* deeds, *their* words are the best of that time.”⁸⁴³ Their values and norms point beyond both morality (*Moralität*) and customary morality or ethics (*Sittlichkeit*).

Let’s now return to Nietzsche’s political project. The aim of Nietzsche’s political project (unlike Hegel’s) is *conscious* production of great human beings, i.e. geniuses who are mainly artists and philosophers. Nietzsche points out in *The Anti-Christ* that hitherto geniuses have emerged but only as “a lucky accident, as an exception, never as *willed*.”⁸⁴⁴ From *Untimely Mediations* and *We Philologists* to *The Anti-Christ* Nietzsche talks about ‘breeding’ superior men. In his meditation on Schopenhauer Nietzsche calls for the production of “the redeeming human being”.⁸⁴⁵ In *Human, all too Human* he talks about the “production of genius”.⁸⁴⁶ And finally in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* he talks about the Superman who as an embodiment of genius is worth self-sacrifice of the others. Nietzsche himself seems to be aware that his political philosophy might be misunderstood and misrepresented. Therefore, in *Schopenhauer as Educator* he spells out the ultimate goal of his political project quite unambiguously: “At times it is harder to concede something than it is to understand it, and this is exactly what most people may experience when they reflect on the proposition: ‘Humanity should work ceaselessly toward producing great individuals - this and only this should be its task’.”⁸⁴⁷

⁸⁴² PH, p.31

⁸⁴³ PH, p.30

⁸⁴⁴ TI, p.128

⁸⁴⁵ SE, p.214

⁸⁴⁶ HAH, p.112

⁸⁴⁷ SE, p.215

Nietzsche writes that it is our task to “pave the way for and promote the production of this human being by discovering what is hostile to its development and sweeping it aside – in short, that we tirelessly fight against everything that, by preventing us from becoming such Schopenhauerian human beings ourselves, robbed *us* of the supreme fulfilment of our existence.”⁸⁴⁸ Nietzsche also thought that in history there are great men who guard humanity. Beethoven, Schopenhauer and Wagner were for the young Nietzsche these men. Nietzsche declares that Wagner has “the will to be the guardian spirit of humanity’s noblest possessions – Art”.⁸⁴⁹ Nietzsche argues that even if there is a *telos* in history, only the greatest human beings can be that *telos*. Furthermore, the only task for history is to create conditions for such great men to live. In his meditation on history Nietzsche puts this idea as follows: “It is the task of history to mediate between them (geniuses K.K) and, by so doing, to provide fresh opportunities and to concert our forces in the creation of greatness. No, the *goal to humanity* cannot lie at the end of history, but only in the *highest human exemplars*.”⁸⁵⁰ Nietzsche believes that the task for historians is not to provide different interpretations of history but to secure a link between human greatness in the past and in the future. Nietzsche writes: “The time will come when we will wisely avoid all interpretations of the world-process, or even human history; when historians generally will no longer consider the masses, but rather those individuals who form a kind of bridge over the wild torrent of Becoming. These individuals by no means continue a process, but, thanks to history which makes concerted effort possible, they live as timeless contemporaries in that republic of genius described by Schopenhauer.”

One needs to overcome the present, only then one can hope for the cure. Great artists, but especially philosophers, go beyond their age and their horizon, and thus

⁸⁴⁸ SE, p.214

⁸⁴⁹ WB, p.326

⁸⁵⁰ HS, p.134

become creators of genuine culture. Because the present sways one's eye one needs to distance himself from it. As Nietzsche suggests in *Schopenhauer as Educator*: "the philosopher must evaluate his own age by contrasting it with others, and by overcoming the present for himself [...]." ⁸⁵¹ Nietzsche admits that "this is a difficult, indeed, scarcely achievable task." ⁸⁵² Nevertheless, seeking beyond one's own horizon one establishes a new horizon. The establishment of a new horizon is the task of legislator, i.e., great human beings. Or, as Nietzsche puts it, "it has always been the peculiar task of great thinkers to be legislators of the measure, mint, and the weight of things." ⁸⁵³

For Nietzsche, a genius is a person who feels primordial unity with others and nature. He is the one who overcomes the Apollonian principle of individuation and embodies the Dionysian principle of intoxication. Genius for Nietzsche is not an instrument of Hegelian Absolute Spirit or a Schopenhauerian mediator between the thing-in-itself, i.e. will and the world, but an embodiment of everything human in the world. Because there is no world spirit, no beyond, no God, geniuses emerge by accident and reveal the true tragedy of human nature. Thus genius is the ultimate manifestation of humanity in the world.

The task for Nietzsche's Zarathustra is to create beautiful souls who stand out and are in opposition to the multitude and to herd morality. The ultimate task for genius is to demolish the old set of values, to legislate and to create new tables of values. The genius is a Dionysian man who is in a state of intoxication, ecstasy (*Rausch*) and therefore beyond individuation in primordial unity with others and the world. *Übermensch* is Nietzsche's term for the genius of the future - a great human being with master morality and the greatest will to power who has *amor fati* – love of

⁸⁵¹ SE, p.193

⁸⁵² SE, p.193

⁸⁵³ SE, p.193

fate; he does not want to be anybody else than he genuinely is, i.e. genius. In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche describes what he means by the greatness of human being: “My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be other than it is, not in the future, not in the past, not in all eternity. Not merely to endure that which happens of necessity, still less to dissemble it – all idealism is untruthfulness in the face of necessity – but to *love* it...”⁸⁵⁴

Life is suffering, according to Nietzsche, but only few can overcome this suffering by genuine art, religion or philosophy. Suffering is caused by anxiety about death but art, philosophy and religion allow us to face and address this anxiety without running away from life. In animal life there is as much suffering as in human life but in contrast to humans animals cannot overcome this suffering by art or metaphysics. That is why, Nietzsche points out, “human beings of greater profundity have always felt compassion with animals precisely because they suffer from life and yet do not possess the strength to turn the sting of suffering against themselves and understand their existence metaphysically; indeed, the sight of senseless suffering arouses profound indignation.”⁸⁵⁵ It is important to note here that Nietzsche’s Zarathustra was one such figure of profundity who felt compassion and regard toward animals.

According to Hegel genius emerges when the time is ripe and he expresses the very nature of that time. For Nietzsche genius emerges despite his own time and he promotes unfashionable values and norms. Genius suffers and fights against the values, norms and morals of his age. Yet, at the same time because of his superior intellect he appreciates the misery of his condition. For lesser human beings this struggle against the age seems pointless and destructive. If one struggles against his age then one seeks to overcome that which prevents him from being great, from being

⁸⁵⁴ EH, p.68

free and from being entirely himself. Thus this struggle against the age is not just an external struggle but it is first and foremost, in Nietzsche's view, the heroic struggle within one own self. It is a struggle between the "fashionable" and "unfashionable" within oneself. Nietzsche argues that "the hostility is fundamentally directed as something that is a part of himself, but that is not actually his true self, against the impure confusion and coexistence of uncombinable and eternally irreconcilable things, against the false fusion of what in this age is fashionable with his unfashionableness."⁸⁵⁶ Thus this struggle becomes an existential questioning of one's own purpose and meaning.

The characteristic feature of modernity, according to Nietzsche, is hatred towards genius. It is similar to the resentment of herd morality toward master morality. Nietzsche writes that "The Philistine hates the person of genius: for it is genius that is rightly reputed to be able to perform miracles; and it is therefore highly instructive to recognize why Strauss only once makes himself into the brazen defender of genius and of the aristocratic nature of the intellect as such."⁸⁵⁷

Nietzsche understands that there is broad hostility towards his political project within modern society. The cultivated people whom he associates with herd morality "hinder an emerging culture and the production of genius - which is the aim of all culture."⁸⁵⁸ That is why he sees the need to re-evaluate the values on which the modern society is founded. In modern society, Nietzsche argues, life is not considered the highest value and therefore there is degradation of culture and nihilism. Nietzsche defines life as will to power: "Life is will to power" (*Leben ist Wille zur Macht*).⁸⁵⁹ He claims that "all the supreme values of mankind *lack* this will - that the values which are symptomatic of decline, *nihilistic* values, are lording it under the holiest

⁸⁵⁵ SE, p.209

⁸⁵⁶ SE, p.194

⁸⁵⁷ DS, p.43

⁸⁵⁸ SE, p.190

names.”⁸⁶⁰ Christianity, Enlightenment, romanticism and herd morality are against life, for living is wanting to be different (*Different/sein/wollen*).

Nietzsche points out that not just in the present but also in the past great human beings lived beyond society, became solitary and socially inactive. Nietzsche writes that “whenever there have been powerful societies, governments, religions, public opinions – in short, wherever there was a tyranny – the lonely philosopher was despised, for philosophy offers human beings an asylum into which no tyranny can force its way, the cave of inwardness, the labyrinth of the heart, and that annoys tyrants.”⁸⁶¹ This is the tragic way of contemplative romantics. However, in reference to Aristotle’s *Politics*, Nietzsche recognises that “now and again there is a demigod who is able to endure living under such dreadful conditions, and who lives triumphantly.”⁸⁶² However, the life of the majority of those solitary beings is full of suffering and personal tragedy. Although Nietzsche’s own life might fit into this description his philosophy urges us to overcome romantic sentiments and actively participate in and transform current culture and society in general.

Nietzsche argues that in order to establish great culture the majority of people must work so that the minority can have leisure to produce great works of art. Therefore, in *Human, All too Human* he writes: “*Culture and caste* – A higher culture can come into existence only where there are two different castes in society: that of the workers and that of the idle, of those capable of true leisure.”⁸⁶³ It seems that by the ‘workers’ or ‘slaves’ Nietzsche means all those people who fail to fulfil their creative potential (for various reasons) and do not become geniuses. Only then can we reconcile this idea with his previous claim that *everyone* can become a genius. One

⁸⁵⁹ WP, p.148

⁸⁶⁰ AC, p.572

⁸⁶¹ SE, p.186

⁸⁶² SE, p.187

⁸⁶³ HAH, p.162

has to note that Nietzsche assumes that the majority will fail to become a genius despite the fact that everyone had a 'chance'.

While looking at the reasons of the greatness of Greek culture, which had 'a host of great individuals', Nietzsche comes to the conclusion (a wrong one, I believe) that it was because of slavery Greek religion, art, philosophy flourished and the conditions for the emerge of great individuals were favourable. In *We Philologists* Nietzsche points out that "Greek culture is based on the lordship of a small class over four to nine times their number of slaves."⁸⁶⁴ Therefore, he controversially concludes, "the order of castes, order of rank is necessary for the higher culture".⁸⁶⁵ Consequently, it follows that a modern form of 'slavery' is a necessary for creation of higher culture and the production of genius. In this point I disagree with Nietzsche for I believe that looking at the reasons of the greatness of Greek culture the opposite conclusion is possible. It is true that the Greeks, particularly the Athenians, owned many slaves but so did the Spartans as well as the Persians whose cultural achievements are not, in Nietzsche's eyes, comparable to that of Athens. One can argue that it was because Athenian democracy (and not slavery as Nietzsche claims) that Greek culture flourished in the fifth century. For example this is the conclusion Andrewes comes in his illuminating study *Greek Society*: "Looking back at this civilization from our distance, one of its most remarkable features is the Greek capacity for free, general speculation, uninhibited by myth or authority."⁸⁶⁶

Nietzsche argues that a high culture can emerge only in a society in which there is great majority of working people who make possible for a small number of geniuses (or Olympian men) to produce great works of arts. Nietzsche writes in *The Anti-Christ* "A high culture is a pyramid: it can stand only on a broad base, its very

⁸⁶⁴ See in CW, p.159

⁸⁶⁵ AC, p.191

⁸⁶⁶ See Antony Andrewes *Greek Society* (1991), p.273

first prerequisite is a strongly and soundly consolidated mediocrity.”⁸⁶⁷ Therefore, Nietzsche is not against the ‘working class’ as such but sees it as a necessary requirement for higher culture: “It would be quite unworthy of a more profound mind to see an objection in mediocrity as such. It is even the *prime* requirement for the existence of exceptions; a high culture is conditional upon it.”⁸⁶⁸

One can call Nietzsche’s political project based on order of rank a kind of aristocracy. At the same time Nietzsche does not like the aristocratic tendencies of the cultural philistines. For example in his *Nachlass* Nietzsche calls the *Almanach de Gotha* (*Who is Who?* of European aristocracy) a ‘parenthesis for asses’. Here it is important to point out that Nietzsche does not think that great human beings can come only from a certain political class. Nietzsche points out in *The Anti-Christ* that there were very few geniuses among the German aristocracy and he blames Christianity and alcoholism for it. I think that what Nietzsche understands by ‘order of rank’ is not determined by one’s blood but by one’s ability to create new values. In *Nachlass* Nietzsche writes “*Order of rank*: He who *determines* values and directs the will of millennia by giving direction to the highest natures is the *highest* man.”⁸⁶⁹ Nietzsche writes in *Schopenhauer as Educator* that “Every human being tends to discover in himself a limitation – of his talents as well as of his moral will – that fills him with longing and melancholy” and he continues “as intellectual being he bears a profound yearning for the genius within himself.”⁸⁷⁰ *Every human being*, according to Nietzsche, has genius within himself but only a few are able to overcome the laziness and fear to discover it and be intellectually “reborn” as one. Though, if one fails to become a genius one becomes a member of mediocrity, i.e. the ‘slave’.

⁸⁶⁷ AC, p.191

⁸⁶⁸ AC, p.191

⁸⁶⁹ WP, § 999

⁸⁷⁰ SE, p.190

In *Nachlass* Nietzsche writes that the “man of today is an embryo of the man of the future.”⁸⁷¹ The ultimate task of educators is to help everyone to liberate this genius. Within true culture this emergence of genius happens intentionally and frequently. It is the longing to overcome one’s ‘non-human’ nature and become a creative being that determines genuine culture. As Nietzsche himself puts it in his meditation on Schopenhauer “This is the root of all true culture, and if what I mean by this is the longing of human beings to be *reborn* as saints and geniuses.”⁸⁷²

⁸⁷¹ WP, § 686

⁸⁷² SE, p.190

Conclusion

Hegel and Nietzsche lived and wrote under the shadows of different historic upheavals: Hegel under the shadow of the French Revolution (1789) and the Napoleonic Wars (1800-1815), Nietzsche under the shadow of the Austria-Prussian (1866) and Franco-Prussian (1870) wars and the establishment of the Second *Reich* (1871). Their works reflect and grow out of these historic processes and events. Despite distressing times both thinkers put forward a positive political programme – the promotion of culture.

I argued that Nietzsche is a political thinker whose thought is influenced by Hegel and Hegelian philosophy. I suggest that Nietzsche develops his own philosophical project not just by elaborating on Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* or contemplating Wagner's music but also in radical opposition to Hegel's philosophy. I believe that one cannot overlook the fact that not just Socrates, Kant or Rousseau but also Hegel is Nietzsche's great philosophical antagonist. Therefore, if one seeks to grasp the meaning of Nietzsche's own philosophical works one cannot avoid Hegel's philosophy. Although there is no compromise between Hegel and Nietzsche in some areas (like the state, the absolute reason, and God), I suggested, Nietzsche's works can be and ought to be read in the light of Hegel's works for they are written in response to Hegel and his philosophy. Furthermore, in order to understand the scope, place and meaning of Nietzsche's philosophy within the German philosophical discourse one cannot avoid Nietzsche's criticism of Hegel's thought.

Nietzsche is a political thinker whose political 'manifesto' is expressed, I believe, most lucidly in his *Untimely Meditations*. It is clear that many ideas present in those early essays were later incorporated into his mature philosophy. Although

Nietzsche changed his views about many things (for example, the significance of science) and people (for example, Wagner and Schopenhauer) during his poignant philosophical life, the importance of art (especially music), the concern for culture, and the preoccupation with the emergence of genius are present in one form or another in all his works throughout his life. I suggested that the kernel of Nietzsche's political project is the promotion of culture in order to produce genius (whether one calls this 'genius' the 'highest man', the 'great human being', the 'noble man', the 'exceptional man', or the 'overman'). At the same time, I argued, it is not possible to say what is primary and what secondary in this political project: the promotion of culture or the production of genius because the more geniuses the culture has, the 'higher' it is; the 'higher' the culture, the more geniuses it has and will have in the future.

It is clear that Nietzsche's political project is radically different from the programmes of contemporary political parties (Liberals, Conservatives, Catholics or Socialists), for he focuses on the problem of culture rather on the problem of constitutional rights, universal suffrage, economic reforms or the political unification of Germany. While looking for the reasons for Nietzsche's political sentiments I came to the conclusion that the historic events in the 1860-70s in Prussia and Europe lie at the very heart of Nietzsche's political thought. I suggested that Prussia's victory in 1866 over Austria and 1871 over France proved to Nietzsche that in world history a culturally superior state (France) might be defeated by a culturally inferior but militarily and politically superior state (Prussia). This new historical and political situation in Europe triggered Nietzsche to express his "a-political" project. Furthermore, I believe that the consequences of the wars prompted Nietzsche to radically rethink the 'traditional' or 'fashionable' (Hegelian) understanding of world history.

I suggested that Hegel's and Nietzsche's political projects are based on their respective understandings of world history. Nietzsche rejects the widely held and popular Hegelian concept of world history as a rational, progressive, teleological and just process governed by reason in the form of spirit (*Geist*). I suggested that Prussia's victory over France led him, in contrast to Hegel, to draw a sharp distinction between military and cultural success in world history. Hegel believes that human history is governed by rational laws which are revealed during the course of world history. In his lecture course on *The Philosophy of History* Hegel seeks to expose those laws and confirm that world history is an evolutionary process with the Germanic world as the pinnacle of this progress. Nietzsche, contrary to Hegel, believes even if there are laws of history they are the laws of stupidity, mimicry, and mediocrity. However, Nietzsche's philosophy is not entirely 'anti-historical' for he understands the importance of history and believes that in certain circumstances history can serve life.

One can say that in some sense today's politics is not very much different from Nietzsche's lifetime for it is still mainly concerned with economic and social welfare issues leaving culture outside the political arena. Although in both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union culture was used to promote a certain political ideology, in liberal democracies cultural problems and issues are often left on the periphery of election manifestos and programmes. The division of the private and public sphere in modern society causes this partition. Culture, like ethical and religious issues, belongs to the private sphere and therefore any intrusion by political parties is often met with sharp criticism from defenders of civil liberties.

Twentieth-century political theorists have often left the question of culture outside their scope. Twentieth-century political theory is based on two fundamental notions: freedom and equality. Pro-egalitarian political thinkers base their theories on the notion of equality and their political projects seek to achieve this ultimate aim, i.e. the

equality of all people. For example, Dworkin's political project is based on the notion of equality of resources which he seeks to achieve by introducing different insurance schemes and taxes in order to redistribute the initially unequal resources (both natural and social). Libertarians like Nozick, on the other hand, base an 'entitlement theory' on the notion of liberty. As an alternative to utilitarianism John Rawls' political philosophy (see *A Theory of Justice*) centres around both concepts: the concept of equality and freedom. Therefore, his theory can be called an egalitarian liberalism. It is clear that Nietzsche's political project is fundamentally different from nineteenth- or twentieth-century political theories, for his political project is not based on the concept of equality or directly on the concept of liberty (although he often talks about freedom but only in artistic terms) but it is based on the concept of culture. Nietzsche believes in the order of rank and for him culture, not equality or liberty, should be in the centre of great politics. This is, as Nietzsche himself admits, his ultimate insight and his greatest contribution to the Western philosophical tradition. Nietzsche hopes that his political project will not cause great upheavals in the future for he writes to his contemporaries in *Schopenhauer as Educator*: "It is even likely that the next millennium will arrive at a few new ideas that cause the hair of those living today to stand on end. *The belief in the metaphysical significance of culture* would in the end not be so terrifying."⁸⁷³

Unlike Marx or any other radical political thinker it seems that Nietzsche does not believe that a single radical political event can bring real change in society and transform culture. Against political revolutionaries he argues that "any philosophy that believes that the problem of existence can be altered or solved by a political event is a sham and pseudophilosophy."⁸⁷⁴ His own project points beyond a narrow understanding of the 'political' for he seeks to radically change not society but culture

⁸⁷³ SE, p.231

and human existence. He points out that “many states have been founded since the beginning of the world; this is an old story. How could a political innovation possibly be sufficient to make human beings once and for all into contented dwellers on this earth?”⁸⁷⁵ He remains critical even about his own political project which, based on a new set of values, has the danger to turn into truth: “I fear, they are on the point of becoming truths: they already look so immoral, so pathetically righteous, so boring!”⁸⁷⁶

It must be pointed out that Nietzsche’s political project is not entirely original or unique. In many ways it echoes the sentiments of the *Sturm and Drang* movement at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century in Germany. As the German historian Karin Friedrich notes, during the nineteenth century “art itself was taking on a more autonomous nature and the function of a substitute religion, to be worshipped together with the genius who produced it and the nation which gave birth to such greatness, the German *Kulturnation* (cultural nation).”⁸⁷⁷ The notion of a German *Kulturnation* was widely spread among German intellectuals from right to left. The Romantic movement opposed the *Reichspatriotismus* of the 1780s as Nietzsche opposed the *Reich’s* patriotism of the National Liberals one hundred years later. The *Sturm and Drang* movement promoted the rebellion against society and the state in the name of individual artistic freedom. Romantic intellectuals stressed the importance of the role of arts and culture in general in society. It seems that those ‘romantic’ sentiments are the common intellectual foundation Nietzsche shares with Hegel. Although both Hegel and Nietzsche criticised romanticism, their philosophies and political views were greatly influenced by German romantics. For Romantics the ideal seems to be a tragic artist, i.e. genius who as a socially and politically passive

⁸⁷⁴ SE, p.197

⁸⁷⁵ SE, p.197

⁸⁷⁶ BGE, p.221

⁸⁷⁷ GH, p.100

and suffering bystander lives on the fringes of or entirely beyond society.⁸⁷⁸ Hegel and Nietzsche seem to agree that to live beyond society is the precondition of human greatness but according to them the great individuals live beyond society not absolutely but only relatively. The great human beings are produced by their age and by overcoming the norms and values of that very age they create the foundation for the new age. Although the notion ‘beyond society’ seeks to capture the ‘individualistic’ aspects of Hegel’s (the world historic individuals) and more importantly Nietzsche’s thought (genius) it does not express the ideal of radical individualism.

In introducing the notion of ‘beyond society’ in order to grasp the inner ‘dialectics’ of Hegel’s and Nietzsche’s political thought, I used Hegel’s *Science of Logic* and the concept of determination (*Bestimmung*) to illustrate the ‘dialectical’ unity between the concept of society and the individual. The concept of determination reveals that society cannot be absolutely separated from the individual and vice versa. Only for the understanding (as Hegel would say) do these two concepts appear *absolutely* opposed to each other. According to Hegel’s *Science of Logic*, the individual and society are both moments in a unified dialectical process.

Hegel as a speculative thinker cannot posit the individual over society nor can he posit society or the state over individuality. However, Hegel himself, especially in *The Philosophy of History* and *Philosophy of Right*, seems to be biased towards the state. His emphasis on the interest of the state over the will of the individual caused him to be known as a totalitarian and authoritarian thinker. I believe that Hegel himself because of his ‘unspeculative’ bias is partly to be blamed for this misunderstanding. This bias, I believe, is the reason for Nietzsche’s and many other commentators’ criticism of Hegel’s political philosophy.

⁸⁷⁸ For example this view is expressed by Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) in his *The Romantic School*

It is my contention that the notion of culture (something supra-individual if not universal) has a central place in both Hegel's and Nietzsche's political projects. For Hegel, culture is understood as an embodiment of absolute spirit and the manifestation of the idea; for Nietzsche as a unity of style of people. Ultimately Hegel sees culture as one whole with the state, whereas for Nietzsche culture is always at odds with the state. Hegel places philosophy above religion and art; for Nietzsche art (music) is the highest form of human activity. Whereas for Hegel world historic individuals are unconscious by-products of the evolutionary development of the world spirit, for Nietzsche the production of genius must become a conscious task for the whole humankind.

It seems that Hegel's and Nietzsche's political projects are not democratic or liberal in their essence. For Hegel democracy is based on the morality of civil society; for Nietzsche, it is based on herd morality. Therefore, they both seek alternatives to bourgeois values and norms. Hegel introduces the notion of the ethical state and absolute spirit in order to overcome the morality of modern society. Nietzsche's political project seeks to overcome "philistine" culture (which he associates with Hegel) by the transvaluation of all values and implementation of his own political project – the promotion of culture in order to produce geniuses.

I think it would be a mistake to regard Hegel's or Nietzsche's political thought as something it is not, an absolute truth or a new 'religion'. Hegel himself points out that his concept of the ethical state is not how the state ought to be but how the state ought to be understood. Similarly, Nietzsche's politics of culture is not a new 'religion' and the genius is not a new 'idol' but just one perspective among many others. As Nietzsche himself reminds us in *Ecce Homo*: "The last thing I would

promise would be to ‘improve’ mankind. I erect no new idols.”⁸⁷⁹ Therefore, I do not want to recommend that we should adopt Hegel’s or Nietzsche’s political ideas completely. However, I think, in our contemporary discourse on political philosophy Hegel and Nietzsche can still provide us with invaluable insights into the relationship between the individual, society and the state, into the significance culture and genius, and into the very meaning of the word ‘politics’. Thus, I believe, Hegel and Nietzsche widen our political horizon and illuminate our existence.

⁸⁷⁹ EH, p.34

Appendix

The problem of Socrates in Nietzsche's philosophy

*Laughter I have pronounced holy; you higher men, learn to laugh!*⁸⁸⁰

*Socrates was the buffoon who got himself taken seriously.*⁸⁸¹

Although Nietzsche attacks Hegel for theoretical optimism his original opponent is Socrates who introduced theoretical optimism into Western thought and thus killed Greek tragedy. Throughout his life Nietzsche was interested in the life and teaching of Socrates. At the beginning of 1870 in Basel he gave two lectures, one on "Greek Music and Drama" and the other on "Socrates and Greek Tragedy" (*Sokrates und die griechische Tragödie*). The latter he published separately under the same title and it became the core of his first book *The Birth of Tragedy (Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik)*. Eighteen years after publishing *The Birth of Tragedy*, in *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche once again returns to Socrates, but now to the "Problem of Socrates".

Many commentators have tried to tackle the problem of Socrates in Nietzsche's philosophy. For example, Kaufmann argues that Nietzsche admires Socrates and has Socratic elements in his own philosophy. Similarly, Dannhauser suggests that Nietzsche is sympathetic to Socrates although he criticises Socratic rationalism and dialectics. Nehamas, more critically, points out that Nietzsche's relationship to Socrates was ambiguous and highly complicated.⁸⁸² This ambiguity is partly caused by Socrates himself for he left no writings, and partly by his students and contemporaries who left us a highly ambiguous, not to say contradictory, literary legacy of the life and teaching of Socrates. One can agree with Tejera who points out

⁸⁸⁰ Z, pp. 407-408

⁸⁸¹ TI, p. 31

that Nietzsche failed to discriminate between the historic Socrates, Platonic Socrates, Xenophon's Socrates and Aristophanes' Socrates. It seems that Nietzsche's image of the "theoretical Socrates" is mainly based on Plato's Socrates. However, besides this image, Nietzsche also has images of the "dying Socrates" and "musical Socrates" which can be seen as great opponents to the "theoretical Socrates".

It is important to point out that Nietzsche recognised the importance and significance of Socrates for the development of the Western thought. In *Human all too Human* he calls Socrates a "stone" of human history. In *The Birth of Tragedy* he calls Socrates "the vortex and turning point" of Western civilisation. Throughout his life Nietzsche seeks an answer to the question: "Who was this man who dared, singlehanded, to challenge the entire world of Hellenism - embodied in Homer, Pindar, and Aeschylus, in Phidias, Pericles, Pythia, and Dionysos – which commands our highest reverence?"⁸⁸³ Here it is interesting to point out that Hegel in his lectures of the history of philosophy also regarded Socrates as a turning point of world history. For Hegel Socrates represents a turning point of the spirit when spirit turns towards itself.

Nietzsche attacks Socrates for his "theoretical optimism" which is summed up by Diogenes Laertius who writes that for Socrates, "there is [...] only one good (αγαθος), that is, knowledge (επιστημη), and only one evil (κακος), that ignorance (αμαθια)," ⁸⁸⁴ Furthermore, Laertius writes that there are three Socratic maxims: "Virtue is knowledge; all sins arise from ignorance; only the virtuous are happy."⁸⁸⁵

Based on Laertius' account of Socrates, Nietzsche claims in *The Birth of Tragedy* that "against this practical pessimism, Socrates represents the archetype of

⁸⁸² Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, p.24

⁸⁸³ BT, p.84

⁸⁸⁴ Diogenes Laertius, p.161

⁸⁸⁵ BT, p.88

theoretical optimism, who, [is] strong in belief that nature can be fathomed.”⁸⁸⁶ Nietzsche claims that Socrates, as the first theoretical man, has limitless “belief in the cognition of the nature of things”, and presupposes that it is possible to “distinguish real cognition from illusion”. For Nietzsche, “theoretical man,” i.e. Socrates, helped to a birth (μαιευτικος) the optimistic “illusion that thought, guided by the thread of causation, might plumb the farthest abysses of being and even correct it.”⁸⁸⁷ Nietzsche attacks Hegel for rationalism and dialectics but as Tejera points out he at the same time “ascribes the discovery of dialectic in the narrow rationalistic sense, to Socrates.”⁸⁸⁸

It seems that Nietzsche overlooks the facts that, according to Diogenes Laertius, Socrates was not a rationalist in the strict sense, for Socrates claims that “he knew nothing except just the fact of his ignorance”.⁸⁸⁹ With his study Tejera rightly reminds us that Socrates was not just a pure rationalist but “also a poet-quoter, punster, story-teller, myth-maker, ironist and allegorist”.⁸⁹⁰

It seems that Nietzsche is aware of the limits of his own narrow rationalistic interpretation of Socrates’ teaching and life. He reveals that Socrates remains disturbingly close to him so he always has to fight with him. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche admits that “Socrates disturbs us so profoundly whenever we approach him, and why we are tempted again and again to plumb the meaning and intention of the most problematic character among the ancients.”⁸⁹¹

Because of Socrates’ life and teachings Nietzsche is forced to ask whether the theoretical Socrates is the only possible and true image of Socrates: “We are forced, nevertheless, by the profundity of the Socratic experience to ask ourselves whether, in

⁸⁸⁶ BT, p.94

⁸⁸⁷ BT, p.93

⁸⁸⁸ Tejera, *Nietzsche and Greek Thought*, hereafter Tejera, p.98

⁸⁸⁹ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, hereafter Diogenes, p.163

⁸⁹⁰ Tejera, p.29

⁸⁹¹ BT, p.84

fact, art and Socratism are diametrically opposed to one another, whether there is really anything inherently impossible in the idea of a Socratic artist?”⁸⁹² In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche admits that Socrates “has prompted generation after generation to reconsider the foundation of art - art taken in its deepest and broadest sense - and as that influence is eternal, it also guarantees the eternity of artistic endeavour.”⁸⁹³

It is well-known that Socrates, the arch-dialectician loved music, dancing and poetry. As Diogenes Laertius points out Socrates “in his old age he learnt to play lyre” and “as Xenophon relates in the Symposium, it was his regular habit to dance”.⁸⁹⁴ Therefore, Nietzsche is forced to question his own narrow interpretation of Socrates by asking “will this dialectic inversion lead to ever new configurations of genius, above all to that of Socrates as the practitioner of Music?”⁸⁹⁵ Nietzsche is forced to acknowledge that “it appears that this despotic logician [Socrates] had from time to time a sense of void, loss, unfilled duty with regard to art”.⁸⁹⁶ Nietzsche admits that the theoretical man, i.e. Socrates was commanded by the muses, “Practise music, Socrates!” which, in Nietzsche’s words “are the only indication that he ever experienced any uneasiness about the limits of his logical universe.”⁸⁹⁷

In Nietzsche’s view, Socratic ‘theoretical optimism’ is to be blamed for the decline and death of Greek tragedy, for because of it music was no longer used in tragic plays: “Optimistic dialectic took up the whip of its syllogism and drove music out of tragedy. It entirely destroyed the meaning of tragedy - which can be interpreted only as a concrete manifestation of Dionysian conditions, music made visible, an ecstatic dream world.”⁸⁹⁸ At the same time Nietzsche introduces the image of the music-practising Socrates who, in his view, might help the rebirth of Greek tragedy.

⁸⁹² BT, p.90

⁸⁹³ BT, p.91

⁸⁹⁴ Diogenes, p.163

⁸⁹⁵ BT, p.96

⁸⁹⁶ BT, p.90

⁸⁹⁷ BT, p.90

Only by coming to the limits of theoretical optimism can one overcome it and return to the Greek tragedy. Nietzsche writes “tragedy could be reborn only when science had at last been pushed to its limits and, faced with those limits, been forced to renounce its claim to universal validity. For the new hypothetical tragedy the *music-practising Socrates* [my italic] might be a fitting symbol.”⁸⁹⁹

Even in his lifetime Socrates was known by his irony which, I think, demonstrates the limits of his own theoretical optimism. It seems that the nature of Socratic irony is understood by Søren Kierkegaard, who dedicated his thesis to Socrates, but not to the “theoretical” but to the “ironical” one.⁹⁰⁰ Yet, as Tejera points out “the ironic Socrates [...] remains, tragically, inaccessible to Nietzsche the poet-philosopher”.⁹⁰¹ For Nietzsche, Socratic irony was a sign of resentment not true overcoming of dialectics. In *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche asks about Socratic irony: “Is Socrates’ irony an expression of revolt? of the *ressentiment* of the rabble?”⁹⁰²

Nietzsche is also forced to admit that Socrates did not always follow his reason but rather his unconscious or subconscious daimon. Nietzsche admits that “in certain critical situations, when even his massive intellect faltered, he was able to regain his balance through the agency of divine voice.”⁹⁰³ Thus Socrates, archetype of theoretical man, followed his instinct or daimon which was “as a purely inhibitory agent, ready to defy his rational judgements.”⁹⁰⁴ Yet, even here Nietzsche interprets Socrates’ daimon as a sign of slave morality, i.e. resentment: “whereas in all truly productive men instinct is the strong, affirmative force and reason the dissuader and

⁸⁹⁸ BT, p.89

⁸⁹⁹ BT, pp.104-105

⁹⁰⁰ Kierkegaard, *Der Begriff der Ironie mit ständiger Rücksicht auf Sokrates*, München, 1929

In sharp contrast to Nietzsche, Kierkegaard argues that Socrates’ irony is not just a specific method of discussion or manner of speaking, but that all his life was irony. Later Kierkegaard confesses in his diaries that the whole of his own existence is also irony.

⁹⁰¹ Tejera, p.31

⁹⁰² TI, p.32

⁹⁰³ BT, p.84

⁹⁰⁴ BT, p.84

critic, in the case of Socrates the roles are reversed: instinct is the critic, consciousness the creator.”⁹⁰⁵

Finally Nietzsche has an image of the dying Socrates, Socrates who at the end revealed his lifelong pessimism. As Nietzsche notes “even Socrates said as he died: ‘To live - that means to be a long time sick: I owe a cock to the saviour Asclepius’”.⁹⁰⁶ With this final image Nietzsche is in great trouble for he himself was misled by this great ironist: “Is it possible! A man like him, who had lived cheerfully and to all appearance as a soldier, - was a pessimist!”. Nietzsche admits that he might have misinterpreted Socrates who was not theoretical optimist but practical pessimist for he “had all along concealed his ultimate judgement, his profoundest sentiment! Socrates, Socrates *had suffered from life!*”⁹⁰⁷ Nietzsche, at the end of the fourth book of *Joyful Wisdom*, despite all who accuse him of anti-Socratism introduces the image of the dying Socrates: “*The Dying Socrates*. - I admire the courage and wisdom of Socrates in all that he did, said - and did not say. This mocking and amorous demon [...] was not only the wisest babler that ever lived, but was just as great in his silence.”⁹⁰⁸

Hegel and Socrates with their theoretical optimism are both, according to Nietzsche, enemies of the tragic art but Hegel is only a follower of Socrates who is the archetype of theoretical man. Nietzsche remains an arch anti-Socratic in the history of Western philosophy. Yet, as this short essay has demonstrated, Nietzsche’s view on Socrates is not as clear cut as some commentators might want to see. I pointed out that Nietzsche in fact has many images of Socrates besides the theoretical one and that despite his antagonism he regarded Socrates very highly. It seems that for Nietzsche the historical accuracy of his interpretation of Socrates’ life was less important and that he needed a figure who would let us understand the genealogy of theoretical

⁹⁰⁵ BT, p.84

⁹⁰⁶ TI, p.29 originally Plato, *Phaedo* 118

⁹⁰⁷ JW, p.270

⁹⁰⁸ JW, pp. 269-270

optimism. Thus Socrates became for Nietzsche an archetype of theoretical optimism in Europe who stands in the centre of his philosophy. Similarly, one can argue, the figure of Hegel, as the follower of Socratic theoretical optimism, has the central point in Nietzsche's philosophy. Both Socrates and Hegel, according to Nietzsche, are representatives of theoretical optimism. Yet, both are great thinkers whose lives and philosophy force Nietzsche again and again to question his own interpretation of their lives and teachings.

Abbreviations

Works by Hegel

- PS *Phenomenology of Spirit*
 SL *Science of Logic*
 PR *Philosophy of Right*
 PH *The Philosophy of History*
 PM *Philosophy of Mind*
 PW *Political Writings*
 HP *History of Philosophy*
 ILA *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*

Works by Nietzsche

- BT *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*
 DS *David Strauss the Confessor and Writer*
 HS *History in the Service and Disservice of Life*
 SE *Schopenhauer as Educator*
 WB *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*
 HAH *Human, All Too Human*
 D *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*
 JW *Joyful Wisdom*
 Z *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*
 BGE *Beyond Good and Evil*
 GM *The Genealogy of Morals*
 AC *The Anti-Christ*
 CW *The Case of Wagner*
 EH *Ecce Homo*
 TI *The Twilight of the Idols*

WP *The Will to Power*

Other authors

- NR Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche Contra Rousseau*
- IN Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker*
- FNN Ansell-Pearson (ed.), Caygill (ed.), *The Fate of the New Nietzsche*
- HT Avineri, *Hegel's theory of the modern state*
- B Blondel, *Nietzsche, the Body and Culture*
- HP Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*
- NP Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*
- GH Fulbrook (ed.), *German History since 1800*
- N Hollingdale, *Nietzsche*
- HN Houlgate, *Hegel, Nietzsche and the criticism of metaphysics*
- HFR Houlgate, 'Hegel and Fichte: Recognition, Otherness, and Absolute Knowing'
- RF Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*
- HPP Pelczinski, *Hegel's Political Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives*,
- OS Popper, *The Open Society and its enemies*
- HE Williams, *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition*
- R Williams, *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the other*
- W Williams, 'Discernment in the Realm of Shadows: Absolute Knowing and Otherness'
- HE Williams, *Hegel's ethics of otherness*

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